



Evaluating Service Quality at a Music Festival Through Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction at SaariHelvetti Music Festival

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BACHELOR'S THESIS
October 2019

International Business

ABSTRACT

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Customer Satisfaction at SaariHelveti Music Festival

Bachelor's thesis 66 pages, appendices 6 pages
October 2019

This research paper will seek to explore the theories and methods of evaluating service quality through customer satisfaction, focusing on the service industry. The commissioner of the research is Nem Agency Oy and the research will focus on their two-day annual heavy metal festival SaariHelveti 2019, evaluating the customer satisfaction of the music festival visitors. The main purpose to be fulfilled is to recognize a method through which an organization can evaluate the service quality of a music festival through the satisfaction of their customers.

The literary review introduces theories about customer satisfaction, service quality, customer expectations, value creation and event management. The framework for the research was chosen to be SERVQUAL by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988), where service quality is divided into five dimensions as following; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The model has not been previously tested out in the music festival service sector and has been modified into a new model to fit the objectives of the previous researches done on the subject.

The research was conducted using the qualitative research approach. The research method chosen was personal face to face interviews at the festival. 20 respondents took part in the interviews during both days of the festival. This research data was analysed by transcribing down the discussions and using the coding procedure to find patterns within the answers, such as similar themes. The results stated that the participants of SaariHelveti 2019 were overall satisfied and that the festival quality was as expected by the majority of the respondents taking part in the research interviews. The most important festival factors were the performers, safety, sound quality and the festival area. The least important festival factor was additional program. The factors to cause the most dissatisfaction were the food stalls, as well as the VIP area. Based on the results, recommendations were focused on improving these dissatisfaction areas of service quality as well as future annual research on the customer satisfaction of the visitors.

Key words: customer satisfaction, service quality, music festival, servqual

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	Objectives	5
1.2	SaariHelvetti music festival	5
2	LITERARY REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES	7
2.1	Customer satisfaction.....	7
2.2	Service quality	9
2.3	Customer expectations	12
2.4	Value creation	13
2.5	Events	16
2.6	Event management	17
2.7	Concepts and theories of service quality management.....	20
3	METHODOLOGY.....	27
3.1	Qualitative research	27
3.2	Interviews	28
3.3	Data collection and analysis.....	30
3.4	Limitations and ethics.....	32
4	RESULTS	34
4.1	Demographics and opening questions	34
4.2	Tangibles	38
4.3	Reliability.....	40
4.4	Responsiveness.....	41
4.5	Assurance	42
4.6	Empathy	44
4.7	Order of importance	45
4.8	Closing questions.....	47
5	DISCUSSION	49
5.1	Key findings	50
5.2	Reliability and validity.....	54
5.3	Future recommendations	55
5.4	Suggestions for future research	57
	REFERENCES	58
	APPENDICES.....	61
	Appendix 1. SaariHelvetti customer satisfaction interview sheet in Finnish	61
	Appendix 2. SaariHelvetti customer satisfaction interview sheet in English	64

1 INTRODUCTION

Quality, customer satisfaction and a positive cash flow have been argued to be key factors in the success of an event (Lee & Beeler 2006, according to Anderson, Armbrecht & Lundberg 2015, 2–3). Thus, it has been argued that the next competitive advantage and a way to build a stable strategy of differentiation is that of offering a superior customer experience, as bad ones are nowadays more common than the good ones (Shaw & Ivens 2002, 6). For a company, the difficult part is finding out exactly what aspects have an effect in keeping the customers satisfied (Woodruff & Gardial 1996, 3).

As the festival industry has grown, so has the number of researches done on events and festivals increased in the tourism sector in the last three decades to better recognise how to manage the service quality and the customer satisfaction within the event industry (Bassegy 2014, 40). The swift growth of the festival industry has also put pressure on the managers to pinpoint the reason of their target customer visiting the event as to ensure sustainable and profitable future growth through better tailored service offerings (Robinson, Wale & Dickson 2010, 139). The satisfaction of a festival visitor is shaped by interactions with the service providers, the program, the event management systems and other visitors and in order to understand the methods of managing quality, service providers of a festival need to understand the nature of quality (Robinson et al. 2010, 165). Moreover, as the general mindset is that it is less risky and less costly to retain the already existing customers as it is to win over new ones, more effort has been put into how to keep these already existing customers satisfied. (Arora & Narula 2018, 31.)

This bachelor thesis will examine service quality in relation to customer satisfaction, looking at concepts and theories of quality management and conducting a customer satisfaction research at an annual heavy metal music festival SaariHelvetti 2019 to try out a model of service quality management, SERVQUAL by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988).

1.1 Objectives

The paper will seek to explore and consider service quality and customer satisfaction in relation to one another. The main research question can be recognised as “How can service quality be evaluated through customer satisfaction at a music festival?”.

In terms of topic and newness, the paper will look at the suitability of the model of SERVQUAL in the music festival context. Multiple scholars and academics have used the model in the event service industry throughout the years, creating own adaptations through research to fit certain objectives, but there has been no focus among scholars to try it out in the music festival sector. A research is carried out in an annual heavy metal music festival SaariHelvetti 2019 to investigate how service quality is viewed at the event by the customers in terms of the expectations and perceptions of the service quality. The research will also analyse what factors of service quality at a music festival affect the customer satisfaction of festival visitors.

Through this, SaariHelvetti music festival will gain insight into the customer satisfaction of the annual event. As a result, the main purpose of the research will be fulfilled; recognising a method through which an organization can evaluate the service quality of a music festival through the satisfaction of their customers.

1.2 SaariHelvetti music festival

When looking at music festivals and especially focusing on the metal music festival scene, it can be recognised as a growing subculture within the music industry (Weinstein 2000, according to Yan, Kloeppel & Li 2017, 581). SaariHelvetti music festival is an annual heavy metal genre festival held in Viikinsaari, Tampere. It is produced and organized by Tampere based music agency Nem Agency Oy and in 2019, the festival is held for the 5th time in its history on the 2nd and 3rd of August and will be, for the first time since 2014, a two-day event. The festival offers shows from both Finnish and international heavy metal performers and as the event is located on an island, the customers, bands and staff members enter and leave the festival area via boat transportation. (SaariHelvetti 2019.)

The age limit of the festival is 18 and the festival area offers restaurants, kiosks and a bar area for the attendees. The tickets for the festival are sold in webshops Tiketti, Liveto and Lippu.fi and alongside the basic festival tickets, SaariHelvetti also offers VIP tickets, providing the VIP customers an earlier boat departure and entrance to Viikinsaari, as well as champagne, buffet and own VIP area within the festival area. The festival has three stages; Kaaoszine Stage, Inferno Stage and Rock'n'Tits Stage. Kaaoszine Stage and Inferno Stage are for the performers and Rock'n'Tits Stage is for burlesque shows running throughout the festival dates. The festival also offers a mini-golf track for the visitors as well as an official afterparty at Jack The Rooster, Tampere. Viikinsaari is a nature conservation area, which is why the festival does not offer a camping site within the island. (SaariHelvetti 2019.)

As the commissioner of the paper, Nem Agency Oy, has no previous data collected on the customer satisfaction of their festival visitors, the research will provide the organization with valuable information regarding the customer expectations and perceptions of the event's service quality. As the festival will be for the first time in its history a two-day event in 2019, insight into the target customers will be crucial during this time of change and growth for the company as through the research conducted on the festival visitors, Nem Agency Oy can better recognise the current possible service gaps and through this, manage the customer satisfaction of the festival attendees by coming up with solutions to eliminate these gaps.

2 LITERARY REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

2.1 Customer satisfaction

Woodruff and Gardial (1996) define customer satisfaction as the customer's reaction to the value received from a specific product or service offering. Satisfaction can be seen as having an emotional component, implying that the more customer emotion is produced by the product or the service, both positive emotions (such as delight) and negative (such as frustration), the more the customer satisfaction will affect the future purchases, customer reviews and positive word-of-mouth (Woodruff & Gardial 1996, 93). A festival can evoke intense emotional responses from the visitors as for example with music festivals, there can be passion towards a certain genre of music or nostalgia created by a particular performer (Yeoman, Robertson, Ali-Knight, Drummord & McMahon-Beattie 2004, 82). The emotional component of customer satisfaction might evoke stronger satisfaction and dissatisfaction responses when gaps between the perceived performance and the standards of comparison appear at large. Thus, a company needs to recognise the value of a service or a product from the customer's perspective to understand, how to deliver the expected value to create stronger customer satisfaction. (Woodruff & Gardial 1996, 3, 86, 89.)

Often customer perceptions and attitudes are measured and researched to assess the quality of a service, a lot of focus being put into the so called soft measures, stemming from the arrival and popularity of customer relationship management (CRM) and customer experience management (CEM) in the past decade. Soft measures include customer satisfaction questionnaire that demonstrate the customer expectations, perceptions and attitudes towards the quality of the service they have received. Soft measures focus on perceptions and attitudes rather than facts and hard data and is often the preferred way of exploring the customer satisfaction as managers nowadays are more interested in gaining a deeper understanding of their customers. (Hayes 2008, 2.) It has been argued that customer satisfaction is one of the crucial aspects of getting positive customer recommendations, creating a loyal customer base and through this, resulting in a positive cash flow for the organization. It is important for any service

manager to understand the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and specifically in the festival and event industry it is of high importance as the service encounters between the staff and the visitors are so close and frequent. (Yeoman et al. 2004, 84–85.)

Each customer is an individual which is why a lot of concern has been put on the comparison standard; the standard that the customer uses to judge the product or service. The comparison standard has been conceptualized as customer expectations; the customer's beliefs of how the product or service will perform. Some different types of comparison standards can be recognised as expectations of the product/service performance, ideals of how the customer hopes the product/service will perform, competitor comparison, marketing promises made by the organization and the industry norms. (Woodruff & Gardial 1996, 90–92.)

Noriaki Kano (1984) developed the Kano model to connect the requirements to fulfil customer satisfaction of services or products, identifying three requirements that impact that customer satisfaction. The three types of the requirements are basic needs, expected needs and exciting experiences. The basic needs can also be defined as must-be requirements that are expected to be there by the customers, but an organization cannot expect to have fully satisfied customers with just filling these basic needs as these needs are so obvious. In the festival context, this could represent a customer expecting there to be toilet facilities, when booking a ticket for a music festival. The one-dimensional expected needs requirement represent those needs that the customer wants to fulfil, but are not always fulfilled. If these needs are met, it can create strong customer satisfaction for the visitor. The attractive requirements related to exciting experiences can be defined as something that the managers and organizers need to come up with themselves. These are surprises for the customer. At a festival, an expected need is food available for purchase, but an exciting experience is Coca Cola handed out for free for the visitors. (Bergman & Klefsjö 1994, 282.)

A customer touchpoint describes the moment a customer interacts with the organization, for example, service (Edwards, 2019). Every touchpoint is an opportunity as it is an encounter with a customer. These touchpoints work as a guide to think and reflect (Wind & Hayes 2016, 79–86). Focusing on the touchpoints

requires engagement and focus from the whole organization, whether it be marketing, sales or management (Wind & Hays 2016, 23). A service provider such a music agency organizing a music festival needs to create value through every possible touchpoint, as well as along the movement from one touchpoint to the next one, ending the chain in a so-called multi-win outcome for all parties, where the company gains a satisfied customer and the customer received value from the service experience (Wind & Hays 2016, 46).

It is crucial for an organization to recognise what the target customers need and how well these needs are met. Not only is it important to measure the expectations, but also the resulting customer emotions towards the service. Recognising which service factors are currently satisfying and dissatisfying the visiting customers will reveal for the company what aspects are needed to be reconsidered and improved for future growth. Thus, events such as SaariHelveti music festival will need to strategically consider how well the company is currently doing in terms of satisfying their customers' needs to recognise, what is the next step for a more profitable future for the event.

2.2 Service quality

Quality has become an important mode of competition, the modern vision of quality being that of focusing on customer expectations and customer needs (Bergman & Klefsjö 1994, 11). When looking at service quality from the customer's point of view, it can be defined as a service that matches the visitor's perception of the service that is being received. Quality of a service is based more on perceptions than tangible assets. The festival visitor's perceptions of the service quality are formed from a mixture of technical and functional qualities as well as external and personal factors, such as weather or an argument with a partner that occurs during the event. When the consumer's perceptions match the expectations set before the event, a quality service has been delivered and the outcome is most likely a satisfied customer. (McDonnel, Allen & O'Toole 1999, 124–125.) Focusing on the customer needs does not mean that the consumers are always right, nevertheless an organization needs to understand the target customers and the reasons behind the recognised expectations and opinions. As the service providers are the experts of their service, they have the opportunity to develop

the service quality through understanding the backgrounds of the customer opinions. (Bergman & Klefsjö 1994, 24.) Garvin (1988) has listed five categories of criteria for defining quality:

- transcendent/judgmental criteria: a feeling, derived from the minds of the consumers
- product-based criteria: the function of some specific product, easily measurable with hard data, not related to customer feelings
- user-based criteria: how well the product fulfils the needs and the expectations of a customer, being difficult to define as customer's are different in their sense of expectations
- value-based criteria: the relationship of costs and price
- manufacturing-based criteria: engineering and production requirements, the quality focusing on the manufacturing processes (Garvin 1988, according to Russak, 2018).

The user-based and value-based criteria are the most fitting for the event industry, quite clearly. Phrases such as 'the event did not bring value for the money' are not uncommon in festivals, proving that the value-based criteria is a possible base for evaluating an event's service quality. Nevertheless, some of the other categories can be used to explain the definition of quality through the event customer. For instance, a visitor might judge the event quality through the transcendent basis, their feelings of satisfaction judging if they find the event satisfactory or not. (Robinson et al. 2010, 167.)

There are two approaches when defining quality, these being the manufacturing industry approach and the service industry approach. In manufacturing, quality is seen as the total features of a product or service that meets the needs that are stated or implied, beforehand (ISO 1994, according to Robinson et al. 2010, 166). Meanwhile, quality authors such as Crosby (1979) have defined quality as the accordance to the requirements, whereas Juran (1998) states that quality is the fitness for use (Crosby 1979; Juran 1998, according to Robinson et al. 2010, 166). On the service sector, the focus is on the experience of the customer, where Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1986) see quality as the functions of the experiences and personal values of the customer, controlled by the expectations of that customer (Blackwell & Miniard 1986, according to Robinson et al. 2010, 166).

Arguable, the most common definition and conceptualization of service quality is that of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), stating that service quality comes from the gaps between the customer's expectations and performance of the service received, the perceived service quality being that of where an event visitors' expectations and perceptions of service delivered are similar or not. (Parasuraman et al. 1985, 44–46.) Thus, it can be argued that within the events industry, quality is evaluated through people, being mostly intangible and more difficult to exactly measure compared to manufacturing industry and their products. When looking at the factors that an event customer might use to evaluate the service quality, these specific factors have been recognised in the service industry:

- systems or procedures quality: the quality of the systems involved, such as ticket sales, ticket checking, registration, merchandise sales, queuing
- technical quality: the quality of the technical side of the festival such as lighting and sound
- professional quality: the quality of the attitude and behaviour of the staff towards the customers of the event, such as information and safety
- customer communication quality: the quality of the lines of communication (Yeoman et al. 2004, 92–93).

When comparing and contrasting with Garvin's five categories of criteria for defining quality, the above stated specific factors in the service industry look at different quality aspects, that build up an overall service quality for an event, whilst Garvin's five categories cannot all be used within the service industry, such as the manufacturing-based criteria. In the SaariHelvetti music festival context, user-based criteria would be the most fitting from Garvin's theory to inspect the customer satisfaction of festival visitors, as it focuses on fulfilling the needs and meeting the expectations of the customers, but does not offer a wider look into the research topic in terms of what possible other factors of a music festival are seen as important ones by the festival visitors.

Improved service quality can be beneficial for an organization in multiple ways; reduced costs due to rework and wastage, high productivity, fewer customer complaints, higher price and a stronger market position (Deming 1986, according to Bergman & Klefsjö 1994, 38). Sometimes the service quality might be difficult for

a customer to assess, as a service is often an intangible experience, the customers themselves taking part in producing that service. It is also important for the service provider to understand that much of the service quality is related to the moments during the service, where the supplier and the consumer interact face to face. Norman (1948) has defined this concept as the moment of truth. (Norman 1948, according to Bergman & Klefsjö 1994, 266–267.) Hence, effective training of the staff hints that positive and successful customer encounters are increased. A recognised problem in the quality of events being directly related to the people delivering the service is the fact that particularly in music festivals, many of the jobs are project-based, short-term and seasonal, meaning that the costs involved in training and briefing the staff have to be weighted against the improvement of the service quality that is needed to be achieved. (Yeoman et al. 2004, 88–89.)

As quality control and management is dependent on gaining understanding and improving the service through customer feedback, change and improvement through this feedback should be integrated into an event's main operations. Service quality has become increasingly important and a method of staying on top of the competition, so for a music festival such as SaariHelvetti, that has no previous data collected on the service quality of the event, the management should become committed to improving its quality systematically to enable keeping a strong stance on the market and to gain competitive advantage.

2.3 Customer expectations

A customer will attend a festival with the expectation that their specific needs will be met. These needs can be such things as entertainment, social interaction, an experience out of the ordinary or self-expression. Consumer expectations are built from a number of different aspects; marketing communication from the organization, previous experience from similar events, positive word-of-mouth, recommendations from other visitors and the brand image of the organization and the event, itself. A service is inseparable from the consumption of that same service in contrast to purchasing a good from a shop and then consuming that good elsewhere. At a festival, the production and the consumption of the service is simultaneous and the decision to travel and attend the festival has been made beforehand. With an event experience, perceptions of the benefits obtained from

the service will vary by each individual, even if the target consumers will have common characteristics. (McDonnell, Allen & O'Toole 1999, 107–108.)

As there are reasons for a festival visitor to attend an event, these needs and motives already will set a list of expectations towards their event experiences. Morgan (1996) has explained the consumer decision-making process with the acronym; PIECE. The letters stand for problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, choice of purchase and evaluation of post-purchase experience. (Morgan 1996, according to Raj, Walters & Rashid, 2009, 94.) Moreover, studies done by Uysal, Gahan and Martin (1993) on the customers of a community festival in South Carolina and by Mohr, Backman, Gahan, Backman (1993) on the customers of a North American hot air balloon festival argued that there are five principal motivations for attending an event, which can have an effect on the expectations that a festival visitor has set beforehand for themselves, these principals being socialising, family togetherness, excitement, escape from the ordinary and experiencing something unique. (McDonnell et al. 1999, 114.)

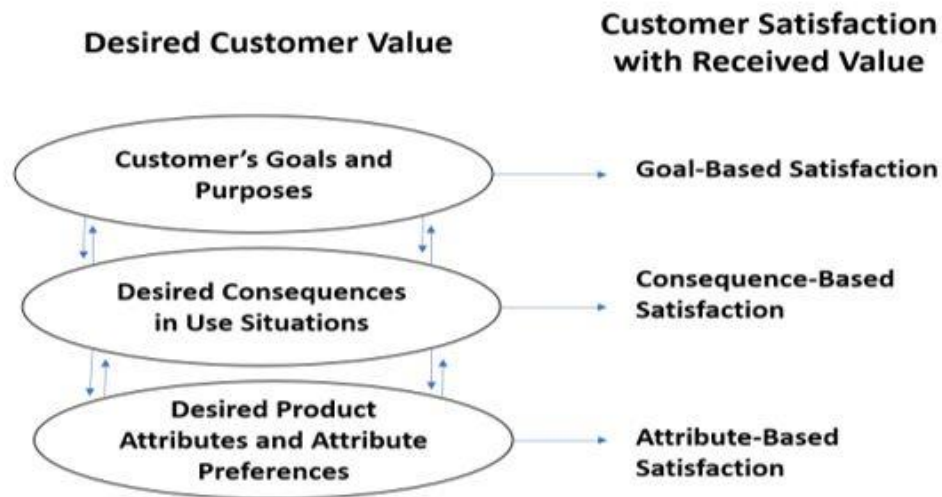
Focusing on SaariHelveti music festival, before the event, the festival visitors have already set expectations through possible previous experience with the festival or with similar events. If the customer has high expectations and the expectations fall short, the event might lose a future customer, and this will be a threat to the word-of-mouth recommendations and the repurchase decisions. On the positive side, if SaariHelveti will meet or even exceed the customer expectations, the event can possibly have an increase in the ticket sales in the future years to come. Based on this, it can clearly be stated that recognising the customer expectations of the target festival attendees is crucial for the festival's reputation and future profit.

2.4 Value creation

Value has been defined in multiple different ways. Zeithaml (1988) has stated that the perceived value is that of the customer's overall assessment of the product or service, based on the notions of what is received and what is given

(Zeithaml 1988, 14, according to Robinson et al., 2010, 171). In the event experience, a construct of benefits and sacrifices is a key factor as the customers sacrifice their time and money to receive the benefits of that event, which can be things such as socializing, relaxation, new experiences and a chance to see favourite band perform live. Overall, value can be seen as one of the key concepts of managing a event attendee's service experience as the service quality influences a customer's perceptions of value and thus, the perceived value is an essential aspect of a visitor's behavioural intentions as well as satisfaction. (Robinson et al. 2010, 171.) Another definition of value states that value is the perception of what the customers wants to happen with the service offering in order to accomplish a desired purpose. However, a company needs to understand that a service is not just a means to meet the goal, but rather that of what the customer actually wants to accomplish with it. This can be understood with two specifications; value in use and possession value. Value in use refers to the outcome that is reached through the product or service consumption, for example a festival will help the consumer be entertained. Possession value refers to the simple act of possessing a product. (Woodruff & Gardial 1996, 54–56.) While the value in use specification clearly fits the festival context more than possession value, the latter can still be applied to the event service through the tangible aspects of a service, such as a festival merchandise booth, where the visitor can purchase a band shirt meant for self-expression and pride of ownings such a product.

Often managers find it difficult to define just what their customers value and this can stem for either not being able to ask the customers the right questions and/or failing to use the customer information to their benefits within the organization (Woodruff & Gardial 1996, 52). The hierarchical view of value states that how products and services relate to customers can be defined by three levels; attributes, consequences and desired-end-states. Attributes describe the product or service, consequences describe the user interaction and desired end-states describes the goals of the organization. The lower levels can be seen as the ways to meet the higher levels and the higher the levels move, the more abstract and challenging it becomes to measure these higher levels. To understand the customer values, an organization needs to research and measure to dig deeper into finding these desires and goals. (Woodruff & Gardial 1996, 71.)



PICTURE 1: A value hierarchy (Woodruff & Gardial 1996, modified)

As picture 1 shows, when applying the value hierarchy in practice, Woodruff and Gardial (1996) mention that several reasons should be taken into account. Managers should not define their service or product solely on attributes, but understand that the value is judged by customers more at the upper levels of the hierarchy and rather than obtaining a bottom-up approach when making decisions, a top-down approach might be more beneficial, as the top levels should be understood, before putting focus into specific attributes of a service or a product. Moreover, it is important to understand that the higher levels of the hierarchy concentrate on the future and offer the chance for more creative changes in the service or product, whereas an attribute focuses on the current moment, resulting in a smaller, additional changes. (Woodruff & Gardial 1996, 75.)

A music festival such as SaariHelvetti might benefit from the value hierarchy model by recognising why the festival customer prefer certain attributes over others. These will then in turn help understand, how to deliver the desired consequences in order to avoid undesirable ones. In the end, SaariHelvetti will be able to get a deeper insight into the goals that the festival visitors want to reach through attending the heavy metal event.

2.5 Events

Festivals have been a growing area within the tourism industry and the phenomenon has been named as event tourism since the 1980s. Getz (1997) has stated event tourism to be a market segment consisting of people travelling to attend events away from home (Getz 1997, according to Raj et al., 2009, 69). Events are performances and acts that have been designed and organized to fulfil the needs of certain groups within a society and to create cultural tourism (Raj et al. 2009, 1–2). The objectives of a musical event are often that of to produce profit through culture and shared experiences, promoting the idea of belonging to a group. Festivals have been cited as being a vital part of developing tourism of a local region, the needs of designing and organizing such events building from the economic opportunities and the cultural and social benefits an event will bring with it (Raj et al. 2009, 68–69).

The nature of an event product is that of an experiential, consisting of tangible and intangible elements. The consumption and the production of an event are inseparable, as an event attendee must be present when the experience is consumed, hinting that there is little opportunity to correct mistakes before the actual consumption of the experience. Another characteristics of an event could be described as the changeability of it, as the experience of the event will differ between individuals. (Robinson et al. 2010, 166.) An event service is also perishable, as for example, the bad weather can affect the attendance level of a festival, the unsold tickets not being able to be sold at a later date anymore. (Raj et al. 2009, 94.)

The study of the motivations of attending music festival events have been recognised to be built from push and pull factors. The push factors can be noted as those influencing the event attendee to make the purchase decision, being intangible and psychological. These factors are individual specific and can be recognised as things such as excitement, relaxation, the need to escape, socializing, nostalgia and education. Pull factors, on the other hand, are more event specific. These can refer to some aspect of the event itself that are very attractive and pulling the attendee towards itself. These factors can be the climate, the facilities or the performers. (Robinson et al. 2010, 141.)

Events build positive and negative impacts on their host cities, ranging from cultural, economic, social and environmental factors. (Raj et al.,2009, 78.) The positive impacts of an event can be seen as building pride within the community, sharing an experience and expanding culture, whereas negative impacts can be recognised as things such as negative community image and negative behaviour within the community (McDonnell et al. 1999, 20). Moreover, a big event such as a music festival can have unintentional social consequences such as bad behaviour by the crowd, injuries and abuse of drugs and alcohol. If not managed and planned well, these negative aspects can take over the image of the festival and affect the way the customers see the event. (McDonnell et al. 1999, 23.)

When looking at the type of an event that SaariHelvetti represents, the focus needs to be put particularly at the music industry context and the heavy metal genre of music. The mosh-pit culture of the metal scene might suggest that this type of music festival might be in need of a larger security assistance staff or medical crew, as injuries caused by a mosh pit is a negative impact that can possibly occur during the festival. However, police reports in the recent years have announced that Finland's biggest annual heavy metal festival Tuska Open Air has been safer than those of different other genres (Kennelty 2017). Moreover, while there also might be some stereotypical images of dark tourism in relation to metal festivals, the experiences of difference and danger are felt through the musical performances of the festival, not as much acted out by the visitors (Yan et al. 2017, 581).

2.6 Event management

It is vital that a manager of an event predicts and manages the positive and negative impacts that an event creates on communities in order to make sure that the event is mostly built from positive impacts, creating favourable outcomes for all parties involved. Negative impacts can be dealt with awareness, hence, good planning for an event is essential in creating a positive event. (McDonnell et al. 1999, 20.) Robbins, Bergman and Stagg (1997) have summarized that the quality of the planning is one of the main important factors within an efficient organisation, stating that for the best financial outcome, formal planning is the key for an

organisation to remain competitive in their field (Robinson, Bergman & Staff 1997, according to McDonnell et al. 1999, 58). A strategic management of the event quality considers the customer as well as the event environment, hence the manager needs to monitor the customer changes and collect feedback from them in order to improve the level of service quality of the event, as well as recognise the role of the service employees in creating said quality. (Yeoman et al. 2004, 95.)

A plan will not be detailed instructions on how the event will be executed, but a method of analysing the actual outcomes of the event in relation to the planned outcomes, a method that enables improvements for the future years to come. (McDonnell et al. 1999, 75.) Without a carefully crafted plan, the organization members might not be clear of the organization objectives and have an unclear image of how to evaluate their success in achieving these objectives. Therefore, the plan will provide a clear and coherent image of the current event process for every individual involved, as it is important for an event organization to have a vision and a mission clearly articulated and understood by all members of the staff. (McDonnell et al. 1999, 58.) One of the most common mistakes a manager can do, when trying to build effective planning, is to define unmeasurable objectives. The outcome of an event needs to be able to be measured in some way or another in order for the team success and abilities to be evaluated.

Mary Parker Follet, a management writer, has defined management and leadership as the way of using other people's efforts to get things done (Caramela 2018). This indicated that the other people (the staff) need to be selected carefully, trained and motivated by the festival and event managers (McDonnell et al. 1999, 83). Motivating the staff commits people and without motivation, the staff can lack the enthusiasm to provide quality customer service, possibly even going as far as lacking interest in the welfare of fellow staff members or the customers (McDonnell et al. 1999, 91). The motivation that comes from outside, for example a manager telling a staff member to do tasks faster, is called external motivation and is short-term. A long-term motivational solution is that of internal motivation, the kind of motivation that comes from oneself. As a manager, the self-motivated staff members are important, as a manager cannot be around all the time to see that the work is being done. If the staff members themselves do not know what motivates them, it is very difficult for them to stay motivated. (Greshes 2011, 5–

6.) As a business leader, communicating that the best is expected from the staff by setting high standards is crucial as well as telling the workers that they are more than capable of doing the best. However, it is also important to still offer the employees the freedom within those standards in order to build innovation and creativity. (Greshes 2011, 47–55.) It is also worth noting that if one never makes mistakes, it is impossible to do things the right way, as for a company to grow, the staff members need to be willing to take risks, doing more than just the bare minimum, as long as the same mistakes are not done again, but rather, learned from. If a manager points out the mistakes of a worker, it is also essential to recognize those individuals when things are done right (Greshes 2011, 70–75).

The service provider of a festival can be recognised as the event organizer, but the people that the festival attendees usually come in contact with the most are the staff members of the event. At festivals, there are employees whose sole purpose is to look after the festival visitors and the communication skills and the professionalism of these members influence the understanding and the way the visitors see the event organization. Starting from the planning stage already, it is crucial for the success of the event that the relationships between the staff and the organization is well maintained and arranged through communication, training and management (Yeoman et al. 2004, 89). In addition to a trained staff, the decisions made must be based on researched facts and every member within the organisation should be taking part in the non-stop effort to improve the processes within the organization (Bergman & Klefsjö 1994, 11).

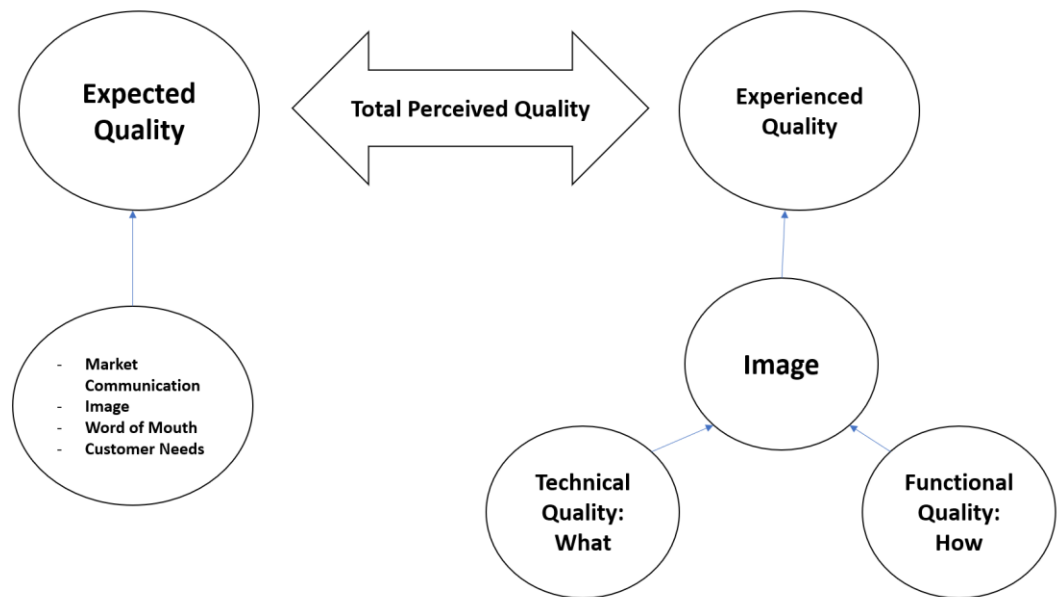
As stated, for an event to be successfully managed, a well designed strategic plan and a successfully informed staff are crucial. Each music festival staff member needs to understand why the event exists, who is it for and what is it trying to offer for those visiting. For SaariHelvetti music festival, it is important that a clear mission and vision statement is defined as well as understandable and measurable objectives are crafted in order for every party involved to stay focused, motivated and professional.

2.7 Concepts and theories of service quality management

Quality management has stemmed from the manufacturing industry, thus most of the theories and concept of service quality management have been tried out on the manufacturing industry. The characteristics of a service (intangibility, perishability) make it impossible for events to be managed the same way as manufactured products, which is why service quality has been observed by many scholars, always starting from the viewpoint of a customer. (Robinson et al. 2010, 167.)

Service quality managed through the viewpoint of the customer has been dominated by two main schools of thought: the Scandinavian school of Grönroos and the US school of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry. They can also be recognised as the Nordic and the American conceptions of service quality and both are based on the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm, being an approach where customer satisfaction is based on the notion that the visitors have set certain expectations of an event before attending and will judge the service quality based on these expectations, then confirming them or disconfirming them. (Robinson et al. 2010, 167.)

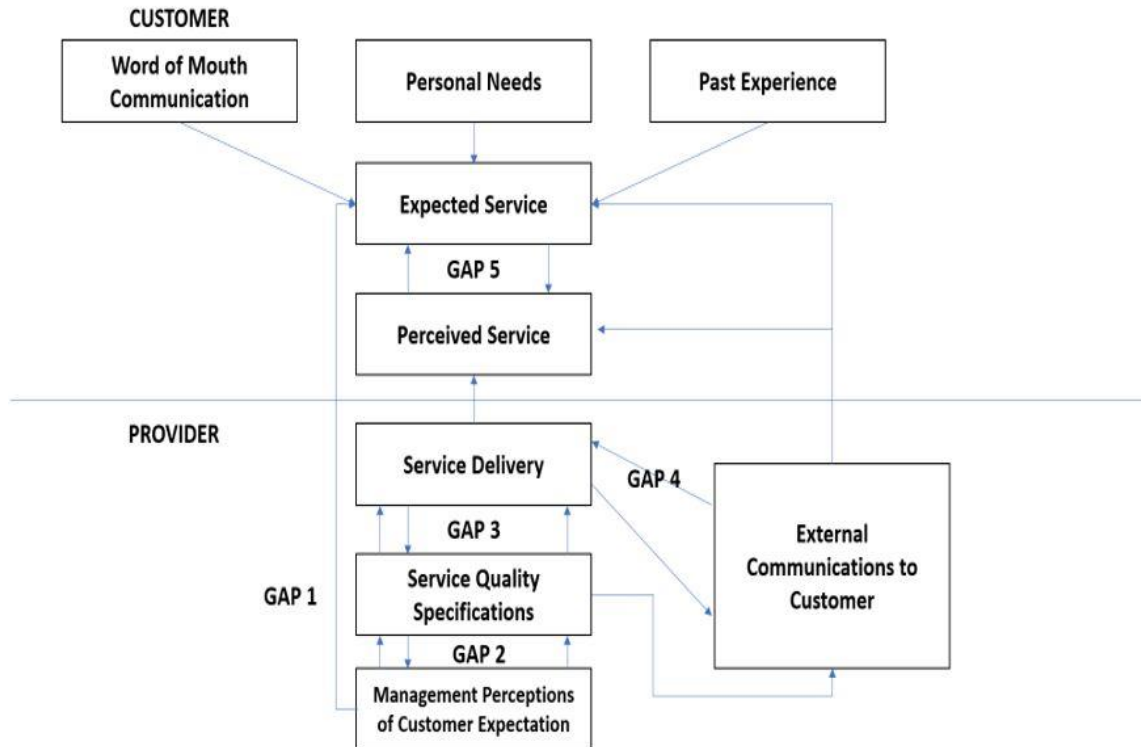
The Scandinavia school of thought, lead by Christian Grönroos (2002) and presented by picture 2, emphasizes technical and functional dimensions as well as the organization's image and the relationships the organization has with its consumers (Grönroos 2002, according to Robinson et al. 2010, 168). According to Grönroos (1982), the technical qualities represent what the attendee receives, measured by the attendee, whereas the functional quality stands for how the service is being delivered, also evaluated by the customer. Emphasis is placed upon the volunteers and the employees behaviours and their relationship with the customers, focusing on aspects such as courtesy, attentiveness and friendliness. The 1982 theory of functional and technical qualities was edited into a more comprehensive model named total perceived quality in 2002, where the effect of external factors are taken into account when looking at the expected quality. (Grönroos 2002; Grönroos 1982, according to Robinson et al. 2010, 168.)



PICTURE 2: Grönroos Model – Total Perceived Quality (Grönroos 2002, modified)

As seen in picture 3, the American school of thought sees customers as information processors (Robinson et al. 2010, 167). This method is the SERVQUAL model created and developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry. In 1985, Parasuraman et al. developed a gap model that measures the gaps between service expectations and the perceived service quality. The five gaps go as following, as stated by Parasuraman et al.:

- Gap 1: Customer's expectations versus the management perceptions
- Gap 2: Management perceptions versus service specifications
- Gap 3: Service specifications versus service delivery
- Gap 4: Service delivery versus external communications
- Gap 5: The discrepancy between customer expectations and their perceptions of the service delivered (Parasuraman et al. 1985, 45–46).



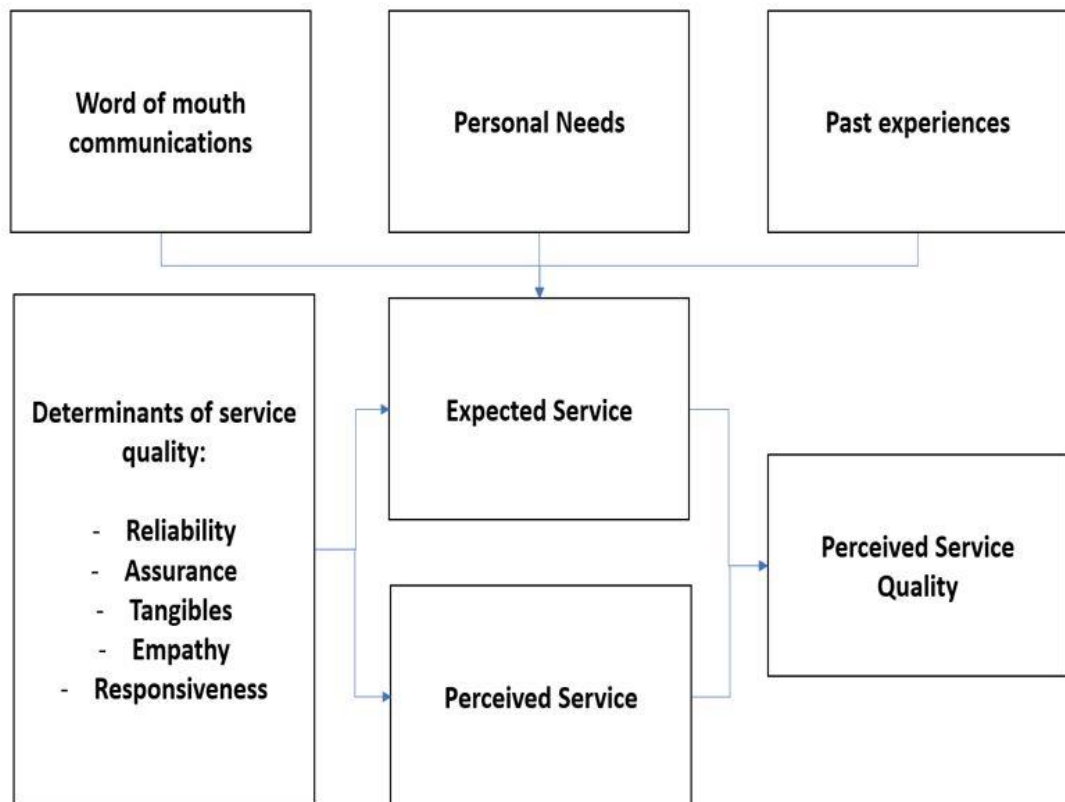
PICTURE 3: The Gap Model (Parasuraman et al. 1985, modified)

The reasons behind these gaps can be analysed in more detail. Gap 1 of customer expectations versus management perceptions can stem from a lack of marketing research and from bad communication within the different layers of the management. Gap 2 of management perceptions versus service specifications often results from inadequate goals set and poor motivation and commitment to meet these goals of service quality. Gap 3 of service specifications versus delivery can grow from conflicts, badly hired employees for certain jobs, lack of teamwork and a bad supervisory system. Gap 4 of service delivery versus external communication is a result of over-promising and bad communication. Gap 5 of consumer expectations and their perceptions of the service delivered derives from many reasons, mostly from external communication from the customer side and the service provider failing to meet these requirements built through these expectations. Such things can be word-of-mouth recommendations and past experiences with the service. (Arora & Natural 2018, 36.)

Later in 1985, a multiple-item scale was developed to assess a customer's perceptions on service quality in different service sectors, when the definition of service quality was stated as being the difference of how a customer experiences a

service compared to how a customer expected the service to be, before experiencing it (Arora & Natural 2018, 34). This scale is presented in picture 4. The five dimensions can be defined as following, as stated by Parasuraman et al.:

- tangibles: physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel
- reliability: ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- responsiveness: willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
- assurance: knowledge and courtesy of employees and ability to inspire trust
- empathy: caring and individualized attention that the firm provides for customers (Parasuraman et al. 1988, 23).



PICTURE 4: SERVQUAL – perceived service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988, modified)

One common theory used in product development, service management and quality management is that of Kano's (2001) theory of attractive quality. As it has been widely used when studying the role of quality attributes in relation to cus-

tomers' perceptions of quality, it has classified quality into five categories of attributes. In event industry, these attributes can help event managers identify opportunities in service differentiation. The attributes can be recognised as following, as stated by Kano (2001):

- one-dimensional attributes (satisfier) – the relationship between the degree of functionality and satisfaction
- attractive attributes (exciter) – heightened levels of satisfaction in relation to increased functionality
- must-be attributes (non-negotiable) – prevents perceptions of inferior quality
- neutral attributes – neither bring satisfaction nor dissatisfaction
- reverse quality – negative impacts of dissatisfaction (Kano, 2001, according to Robinson et al. 2010, 169).

Rust and Oliver (1994) developed another model for service quality management called the Three-Component model, identifying three components for service quality: service product, service delivery and service environment. The model has been used in healthcare industries and retail banking, even though the authors could not test their conceptualization. (Arora & Natural 2018, 37.) Moore's service quality model (1987) developed a theory consisting of six steps, having an external focus and having applicable factors in each step. These steps focus on aspects such as objectives, prioritizing, improvement activities, required resources and action plan, so great focus has been put into monitoring the performance and implanting a strategy. It describes the process of launching a quality drive, but has been criticised as it fails to recognise the areas in need of quality improvement. (Ghobadian, Speller & Jones 1994, 58.)

Haywood-Farmer (1988) put forward a model where attributes were separated into groups to develop service quality and stated that an organization is having a high-quality service, when the customer preferences and expectations were consistent. The three attributes were recognised as physical facilities, processes and procedures, people's behaviour and professional judgement. These attributes built an culmination of a triangle and it is the job of the managers to recognise, which is their organization's placement in the triangle, helping the company to develop a consistent service through understanding how easy the service is to

customize, how strong is the staff and how much contact and interaction is there with the customers. It has been argued that the model might be difficult in helping an organization recognise means of improving the service quality, but will help recognise the links between the quality of the service and the operations behind these services. (Ghobadian et al. 1994, 59.)

Nash (1988) developed a model called service journey, where stages of a service journey are recognised, the experience at each stage of the journey and the expectations prior to the purchasing of the service forming the expectations for the next stage. The service journey is motivated by the customer's need and a purchase of a service will happen if the need matches with the service offering, the key elements for a successful offering being the company's reputation and accurate communication. (Ghobadian et al. 1994, 59.)

One can clearly conclude that there has been no single definite model to measure service quality, but research has proven that one of the most common methods is the SERVQUAL model created by Parasuraman et al. Past research conducted by previous scholars has applied the model in the music festival context to see, how fitting SERVQUAL is for measuring service quality in this particular service sector, but has not used it as the main instrument to conduct research with. A study done on Innibos Arts Festival in Africa used the SERVQUAL quality factors as a part of the research to understand the satisfaction levels of the visitors (Welthagen 2014, 7). Furthermore, research conducted on Strosjöyran Music Festival proved that aspects from an adapted SERVQUAL scale, such as empathy, assurance and responsiveness were important factors to explain satisfaction measured by consumers at a music festival (Andersson et al. 2015, 14–15).

Yarimogly (2014) reviewed the literature of service quality and concluded that different industries would need different service quality measurements, stating that a SERVQUAL scale that would be more industry-specific, might be needed (Yarimogly 2014, according to Arora & Narula 2018, 43). As previous researches conducted with SERVQUAL have resulted in adaptations of the model, there is a possibility that in the metal festival scene there also needs to be an adaptation to fit the environment and customer segment better. This possible adaptation can be, however, only recognised through research done on the customer base of a

metal festival. Furthermore, the past research done on the music festival context does not prove any crucial differences needed to be taken into account with this particular music genre, as the safety issues stated earlier can fall under the categories of assurance and/or empathy, based on the definitions of these dimensions.

The SERVQUAL instrument was built as a quantitative one, using raw data to produce a difference score for each of its' dimensions (Parasuraman et al. 1988, 23). With the gap model, higher numbers inform wider gaps and lower scores indicate smaller gaps between the expectations and the perceptions of the service quality by the customers. It has been referred to as a quantitative survey instrument. (Hassan 2015, 19 21.) Additionally, the perceived service quality model is used in research generally by using a scale of strongly disagree - strongly agree, this being different to that of qualitative interview questions.

However, SERVQUAL has been used in past research as mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research, as well. Jyotsna has conducted research using SERVQUAL with both quantitative and qualitative data to research the services provided by the Tehsil offices (Jyotsa, H. 2012, 3). Chang researched guided Taiwanese package tours using a qualitative approach with modified SERVQUAL dimensions, having added communication and sociability to the dimension to fit the needs of the research (Chang 2009, 169). Using the SERVQUAL in qualitative research has been overall minor, as the instrument was built to offer quantitative results, but the nature of the SaariHelvetti research is a that of a qualitative one, which is why the instrument will be used as a qualitative research, analysing the results in a qualitative manner. As it has been argued that SERVQUAL can be used and adapted to measure different service setting, it can prove to be a valuable model for measuring service quality in the SaariHelvetti music festival environment, as well (Tkaczynski & Stokes 2010, 71).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Qualitative research

Bryman (2008) has defined qualitative research as a strategy that emphasizes words rather than the quantity of the collection and analysing of the research data (Bryman 2008, according to Hammersley, 2013, 1). Whereas in quantitative research the data sample indicates validity, in qualitative research the way the individual experiences the social event offers the credibility of the study (Creswell & Miller 2000, according to Yan et al. 583). As qualitative research examines the experiences of an individual, to understand the experiences the researcher needs to be empathic and open-minded, flexible and able to listen to people (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey 2011, 9). Moreover, a qualitative research strategy is a more flexible approach to that of quantitative, where data is based rather on counting and measuring (Hammersley 2013, 12).

Qualitative research is used when there is a need to explain behaviour, discover meaning behind experiences, discover issues within a community and to understand behaviour, beliefs and opinions (Hennink et al. 2011, 10). Thus, it is the preferred strategy to collect service quality experiences at a music festival event. It can also be seen as the study of natural settings, as in contrast to quantitative research, qualitative explores the events in the normal setting where people work, live and socialize. Qualitative research can be used in audio and video recordings, interviews and observations. It focuses on the notion that the data collected is shaped by the social and personal characteristics of that of the interviewer, hinting that it is impossible to ignore the effect of the researcher on the situation, it possibly even leading to negative effects. Whereas quantitative research studies large samples, qualitative research involves smaller numbers, stemming from the need of in-depth understanding and examination of individuals. (Hammersley 2013, 12–14.)

No research method is superior to the other. However, as qualitative research methods focus on producing data that is meant for in-depth understanding of the reasons and motivations behind the responses, these methods should be used

to research the motivations for visiting events (Raj et al. 2009, 90–91). Therefore, qualitative research is chosen as the method of conducting a customer satisfaction research at SaariHelvetti music festival. One interview question is, however, a quantitative research question due to the nature of what the question wants to find out. This question will investigate the most important and the least important aspects of a music festival by counting together the numbers of importance given by the interview participants. The size of the sample, in this case the numbers counted together, will indicate the validity of the responses, thus a quantitative question type is chosen.

3.2 Interviews

An interview is often used when seeking to explore the individual experiences on a specific topic. Interviews can be used to find out how people make their decisions, what are their perceptions on a particular topic and the motivations behind these behaviours, feelings and emotions. (Hennink et al. 2011, 109–110.)

The most popular approach with interviews is treating the participant answer's as descriptions of external reality (events, facts) or internal experiences (feelings, meanings). Another approach is that of a more narrative one, where the data is treated as an access to the stories through which the interviewees describe the world. (Silverman 2005, 154.)

An interview guide can be structured or less structured, depending on the research type and objectives. A typical interview guide follows a structure as such; introduction, opening questions, key questions and closing questions. With an introduction, the topic and the researcher are introduced, after which a couple of general questions are usually asked about the interviewee's background. The opening questions are asked to make the participants feel more comfortable and ready to answer the key questions. (Hennink et al. 2011, 112–113.) For example, in SaariHelvetti music festival, the opening questions might generally be about festivals and the individual's festival going habits. The key questions then follow, being a central part of the interview guide, designed to collect the needed information. The closing questions conclude the interview, being broad and general. There needs to be several closing questions to bring finality to the interview.

(Hennink et al. 2011, 113–114.) In SaariHelvetti, these questions can, for example, discuss the future plans of the interview participants and whether they might be interested in visiting the festival again, the next year.

Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) state that in-depth interviews include using a semi-structured interview style, because it establishes trust between the participant and the interviewer through asking the questions in an open, empathic way, motivating the interviewee to tell their story (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey 2011, 109). While some of the advantages of conducting interviews as the chosen research method are gaining in-depth information and identifying personal experiences, the disadvantages can be recognised as the fact that these are only individual perceptions (Hennink et al. 2011, p. 53). Qualitative research is typically quite unstructured when it comes to interviews, the interviewees asked to talk in length and detail, the interviewer encouraging more elaboration (Hammersley 2013, 14). The interviewer should try to avoid their influence on the answers, even if it is necessary to intervene to get the participants to talk about topics that have been jumped over and that are necessary (Hammersley 2013, 54).

The interviewer asks questions to motivate the participant to share their experiences and perspectives. However, it is not about questioning and answering, but more about reacting to the personality of the other person. This affects what and how are things discussed in the interview. (Hennink et al. 2011, 109.) An interviewee also needs to have good social skills and flexibility to be a good interviewer. Multiple tasks need to be handled at the same time, such as small talk with the interview participant, creating a comfortable environment for discussion, listening and responding with empathy and motivating the participant to tell their stories. (Hennink et al. 2011, 124.) Interviewing people on the actual event of SaariHelvetti will help the interviewee understand what they believe and why. A semi-structured interview style is a preferable option for the research, as the interviews aim to find out the 'why' behind the answers. Conducting the face to face interviews at the SaariHelvetti music festival will offer the participants a natural and comfortable setting in which to consider their experiences of the festival. The interviews will be conducted on both days of the festival, as not to exclude any of the three ticket type customers; one-day ticket owners, two-day ticket owners and VIP customers.

The interview questions used at the SaariHelvetti music festival can be found from Appendix. 1 in Finnish and Appendix. 2 in English. Each question is modelled after the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument. Small bullet points will be written down under each question for the interviewee, in order to make sure these certain aspects lead the conversation deeper into the subject of music festival, if these subjects do not come up naturally. These bullet points under each question will be build through the definition of each original dimension by Parasuraman et al. (Parasuraman et al. 1988). These bullet point notes will go under each dimension as following:

- tangibles: location, guidance, cleanliness, safety, food and drink, technical aspects
- reliability: possible problem-solving situations
- responsiveness: availability of staff, helpfulness of staff
- assurance: professionalism
- empathy: understanding the personal needs of the customers

With these personal notes, the interview discussion can flow in a natural manner, not leaving anything relevant out of the conversations and continuing the discussions in moments, where the subject seems to be meeting a dead end.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

The SERVQUAL model has been widely used when evaluating and managing the quality of a service and was chosen as the model to conduct the research through. Within the festival service sector, the model can help recognise areas in need of managerial attention and find actions to improve service quality, as to avoid possible service gaps that can lead to dissatisfied customers. A questionnaire will be composed, to be modified according to the five service quality factors of the SERVQUAL instrument; reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. As interviews are useful, when collecting information on attitudes, opinions and motivations, face to face interviews are chosen as the main data collection method (Hennink et al. 2011, 109). The face-to-face interviews will be conducted with the visitors of the event, the results then analysed through comparison. Comparison allows a researcher to deeper explore the issues and notice

patterns within the data, beginning to recognise the links between issues. (Hennink 2011, 243.) In SaariHelvetti music festival, it can help to identify similar experiences within the festival.

Information will be gathered from the individual interview transcripts using the coding procedure, which organizes the text to find patterns within the structure. The coding technique has proved to be helpful when faced with a huge amount of text. (Auberbach & Silverstein 2003, 35.) Analysing the interview results will begin with cutting down the text into smaller portions, otherwise the amount of text can become quite overwhelming. Keeping the research purpose in mind, the interview results will be read through to recognise relevant text, as all the raw text gathered from the interviews will not be of importance for the research findings. Repeating ideas will be discovered through similar words and similar phrases that express similar minds and themes will be recognised through organizing these groups of repeating ideas. (Auberbach & Silverstein 2003, 40-42.) As the theoretical framework of SERVQUAL has already divided factors of service quality into certain themes, the coding might aid in discovering themes overlooked that are needed in order to evaluate the service quality of a music festival event.

There are many ways in qualitative research to collect the participants for the research. Five strategies can be defined; gatekeepers, networks, snowball, advertisements and research-based recruitment. Gatekeepers consist of the people who are recognised in the local communities and know the members well, finding suitable participants for a study. Network consists of potential locations where the population gathers, finding suitable participants from these locations. Snowball recruitment identifies participants with specific characteristics or rare experiences, asking the other study participants whether they know a member of community who meet these criteria. With the advertisement strategy, an ad is located on places that catch the attention of the popularity and with a research-based recruitment strategy, researches that use multiple research methods choose participants from a different part of the research to also take part in the qualitative part. (Hennink et al. 2011, 91–103.)

For SaariHelvetti music festival, the network strategy will be applied, as the attendees interviewed are gathered on a particular location, where they can be

reached. The sampling procedure is to be a non-probability sampling, as it is fitting for doing qualitative research at an event where it is impossible to access the whole population (Walliman 2011, 96). Individuals who fit the criteria of the study are identified in any way possible at the event and will help the researchers obtain the number needed for the study. Qualitative study samples of over 100 are not advisable, as in-depth analysis is needed and it becomes difficult to manage with such a big group of participants (Hennink et al. 2011, 90). Therefore, a sample size of 20 is chosen for the research.

3.4 Limitations and ethics

There is always the criticism of understanding other's experiences and perspectives. Furthermore, it is important to consider the problem of if people truly understand themselves or their behaviours. (Hammersley 2013, 56.) This was dealt with asking in detail the true reasons behind the feelings and the answers of the interviewees. As qualitative research aims to recognise the feelings and beliefs of the participants, some of the information can be of sensitive matter, which is why it is important that the interviewer understands to keep the information anonymous to respect the privacy of the one being interviewed. (Hennink et al. 2011, 65.) Sometimes in qualitative research, the interviewees might become surprisingly emotional and there needs to be empathy from the researcher's part (Hennink et al. 2011, 75). However, the advantage of seeking understanding of experiences at a music festival is that the nature of the environment is not highly sensitive and most probably, won't be difficult to discuss because of, for example, past trauma.

When looking at limitations of the research, the downside is the fact that it cannot take into account the unknown population that has not attended the festival this chosen year. Moreover, the way the participants are gathered can influence the results as the geographical area will be the same and the visitors may have similar ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds. (Emerson 2015, 166.) It is also important to consider the purpose of the research problem in terms of if the research will respond to a problem recognised by the research community or an organization. It is important to reflect on how the findings will be beneficial to different stakeholders. The researcher also needs to make sure that the study does not

exploit the study population in any way. (Hennink et al. 2011, 64–65.) For example, at a music festival, it would not be fair to the festival attendees if the researcher hides the true identity of being an interviewer doing a research.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Demographics and opening questions

The interviews took place on the 2nd and 3rd of August 2019 at the 5th annual SaariHelvetti heavy metal music festival. 20 people were interviewed during both days of the festival as there were three different ticket types, offering an opportunity to talk to each kind of a festival ticket owner. It is possible that the experiences of these various ticket holders differ from each other depending on the extra service that the ticket has brought with it for the VIP customers, the external factors of each day such as bad or good weather and the possible previous day's experience at the festival.

For marketing purposes, the age, gender and the hometown of the participants were asked. 12 of the visitors were between the ages of 20 and 30, which has been the target age for marketing of the event. 12 of the people interviewed were male, whilst 7 were women and one person was other. When asked about the hometown of the visitors, 10 of the 20 people were from Tampere, which was understandable given the effortless accessibility of a local hometown event. Lahti, Seinäjoki and Espoo had 2 people participating in the interview, while other cities that had a visitor interviewed from were Mikkeli, Joensuu, Savonlinna and Canberra. Apart from Lahti, Espoo and Canberra, every person who took part in the interview and was from another city, had come to the festival with a Tampere resident. Narrowing down the audience through demographic research will offer an opportunity for more focused marketing for the event. The fact that only one respondent was from abroad does not exclude the possibility of marketing for people from other countries, as well, as this particular individual had travelled to the festival alone, not being motivated by a local friend attending the event, but by the festival's offerings.

RESPONDENT GENDER	
female	7
male	12
other	1

PICTURE 5: Respondent gender - table

RESPONDENT HOMETOWN	
Tampere	10
Espoo	2
Lahti	2
Seinäjäki	2
Mikkeli	1
Joensuu	1
Savonlinna	1
Canberra	1

PICTURE 6: Respondent hometown – table

Next the visitors were asked if they had been to the festival before in their lives and if yes, how many times. This can help understand the expectations the respondents had set for the festival before arrival and the reasons behind their expectations, taking into the account the previous visits to the festival or the expectations build by other people and the marketing of the event. 8 answered that this is their first time at the festival, while 9 said that this is the second time. 2 said that this is their third time and one participant said this is the 4th time for them, the festival being the 5th in its history in 2019. This division hints on the positive customer satisfaction of the past visitors through the fact that almost half of the respondents are returning customers, but one has to take into consideration that the results are excluding those festival visitors who have once been to the festival in the past without returning for possibly a negative customer satisfaction reason. 16 of the 20 respondents had bought a ticket for both days and 4 had bought a ticket only for Saturday.

NUMBER OF VISITS	
1st TIME	8
2nd TIME	9
3rd TIME	2
4th TIME	1

PICTURE 7: Number of visits - table

When discussing the marketing of the festival, it was asked how the customers had heard about SaariHelvetti. 7 replied that they had received recommendations from a friend and 7 said that their interest had grown through the SaariHelvetti Facebook page, these making up the majority of the responses. Two visitors had seen an advertisement in Instagram, one had seen an advertisement in Nem Agency's winter heavy metal event TalviHelvetti 2019 and the one respondent from Canberra told that they had searched their favourite band's upcoming concerts through Google and had noticed, that they are playing at SaariHelvetti. One interviewee had found the festival through a recommendation from a band member performing at the festival and another had gotten a recommendation to visit the event through a staff member. From the responses, it is found out that positive recommendations and social media marketing are the most common ways that the customers find the music festival. Based on this, it can be argued that the advertisements have been successfully targeted for the main audience of SaariHelvetti and that the visitors before have been satisfied with the festival quality, as the positive word-of-mouth is spreading around.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE FESTIVAL	
from a staff members	1
from a friend	7
from a band	1
Saarihelvetti social media	9
through Google	1
other advertisement	1

PICTURE 8: How did you hear about the festival - pie chart

The interviewees were asked to describe their expectations for SaariHelvetti that they had developed before arriving at the festival. The majority of the expectations were positive and wordings such as friendly, beautiful and unique were used repeatedly by each participant. One respondent who had been to the event before, told that based on their previous positive experiences, the festival is a good place to have fun with friends in a special environment, while another respondent, who was visiting the first time, told that they were not extremely excited to arrive on the first day, as the friend group they were attending the festival with, was tired. One comment mentioned that the festival was marginal before, but had

grown more mainstream through popularity, which they described as a negative thing. This might hint on a notion that some of the previous visitors, that did not return, could have also enjoyed the festival more before it grew into a popular well-known event, as heavy metal listeners have been described as individuals that oppose the mainstream society (Arnett 1996, 33). Based on the discussions with the 20 visitors, the expectations for SaariHelvetti are generally positive ones, built from positive word-of-mouth and the festival has a reputation for being a different and special experience compared to the other heavy metal festivals in Finland, due to its unique location. These expectations were mostly built through positive recommendations and the brand image that SaariHelvetti festival has presented through their social media platforms.

The discussions show that the expectations of the customers of SaariHelvetti differ based on their motivations for attending the event. For instance, the respondents describing their expectations positively through the themes of uniqueness are attracted to attend through the offer of something original, whilst the respondent who was not excited beforehand because their friend group was tired, was motivated to attend the festival in order to socialize and have fun with their friends. If there is a consistent need for socializing, the producers of a music festival need to make sure there is an environment and activities to satisfy this need. Even if the motivation to attend a festival is for the performers, it is equally important to offer an exciting atmosphere with the opportunities to socialize, in order to create a sense of community and togetherness. This will broaden the appeal of a music festival such as SaariHelvetti for a bigger audience, not only focusing on a popular line-up. (Robinson et al. 2010, 139.)

By the end of the opening questions, the visitors were also asked to tell which performers they were the most excited about seeing and what kind of other music genres do they listen to other than heavy metal. These questions were collected simply for marketing purposes and to gain more insight into what kind of music attracts visitors to SaariHelvetti. This will be useful when planning the program of the 2020 SaariHelvetti festival.

4.2 Tangibles

The first dimension on the SERVQUAL scale discussed was tangibles, which refers to the physical facilities, equipment and personnel. The question concerned subjects such as the location, the availability of information and guidance at the island, the area appearance, the safety at the event, the food and beverage stalls and the technology quality of the performances.

The location of the festival got a highly positive response. Some of respondents mentioned that the island offers a unique experience, something that one cannot experience with the competing heavy metal festivals. One interviewee said that as the event is on an island and one cannot leave and enter as one pleases, it brings a feeling of seclusion outside of the city and a kind of intimacy, that in return has created a community feeling amongst the visitors of the festival. Only one person stated that they did not enjoy the fact that the event is on an island, as it brings forth a need to plan more in advance to catch the boats, whereas 19 thought that the island brought the uniqueness factor of the event, which makes it highly different from the other heavy metal festivals. Of course, one has to recognise that the sunny summer weather has a positive effect on the visitors. If the respondents would have not had the chance to enjoy the nature of the island due to a stormy and rainy weather, the responses concerning the beauty of the area might have been more negative or non-existent. As the island also had this year two cow residents from the Tampere based school Ahlman, 4 customers also mentioned that the animals brought a fun atmosphere, fitting to the green environment of the festival.

When discussing the arrival into Viikinsaari island, every respondent mentioned that arrival with boat was easy and a few mentioned that it was easier than they had thought in advance, one answering that it had been the only thing that had been stressing out beforehand when looking at the festival experience as a whole. The boat ride created a sense of adventure within the customers, as stated by 3 of the respondents, this adventurous feeling also adding to the uniqueness of the festival in comparison to the competing events. Two customers used the

word 'special', when describing the experience of arriving to a heavy metal festival with a boat. The feelings of excitement and adventure of arriving with a boat to the festival was a united theme amongst the participants of the interviews.

The respondents mentioned that the safety staff members could be easily spotted throughout the whole festival. One interviewee said that this brought an overall safe feeling at the event, because she felt that she was constantly looked after, as she could see safety people close by. She also mentioned that a feeling of safety is very important in an event that is located on an island, as being so far away from the city centre brings its risks if something alarming would happen. It was discussed whether the festival area had enough guidance through the INFO staff and signs around the island and this got an overall positive response, one customer stating that it was convenient that the free booklet of SaariHelvetti included a map of the area, so one did not constantly have to be asking the staff for directions. One customer responded that they had been somewhat lost and confused on the first day of the festival, because they felt overwhelmed upon arrival, but by the second day, the island was already familiar.

When discussing the appearance of SaariHelvetti, a common comment amongst the customers was the fact that the area was surprisingly clean, as they were used to festival areas being full of trash and had been prepared for this, in advance. One customer stated that as the event is close to nature and a nature conservation area and as there were multiple trash cans visible around, they felt the pressure of being responsible of the trash they left behind. Furthermore, as the festival offers and encourages the visitors to sit down for a picnic with picnic blankets and snacks, the same person mentioned that the possibility of another visitor having a picnic at the same spot afterwards brings the urge to clean up after yourselves.

The talk around the food and beverage offerings of the festival was either passive or negative. 18 of the respondents mentioned the fact that they would have preferred there to be more options to choose from and that the price has been relatively high compared to other festivals that they had been to. Additionally, the quality of the food had not matched the price, as brought up by two customers. The positive comments focused on the vegetarian options and the quality of the

VIP customers festival buffet, one VIP customer commenting that it was better than he had expected.

The technology of the festival gained neutral responses, as the majority stated it was suitable and good enough for an event located in a special environment. The VIP ticket owners all reported, however, that they had been disappointed how from the VIP bar area, one could not see the stages or watch the performers, one comment using the adjective “weird” to describe this. From these comments, it is clear that some of the VIP ticket owners expected their festival experiences to be above the average, the reality not meeting these set expectations of these certain individuals.

4.3 Reliability

The interviewees were next asked to tell about their thoughts on the reliability of the staff members, the second dimension on the SERVQUAL model, focusing on the ability to perform the promised service accordingly. The discussions touched on topics such as the employees treating the visitors with the appropriate approach, as well as their genuine interest in resolving any possible customer problems.

The two most common wordings to come up when describing the staff was easy-going and friendly. The terms friendly and trustworthy came often together within many of the discussions, hinting that a friendly staff creates reliability within the festival visitors. One respondent mentioned, that because the staff members were easy-going, it had helped in creating a calm and stress-free atmosphere at the event itself. Another interviewee further stated that the fact that the workers had a noticeable sense of humour and that they did not look tense, they were easy to approach and trust. However, only 2 of the participants interviewed had approached the festival staff members with an actual problem. In terms of reliability, had there been more respondents who had dealt with the staff in a problem-solving situation, the response to the topic might have possibly been different.

One person commented negatively on the ticket and security people at Laukontori, where the boats for SaariHelvetti leave from. They mentioned that they had

been hastily looked over and that it would have been easy to bring something forbidden to the island by any other customer and this had created a sense of unsafety. Another negative comment mentioned that the cloak room personnel had seemed confused, nervous and unsure, when helping the customer with their problems. Understandably, seeing uncertainty in a staff worker brings forth un-trustworthy feelings, as these are the people who are in charge of the quality of the festival itself and the safety of the visitors.

Discussions regarding the reliability of the staff often moved on to the appearance of the personnel, most of the 20 individuals bringing up the fact that as the workers were dressed clean, but quite casual, this had grown the sense of security and trustworthiness, as it made the festival workers look confident and comfortable. It was also mentioned by one interviewee that the safety and security personnel were unpretentious and down to earth, describing some of the other music festivals as having scary looking workers as security staff members, that were difficult to approach due to their stern appearances.

The response on the reliability factor of service quality in SaariHelvetti was overall a positive one. Clear similar themes could be recognised through words such as easy-going, humorous and friendly. Through this it was possible to recognise that the festival visitors were like minded in the sense that a stress-free and friendly staff member creates an image of confidence, which in return entices trust within the customers of the event. However, as stated above, the fact that only 10% of the respondents had had an actual problem solving situation with an employee, this gives a narrow view if the staff of SaariHelvetti are actually capable of performing the promised service accordingly, when it comes to helping the customers when needed.

4.4 Responsiveness

A question regarding the SERVQUAL responsiveness dimension of service quality discussed topics such as the availability and helpfulness of the staff of Saari-Helvetti, as well as their opinions on the service speed. If the respondent had approached a member of the staff during the festival, they were asked to describe their experience. If the interviewee had not been in close contact with a staff

member, the discussion moved onto whether the respondent knew how and where to approach an employee, if needed.

Overall, the common response was a positive one. The closed area was seen as being an aid in staff responsiveness as both the visitors and the workers are on an island, so one does not have to go far to reach the employees because of the space limitations. None of the interview participants had had anything severe to approach the staff with, mostly the encounters with the workers being related to purchases.

Discussion revolved around the service speed, as well. Eleven out of the twenty respondents mentioned that the service had been fast and that they had been positively surprised, being used to often queuing for a long time when it comes to a music festival. Two of the interviewees stated that the island location excludes too many people from attending the event compared to some of the bigger music festivals, this helping positively the service speed. Another interviewee said that the fast service made them feel appreciated, as it gave the impression that it is important to serve the customers fast and to not keep them waiting.

4.5 Assurance

Next discussion topic with the visitors focused on the assurance dimension of the SERVQUAL scale, meant to touch topics such as knowledge and courtesy of the employees and the ability to inspire trust within customers. Topics focused on the professionalism and the appearance of the workers at the festivals. Themes of safety and reliability came up naturally, when talking about assurance.

The opinion on what the appearance of a music festival worker should be like in order to create a professional image in the eyes of a visitors was divided. Many of the respondents said that it was a positive thing that the workers seemed to be casual with how they were dressed for their work, which was stated to be fitting for the atmosphere by eight of the interview participants. One interviewee said it would be boring if the staff members had matching clothing and another one stated that it would be weird to dress professional for a heavy metal festival. Two respondents used the wording rock and roll to describe the staff members apparel

and one of them continue that this look fits a festival worker, as they did not feel a need for a very strict and professional look to trust a music festival employee. Another customer suggested that the festival workers could be united with something very unstrict and heavy metal related, such as a corpse paint make up on each individual's face. Corpse paint is recognised as being a part of the black metal culture, referring to a certain style of facial makeup, meant to match a decaying body of a human (Ulrey 2016).

The other half of the respondents said that sometimes it was difficult to recognise a staff member from a visitor within the festival area, if the staff worker was dressed casually, which made them seem not as trustworthy. One comment pointed out that in order for the staff members to look casual, but still a little more recognisable, could be done through the employees wearing a SaariHelvetti festival shirt, which were sold on the merchandise tent. This would also then inspire people to go buy their own SaariHelvetti shirt, the individual continued.

From the discussions around the subject of assurance and professionalism, it is very clear that heavy metal festival staff members have a different kind of professionalism notion in the eyes of a festival visitor compared to other events from different industries. The ones who negatively commented that the staff should look more easily recognisable as workers also included wordings of 'not too professional' and 'not serious', rather craving for some coherence and togetherness from the personnel in order to see them as more professional. One interviewee commented that it feels like talking to a friend or another festival visitor when being in contact with a festival employee, which helps to create the cheerful atmosphere of SaariHelvetti and inspires trust. On the other hand, one could question if this creates a problem with the authority within the festival, if the employees are seen close to the likes of a friend or a festival visitor. Music business may not be as formal as some other businesses, but it is important to take one's job seriously in order to stay professional (McDonald 2019).

4.6 Empathy

Next interview question was built around the empathy dimension of the SERVQUAL model, which is defined as looking into the caring and individualized attention that the customers receive from the organization. The customers were asked to generally tell their experiences of personalised services within the festival. The discussions included aspects such as feeling welcome, recognising the needs of the customers, whether the opening times were suitable for the visitors and whether it felt like the workers at the festival genuinely want to help the visitors.

Every person of the 20 people interviewed mentioned that they had felt welcome at the festival. One mentioned that the workers do not seem stressed, which in turn makes one feel like they are seen as individuals as they are not served in a haste. Another participant compared the staff members to a feeling of speaking to a friend, as with the previous topic of assurance. Multiple times it was stated that the customers have felt welcome, because the workers at the festival seem confident and happy. One comment stated that, because the customers have been treated with a good attitude, in turn the customers have been generally in a very good mood and thus, the atmosphere at the festival is very welcoming and open. Another comment mentioned that when served, it had felt like the employee had genuinely wanted to speak with them on the contrary of being annoyed and angry after a long day of work, something the customer said they are used to themselves when working in customer service. When asked what aspects made the visitors feel welcome by the workers at SaariHelvetti, similar wordings included words such as smiling employees, stress-free appearance and a sense of humour in the service situations.

SaariHelvetti was open this year on Friday from 14:45 to the VIP customers and 15:00 for the normal ticket holders and on Saturday 13:45 for the VIP customers and 14:00 for the normal ticket holders. Regarding the opening times, 90% of the customers interviewed said that the opening times were good, 10% stating that the festival could start even later. The main reasoning for the festival opening times being suitable was the fact that one does not have to hurry to arrive to the festival, but can rather get ready in peace and enjoy food in a restaurant with the friend group that one is arriving with, hinting on the fact that most people do not

plan to eat at the festival itself. The main reason for wanting later opening times was to have more time to get ready and arrive with no hurrying.

4.7 Order of importance

After discussing the service quality dimensions of SaariHelvetti music festival, the participants were asked to arrange a list of music festival factors in order of importance for them, 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important. These aspects were performers, sound quality, festival area, customer service, safety, food and drink and additional program, as these can be recognised as aspects of a music festival event. Below one can see the overall scoring of each factor, counted by adding the given numbers together from each respondent.

FESTIVAL FACTOR IMPORTANCE SCALE	
performers	88
safety	86
sound quality	85
the festival area	82
customer service	76
food and drink	73
additional program	54

PICTURE 9: Festival factor importance scale

Performers, safety, sound quality and the festival area scored over 80 points, making them the most important factors. Customer service and the food and drink offerings both scored over 70, placing them in the medium importance section. Additional program gained 54 points, making it the least important factor of a music festival.

Some of the reasonings behind these answers were discussed in depth with the respondents. One customer mentioned that if the performers are not good, they see no reason to attend a music festival. Another one stated that big and popular names from music industry are needed to catch the interest of the audience. Safety was seen as a highly important factor in an event, as it makes a visitor feel like they are looked after and appreciated as an individual. The sound quality was

also viewed as an important factor, often aiding the customer in deciding if they want to return again, as explained by three of the respondents.

The festival area was seen as an important factor in terms of satisfaction. One customer talked how recycling is valued amongst festival goers currently because of the environmental crisis and continued that a clean area gives an impression that also the festival organizers have their priorities organized according to what the visitors of a festival value. Another person said that it is necessary that the area is spacious enough to avoid overcrowding and anxiety caused by a limited space and too many people.

Customer service and food and drink were seen as medium important. An interviewee mentioned that both were aspects that exist in a music festival, but one does not set high expectations for either one, as food is often highly expensive in music festivals and customer service not seen as high quality, as the employees usually do not seem to have enough time to focus on the service quality, but rather concentrate on the service speed. The least important factor was seen as being all the additional program of a festival, as a few of the respondents stated that during a festival, they focus on seeing the performers of a music festival and do not find time to focus on the additional programme, as they also need to find time for socializing between the bands and artists.

The most important factors within a music festival can be recognised as performers, safety, sound quality and the festival area. Based on the definitions of the five dimensions of SERVQUAL, these aspects can be placed under each dimension of the instrument, when needed. Performers, festival area and sound quality fit the tangibles dimension, which describes the physical facilities and equipment of a service. Safety can be placed within the assurance dimension, as it focuses on the ability to inspire trust within the customers. Based on this, the most important SERVQUAL dimension in a music festival are tangibles and assurance.

4.8 Closing questions

The interviews were closed by discussing the overall satisfaction of the customers, touching topics such as if the expectations of the festival were met and the future plans of the festival goers, regarding the next SaariHelveti music festival.

First the respondents were asked to consider, what else they could have possibly wanted to experience at the festival. The majority of the interviewees mentioned the food choices of the event, stating that they would have preferred there to be more options. One visitor said that the other two festivals of 2019 that she had visited, had better quality food for the customers and that she would have expected something similar, given the beautiful area of SaariHelveti. Another common comment regarded the bottle and can collection, hinting the need for more recycling for the drink bottles to keep the area in front of the stages much cleaner, where the customers often enjoyed their drinks while watching the bands. The VIP area was mentioned as well by two customers, both suggesting that they would like next year the VIP customers to be able to see the bands play from the VIP area, as currently, it is not near the two stages, but located in its own area near the restaurant. Most of the respondents were overall satisfied and expressed that there had been nothing more that they would have wanted for the festival to offer and that they had been satisfied what the event had offered.

Next the discussion moved onwards to exceeding expectations and the customers were asked what went better than they had anticipated. Most of the 20 people instantly mentioned the boat ride to the island. It was referred to being exciting, the queuing for the boats having been surprisingly fast and the boat rides in general being a fun and an effortless experience. One person commented that the boat service had been better than the previous year, saying that a clear improvement had been made. The fast service was also mentioned when customers commented on the food and drink lines and some of the respondents evidently had prepared to queue for a long time when being served, as it was a music festival and this was their experience from previous events alike. SaariHelveti 2019 had a broader alcohol serving area than the previous years and 7 people out of the 20 respondents mentioned this positively, stating that this also was an improvement affecting the overall enjoyment of the event. All of the 20 respondents ended

their discussions on a positive comment on the expectations being surpassed or being exactly what they had hoped for. None of the respondents replied that their expectations had not been met, but rather suggested small improvements for the upcoming festival in 2020 on how to exceed their expectations.

The interviews were closed off by asking if the respondent was planning on attending the festival in 2020 again. 11 replied yes, 3 replied maybe, 1 said they do not know yet and 5 interviewees said that their arrival next year depends on the performers. Last, the customers were asked, what bands would they like to see on the program next year and each one could leave their contact information to take part in a raffle where the main prize would be avec tickets for SaariHelvetti 2020, as a thank you for taking part in the interview. The suggestions of performers regarding SaariHelvetti 2020 can be used to plan the content of the upcoming festival and gives insight into what kind of music is popular amongst the target audience of the event.

5 DISCUSSION

The research was partly a successful one as the main purpose of the research was fulfilled, that is, to recognise a method through which an organization can evaluate the service quality of a music festival through the satisfaction of the customers. The SERVQUAL model was an aid in designing interview questions, that could be divided into understandable dimensions, that could then be analysed through similar and different wordings and themes found amongst the responses. Through this, SaariHelvetti music festival has gained insight into the customer satisfaction of the annual festival.

Every face to face interview flowed and ended on a positive note and the visitors of the festival were open to telling their experiences of SaariHelvetti 2019. The customers were not manipulated towards giving certain type of answers to the questions, but were offered to tell their experiences of the festival generally, guided to discuss certain relevant aspects of the event if these did not come up in the conversation naturally. Clear themes could be found from the discussions through similar wordings, justifications for their answers and reasons for their feelings. A great customer experience depends on how it makes one feel and as a customer experience can be recognised as having elements of the physical and the emotional kind, these two elements were taken into account, when guiding the discussions with the research participants (Shaw & Ivens 2002, 4–5).

However, it must be criticised if the SERVQUAL framework is the suitable method in doing so, in the music festival context. Based on the festival factor importance scale question discussed during the interviews, performers, safety and sound quality were seen as the most important factors of a festival for a music festival visitor and these aspects do not exist in the SERVQUAL dimension. These aspects can be placed under each existing dimension based on the definitions of each of the original dimension, but this will drive away the focus from the most important factors of a music festival, as they can then disappear or become a side note of the main dimensions and are not discussed in-depth as themselves. In the music festival context, it needs to be considered, if the SERVQUAL dimensions are too uncertain to fit the service industry. Thus, the uncertainty of the

instrument really fitting the music festival industry cannot prove the research to be a completely successful one.

5.1 Key findings

The results from the individual face to face interviews indicate that the overall satisfaction of the visitors of SaariHelvetti 2019 heavy metal music festival is good. An event service is a variable one, as the perceptions of it can be different depending on separate individuals. Even if the segment is built from a group of people with common interests, the perceptions of the service received may differ greatly. (Raj et al. 2009, 94.) Service quality has to be built around the customer needs and expectations, finding out what the customers want and then trying to fill these expectations (Bergman & Klefsjö 1994, 23). Based on this, it could be seen that when evaluating the service quality of an event, expectations guided the perceptions of the event service, so most of the reasonings and the justifications of the answers were behind reasonable evaluation. These expectations had been built from past experiences at the previous SaariHelvetti festivals, similar music events, recommendations from family and friends and promotional communication. Mainly positive word-of-mouth reaches many of the visitors of the festival and thus, expectations from the customers arriving have been overall positive, as well.

From the interview discussions, it can be seen, that a major strength of SaariHelvetti is the unique location of the festival. Wordings such as special, beautiful and unique came up when describing the festival and the island was brought up the most, when discussing the positive aspects of the festival. The boat ride to the festival was also noted as something out of the ordinary. This is a certain means of competition, as the interviewees compared the music festival location as being superior to that of the competitors without being asked or guided to do so. The island's exclusive location is also seen as an aid in shorter queuing times and more accessible staff members, something that the customers had prepared for, due to previous negative music festival experiences. Customer needs change depending on the environment and the society and companies are using sustainability as a method of differentiating themselves (Robinson et al. 2010, 179). Based on the interviews, SaariHelvetti is being successful in this aspect as many

of the positive themes touched on topics such as the greenness and the cleanliness of the festival area. Moreover, a respondent mentioned recycling and environmental awareness to be a very current trend in music festivals and Viikinsaari being a nature conservation area motivates the visitors to act more responsibly. Being a unique experience outside of the normal heavy metal festival one is something that defines and differentiated the event from the competition and should be used in the brand image consistently.

When discussing the staff of the festival, the terms easy-going and friendly were used the most when describing the reliability as well as the appearance of the personnel. It can be recognised that the professionalism of the employees of a heavy metal festival is not seen as polished and strict as maybe with events from another kind of an industry. In a heavy metal music festival, the laid-back employees are seen fitting for a subculture as such, as according to Williams (2007), some of the core concepts of the culture are style and authenticity (Williams 2007, 578). Friendliness associated with reliability amongst the visitors can also possibly stem from the authenticity factor of the genre. Moreover, the festival was seen as a safe event, as the safety employees were easily reachable. Taking into account the heavy metal culture of mosh pits, a dance style where participants slam into each other, it can be argued that in a heavy metal festival where the said aggressive dance style is a part of the scene, extra focus should be put into safety and security (Mott 2013). Thus, it is positive that the participants of SaariHelvetti view the festival as a safe event, where security is effortless to access.

Most dissatisfaction rose from the food stalls of the festival, a surprising outcome as food and drinks were places as the second least important festival factor. The food offerings were seen as too expensive compared to the competitors and the quality did not match the price of the products, thus, the price did not match the value in the eyes of the visitors. However, this can also indicate positively that the main reason of dissatisfaction amongst the visitors did not arise from one of the main reasons for visiting a music festival, but from less important additional aspects. Furthermore, some of the VIP customers did not feel they received the value for their money, as negative comments concerned the stages not being able to be seen from the VIP ticket owner area. Based on this, it can be argued

that some of the VIP ticket holders' expectations were not met by the service received.

The most important factors of service quality at a music festival affecting the customer satisfaction of the visitors was analysed through a scaling question during the interview, where the respondents were asked to give a number of importance for each festival factor, 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important one. The factors on the list were based on service offerings that are generally seen as being a part of a music festival event, as well as are possible to associate with the SERVQUAL service quality dimensions. Some of the factors do not exist as their own dimensions in the original SERVQUAL instrument dimensions, but as stated earlier, can be placed under these original instruments based on their definitions, when needed.

Based on the scaling question and the answers added up, it was recognised that performers, safety, sound quality and the festival area were recognised as the most valuable and important factors of a music festival, whilst additional program can be recognised as the least important festival factor. Customer service and the food and drink offerings were seen as medium important. The visitors of the festival had little to say about the extra program of SaariHelvetti, such as the burlesque performances, as it was stated by the respondents that the visitors do not have as much time to focus on the additional program, as the main reasons to attend a music festival are the main musical performers. Thus, it can be argued that the main reason for the additional programming to be placed on such a low rank on the scale, is the fact that these programs are additional services at the music festival, not being the main reason that the visitors attend SaariHelvetti.

On the rank of importance, the performers of the festival were ranked as the most important one, one customer commenting how they see no point in attending a music festival, if there are no interesting and relevant artists performing at the event. This result comes as not a surprise for the research, as the event in question is a heavy metal music festival, where the musical performances are the main offering of the festival.

When looking at the SERVQUAL service quality factors and the importance scale of the interviews, tangibles can be recognised as the most important one in a music festival, being that of the physical facilities such as the festival area and equipment such as sound quality. As safety was the second most important factor of importance in a music festival, it can be recognised as the assurance quality factor, focusing on the knowledge and ability to inspire trust in the visitors. Thus, it can be argued that from the SERVQUAL model, tangibles and assurance are the most important service quality factors to affect the customer satisfaction of music festival visitors.

In terms of topic and newness, the suitability of the SERVQUAL model was tried out as itself in the music festival service context, something that has not been researched beforehand. However, the results of this particular research is difficult to compare to the previous studies done on the SERVQUAL theory, as the previous researches have used SERVQUAL in the quantitative context, whereas in the SaariHelvetti research, a qualitative research method was chosen, to gain in-depth insight into the reasons behind the answers, as there was no previous data collected on the customer satisfaction of the SaariHelvetti visitors. Past research has modified the model more fitting into their objectives and purposes, such as FESTPERF, which researched the service quality factors relevant for a festival event, adding such dimensions as professionalism, environment and core service into their modified instrument (Tkaczynski & Stokes 2010, 73). However, it must be emphasised that as the music festival factors recognised as the most important ones for a festival visitor are not their own dimensions in the SERVQUAL instrument, the model cannot possibly offer as relevant information in customer satisfaction research done on a music festival, as needed.

Based on the closing discussions of the interviews, the majority of the visitors either had their expectations exceeded or met. This can be explained through past experience expectations that the customers had set for themselves, that were either positively surpassed or met. This positive customer satisfaction can also be seen from the fact that 11 of the people interviewed replied that they will attend the festival the following year again, satisfied with the service quality of the

event. In conclusion, SaariHelvetti 2019 was a success in terms of customer satisfaction, as the service quality was seen in a positive light by the majority of the people interviewed for the research.

5.2 Reliability and validity

When discussing the reliability and the validity of the research interviews, it has to be noted that this year, SaariHelvetti 2019 gained a total of 5000 customers and only 20 individuals from these visitors were interviewed face to face to gain insight into the customer satisfaction (Mäenpää 2019). For future research suggestions, different research methods such as an online questionnaire can be used as well to reach a more reliable sample.

Concerning the questions regarding the staff and their ability to perform the promised service, only 2 of the 20 respondents had approached a staff member with an actual problem to solve. Based on this, is it difficult to make assumptions on the service quality in this matter, as the responses could have been different, had all of the visitors interviewed dealt with the employees in a customer service situation.

One has to take into consideration the visitors that did not attend the festival this year nor the ones that have attended in the past, but did not take part in the event this year. These opinions cannot be included into the research, but could prove to be relevant for the customer satisfaction research through the possible negative reasons why these individuals did not return to the festival this year or did not attend at all. The good summer weather also has a clear positive effect on the visitors and it is important to remember that the discussions could have been different, had the weather been bad, making the green scenery not as beautiful and the boat ride not as enjoyable, which were both clear factors in building positive experiences amongst the customers of SaariHelvetti 2019. Another problem recognised was that everyone interviewed seemed overall content, which made the in-depth analysis difficult, as the discussions did not offer highly different re-

sponses. In the positive sense, this hints on the fact that the customers are satisfied by the event service quality, but from the research point of view, it does not offer a broad selection of opinions from different mindsets.

5.3 Future recommendations

The results can be used to identify possibly current customer trends, find service weaknesses and assist in developing the future training of the staff, requiring an investment in the people providing the service of the event (Yeoman et al. 2004, 87–88). Based on the customer interviews, generally the festival has a positive customer satisfaction currently.

As quality evaluation should focus on efficiency, effectiveness and customer service, it would be beneficial for Nem Agency Oy to keep researching the customer satisfaction of SaariHelvetti music festival in the following years to come, as well (Jacka & Keller 2002, 34). Positive customer experiences can increase future revenue as well as reduce the costs through a long-term competitive advantage, differentiation and a strong brand, which is why it is important for an event such as SaariHelvetti to recognise the expectations, pre purchase interactions, service consumption and post experience reviews of the event (Shaw & Ivens 2002, 11). A service is inseparable, compared to that of a product, as the service offering cannot be separated from the service being consumed (Raj et al. 2009, 94). Thus, it is relevant for the whole team of event production to know what is being provided for the customer and why, as these service providers take part in the service consumption of the customer (Jacka & Keller 2002, 15).

The replies collected for marketing purposes during the opening and the closing questions will be used in the future for a more targeted customer base, offering new ideas for customer engagement and their expectations for the next SaariHelvetti music festival. Through researching the target audience and the geographics of the individuals interviewed for the research, the organizers of SaariHelvetti are able to target a wider audience through social media, attracting more visitors for the area (Raj et al. 2009, 79). As one of the keys in managing service quality in events is for the managers to be aware of the way the customers

evaluate the quality and how to manage the quality of the event, it is important to establish a quality strategy. This could be done through quality planning, planning and documenting the quality of the service to manage and improve the processes through researching the customer satisfaction of every SaariHelveti music festival to come. (Robinson et al. 2010, 174.) Continuous improvement should become a part of the SaariHelveti festival production as customer needs change, the technology changes and the competition grows (Robinson et al. 2010, 179).

Based on the customer satisfaction results, the festival should next year focus on the two factors that caused the most dissatisfaction; the food stalls and the VIP area. The event could plan to offer a wider selection of food options, some of these options with a lower price than the ones this year, as the food price was said not to match the quality of it. This could be done by obtaining a wider selection of partners for the event or by planning a more versatile menu for the festival with the Viikinsaari restaurant. Regarding the VIP area, the festival could possibly move one of the two stages to another location in 2020, to offer the VIP customers a chance to enjoy some of the performances from their VIP area. Alternatively, the VIP area could be planned to move to a new location, somewhere closer to the stages. This could also be done by building a second area for the VIP customers, one close to the stages, to offer the VIP ticket holders the option to watch the bands from their own location. This would not exclude the calmer current area near the festival restaurant, as some VIP customers might prefer this location for other reasons than the ones dissatisfied with the location.

As research provides a link between the customers and the organization understanding the customer needs of an event visitor, it can be used to improve the service quality through recognising possible shortcoming. However, research has its limitations and it is preferred to use more than one method, when looking into the satisfaction of the customers. (Yeoman et al. 2004, 87.) Based on this, it should be noted that in the upcoming SaariHelveti 2020 festival, it would be beneficial to do possibly an online questionnaire of the quantitative research kind to go alongside the qualitative face to face interviews to gain more insight into a bigger sample of the visitors.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

The SERVQUAL service quality dimensions could be used on the research to build the interview questions for a music festival, but might not bring forth relevant enough information concerning the customer satisfaction of the festival visitors. This can be judged based on the important festival factors scaling responses, as the recognised most important factors do not exist in the original dimensions. In the future, another method might be more suitable in the music festival context, such as FESTPERF. The findings of the research can be utilised in the future, when planning a customer-oriented research for music festivals.

The research looked into how an organization can evaluate the service quality of the festival according to the customer satisfaction, but did not examine the next step of managing the service quality through actual actions to improve the found shortcomings. The research could therefore be continued by researching methods to manage these service quality factors.

Furthermore, as stated above, a research with a richer amount of data would provide a larger amount of relevant information regarding the satisfaction of the visitors. Data collection and analysing is a key in monitoring and improving the performance of an organization through set targets. If these improvement targets are not met, the quality of the service might fall. (Yeoman et al. 2004, 87.) A customer satisfaction survey with similar interviews like these collected for the research could be done annually to ensure that the improvement is continuous and becomes a part of service quality management for the festival organizers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. SaariHelvetti customer satisfaction interview sheet in Finnish



ASIAKASTYYTYVÄISYYSKYSELY

ALOITUSKYSYMYKSET

Ikä

Sukupuoli

Kotipaikkakunta

Oletko ensimmäistä kertaa SaariHelvetissä? Jos olet aiemmin käynyt, montako kertaa?

Omistatko lipun yhdelle päivälle vai molemmille?

Miten kuulit festivaalista?

Millainen mielikuvasi oli SaariHelvetistä ennen tänne saapumista?

Mitä yhtyettä odotat eniten?

Minkä muun genren musiikkia kuuntelet kuin hevimetallia?

HAASTATTELUKYSYMYKSET

YMPÄRISTÖ

Kertoisitko yleisesti kokemuksiasi festariympäristöstä?

Onko jotakin, jota kaipaisit vielä festivaalialueelle?

LUOTETTAVUUS

Mitä mieltä olet henkilökunnan luotettavuudesta?

REAGOINTI ALTTIUS

Mikä on kokemuksesi festivaalin palvelun nopeudesta?

VAIKUTTAVUUS

Mitä mieltä olet henkilökunnan asiantuntevuudesta?

EMPATIA

Voitko kertoa yleisesti kokemuksistasi henkilökohtaisesta palvelusta festareilla?

Jos täytyisi antaa arvio asteikolla 1 – 5 (1 ei tärkeä, 5 erittäin tärkeä), minkä numeron antaisit seuraavien asioiden tärkeydelle musiikkifestivaaleilla?

artistikattaus	
äänenlaatu	
festivaaliympäristö	
asiakaspalvelun laatu	
turvallisuus	
ruoka ja juoma tarjonta	
oheisohjelma	

LOPETUSKYSYMYKSET

Mitä jäit kaipaamaan festivaaleilta?

Mikä onnistui paremmin kuin odotit?

Tuletko uudelleen ensi vuonna?

Onko jotakin bändiä/artistia, jota toivoisit ensi vuoden SaariHelvettiin?

Nimi ja sähköpostiosoite, jos haluat osallistua arvontaan, jossa mahdollisuutena on voittaa avec lippu SaariHelvetti 2020 festareille:

KIITOS!

Appendix 2. SaariHelvetti customer satisfaction interview sheet in English



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INTERVIEW

Age

Gender

Where are you from?

OPENING QUESTIONS

Was this your first time visiting SaariHelvetti? If you have been before, how many times?

Do you have a ticket for one day or for both days?

How did you hear about the festival?

What expectations did you have about SaariHelvetti, before arriving?

What band are you most looking forward to seeing?

What other genres do you listen to other than heavy metal?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

TANGIBLES

Could you describe your experiences related to the festival area?

Is there something else that you had wished the area would have had?

RELIABILITY

What do you think of the reliability of the staff?

RESPONSIVENESS

What is your experience of the festival's service speed and responsiveness?

ASSURANCE

What do you generally think of the professionalism of the staff members?

EMPATHY

Can you generally describe your experiences of personalization within the festival?

If you should rate from 1 to 5 (1 being not at all important and 5 being very important), what number of importance would you give to each factor of a music festival?

performers	
sound quality	
the festival area	
customer service	
safety	
food and drink	
extra program	

CLOSING QUESTIONS

What did you wish the festival would have had more?

What went better than you expected?

Will you come again next year?

Is there an artist/band you would like to see on stage next year?

Name and email address, if you want to take part in a competition to win an avec ticket for SaariHelvetti 2020 music festival:

THANK YOU!