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## The role of experience in facilitating networking in a B2B context

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# **The role of experience in facilitating networking in a B2B context**

**PhD thesis**

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# Abstract

This PhD thesis aims to elucidate the role of experience in facilitating networking in a B2B context. This aim is achieved by explaining what the facilitators of networking at a film festival are, how these facilitators operate and contribute to stakeholders' (filmmakers and commissioners) experiences of a film festival, and the nature and characteristics of those experiences. The study takes an interpretive approach to understanding the experiences of business professionals and therefore draws on data from semistructured interviews with 50 participants and observations undertaken at three film festivals. The interviews were both face-to-face and through video VoIP; the VoIP software used in this study was Skype. The participants were recruited mainly using snowball sampling. The results of this study highlight the importance and role of mundane experience and ordinary pleasure in facilitating networking opportunities. That hedonic experience is important in B2B networking is acknowledged in the existing literature, and this study identifies the particular facilitators of such extraordinary experiences: a relaxed ambience, a sense of festivity, the presence of alcohol, scheduling of film exhibitions and the surrounding landscapes. However, the pleasure that facilitates networking comes not only from extraordinary but also mundane experiences. The facilitators of mundane experience and ordinary pleasure (organised formal meetings, synchronisation of meetings and exhibitions, availability of equipment and resources and appropriate infrastructure, food and beverages, access to Internet/Wi-Fi, process and mass-customisation) create a sense of ease and convenience, which enables B2B professionals to network effectively. By framing the business professionals as consumers, this thesis contributes to the field of experiential marketing by recognising the importance of hedonic rather than just utilitarian experiences in the B2B context. The findings also show that the hedonic experiences that facilitate B2B networking and relationships at B2B events are co-created rather than staged or facilitated. Incidental and spontaneous encounters are key enablers of hedonic experiences, which in turn spark new ideas and facilitate B2B networking and relationships. A limitation of this study is that because of the narrow focus on documentary film festivals, the generalisability of the results on other industry professionals, non-documentary film festivals and other festivals and networking events in other industries and sectors is not possible.

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Introduction**

Networking offers opportunities for businesses to interact and develop relationships with other businesses, whether they are competitors, customers or potential cooperators (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000, and Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008). The importance of networking in business-to-business (hereafter B2B) contexts has been widely studied and is well documented (see Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Corsaro et al., 2011; and Mitrega et al., 2012). Business-to-business (hereafter ‘B2B’) networking and relationship development are important not only at the industry level but also for professionals at an individual level, for goals such as career progression (Wilson & Millman, 2003; Tonge, 2010; and Elg et al., 2012). Despite its importance, there is scant research on what facilitates networking in the context of B2B relationships. While most of the literature treats B2B networking as fairly instrumental in motivation and character, Cayla et al. (2013) have identified that in fact, experience, particularly hedonic experience, is important in facilitating networking and relationships. Existing literature has shown market-based experiences can be both ordinary and extraordinary in nature (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Holbrook, 2000; Carù & Cova, 2003; and Miller, 2009; 2010), but there has been a tendency to emphasise the extraordinary origin and nature of hedonic experience.

Thus, in spite of the growing interest from academics and researchers in understanding experiences, most research focuses on instances of consumption experience. Scant attention has been given to experiences in the context of B2B relationships, particularly the role of hedonic experiences in professional networking and the nature of such experiences. Cayla et al. (2013), for example, look at B2B parties at tennis tournaments, and therefore, their conceptualisation does not embrace aspects of festivals, particularly film festivals. There is still a gap in understanding how pleasure facilitates B2B networking at festivals, how those facilitators relate to each other and how such facilitators come into being. So in this thesis, I will address these and examine the importance and role of hedonic experiences, including ordinary

hedonic experiences, in B2B networking, focusing particularly on the features of B2B events that facilitate such experiences and how these experiences then influence networking. To investigate this phenomenon, the contexts of the film industry and film festivals were chosen. A wealth of studies have found networks and networking to be fundamental to career progression in the film industry (Storper & Christopherson, 1987; Krätke, 2002; Blair et al., 2003; Christopherson & Righthor, 2010; and Currid-Halkett & Ravid, 2012). These studies have established the importance of networking in getting into the industry, finding jobs and developing strong working relationships. However, prior studies do not focus on the ‘how’ of network building from a micro level of analysis.

## **1.2. Aims and Objective**

The aim of this research is to explore the role of experience in facilitating networking in a B2B context. This will be achieved by addressing the following research objectives and questions:

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>
1. Explore the facilitators of networking at a film festival	1. What are the facilitators of networking at a film festival?
2. Understand how the facilitators of networking operate and contribute to stakeholders’ experience of a film festival	2. How do the facilitators of networking operate and contribute to stakeholders’ experience of a film festival?
3. Find out the nature and characteristics of stakeholders’ film festival experiences	3. What are the nature and characteristics of stakeholders’ film festival experiences?

## **1.3. Importance of This Thesis**

Existing literature has shown experience can be ordinary as well as extraordinary in nature; examples are studies by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), Holbrook (2000), Carù and Cova (2003) and Miller (2009 and 2010). However, there is limited research that looks into the relationship between mundane and experiential consumption in both B2C (Business to Customer) and B2B (Business to Business) context, i.e., the hedonic consumption from ordinary aspects of consumption, from an experiential perspective. There is also a lack of research in understanding how

hedonic consumption from ordinary pleasure facilitates business-centric activities such as networking and collaboration. This thesis contributes by elucidating the importance and role of hedonic experiences and pleasure from mundane experiences, particularly in relation to business-centric events. While doing so, it also helps to understand that consumption experience is a phenomenon that is not always directed toward the pursuit of fantasies, extraordinary feelings and fun. This is because the ultimate satisfactory experience also comes from the easy and convenient fulfilment of mundane aspects. Yet these experiences are hedonic and pleasure-seeking in nature, which is often co-created at the film festivals. It also contributes by highlighting how the facilitators work together to facilitate experience important to improve networking opportunities.

Researchers have now started to understand and acknowledge the importance of co-creating experiences in the marketplace. For example, see Holbrook (2000), Carù and Cova (2003), McKechnie and Tynan (2008), Tynan and McKechnie (2009a and 2009b), Chen et al. (2012), Seo (2013) and Minkiewicz et al. (2014) who explore and argue the the co-creation of experiences between consumers and providers is relevant and significant for all parties involved. In spite of the growing interest from academics and researchers in *co-creating experiences*, there is little research on this in the context of B2B networking and of course in relation to the film industry. This thesis addresses this gap by exploring the importance of co-creation of experience and how it results in achieving important planned and incidental (or spontaneous) B2B objectives. The contributions of this study include building on Tynan and McKechnie's (2009a) paper (which is about the role of service-dominant logic in experience marketing) and finding out that the co-creation of experience leads to networking and new collaboration and hence allows career progression and business development in the film industry. While doing this, this thesis shows how co-creation of experiences between B2B professionals leads to the 'sparking of new ideas' in addition to exploring the challenges of multifarious contexts of consumption experiences.

In undertaking this research, film festival attendees (professionals attending the B2B networking event) are framed as consumers. In the wider B2B literature, it is

not common to consider such participants as consumers because they are attending for the purposes of work. In doing so, we benefit from the analytical lens that this offers. Looking at these participants in terms of consumption rather than as ‘doing business’ offers the opportunity to draw on wider literature and reconceptualises these experiences. It is helpful because it shows that professionals are affected by similar pleasure-centric experiences that influences consumers. Just as B2C customers are humans, B2B professionals are too, and pleasure is an important part of human life. Taking this approach helps to explore what facilitates better networking and collaboration opportunities for professionals at the documentary film festivals. It helped to understand the facilitators (for networking) as experiential and hedonic in nature, and they are linked to the social milieu.

While the importance of networking has been widely studied, there is still scant research on what facilitates networking not only in context specific to festivals and film festivals but in general too. Both practitioners as well as academics emphasise why networking is important in today’s business environment. Networking in the current global environment offers an opportunity for businesses to interact with other businesses, both competitors and potential cooperators (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008). The importance of networking in business is well documented in the current literature on networking in B2B and industrial marketing topics; examples are Ritter (1999), Bengtsson and Kock, (2000), Ford and Mouzas (2010), Corsaro et al. (2011), Hu and Stanton (2011) and Mitrega et al. (2012). The importance of networking for career progression has also been highlighted in papers by Wilson and Millman (2003), Tonge (2010) and Elg et al. (2012). It is not only in general but also in relation to the film industry that the importance of networking has been well documented. As mentioned earlier (Section 1.1.), Storper and Christopherson (1987), Krätke (2002), Blair et al. (2003), Cattani and Ferriani (2008), Christopherson and Righthor (2010), Currid-Halkett and Ravid (2012) and Grugulis and Stoyanova (2012) have all shown **that** networking is important in the film industry because it helps in finding jobs and career progression. Similarly, relevant public bodies in the UK and the European Union, such as the MEDIA Unit in the European Commission and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in the UK, have also stressed the importance of networking in the film industry.

These are the reasons why film festivals are increasingly facilitating networking opportunities for the industry. For example, at Galway's Film Fleadh (in Ireland), the main activity is to showcase international films, yet the festival offers additional networking events (Galway Film Fleadh, 2011a). Other examples of business-oriented film festivals include the Sheffield International Documentary Festival ([www.sheffdocfest.com](http://www.sheffdocfest.com)), South by Southwest ([www.sxsw.com](http://www.sxsw.com)), Berlinale Co-Production Market ([www.efm-berlinale.de](http://www.efm-berlinale.de)), Edinburgh International Film Festival ([www.edfilmfest.org.uk](http://www.edfilmfest.org.uk)) and Raindance ([www.raindance.org](http://www.raindance.org)). Film festivals are taking proactive role to facilitate business-to-business (B2B) networking opportunities besides film exhibitions. Film festivals have 'grown tenfold in last three decades', but research on film festivals is limited (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009, p. 1). Although thousands of film festivals have appeared, many have disappeared since the phenomenon began in the 1930s (Rhyne, 2009, p. 9). Research on film festivals is therefore very important to not only help such events but also for the industry in general.

Researching specifically what facilitates networking will not only help in developing a conceptual framework of the facilitators of networking but will also explain how they relate to one another. An understanding of this can underpin recommendations to improve networking. It will also help practitioners organise better film festivals. This thesis aims to address these gaps and contributes by identifying the facilitators of networking at film festivals and providing an understanding of how they operate. This thesis particularly contributes by exploring the experiential facilitators for networking. While scholars such as Velthuis (2003), Currid (2007) and Ooi (2010) linked networking to socialisation, Kozinets (2002), McKechnie and Tynan (2008) and Tynan and McKechnie (2009b) have shown the relationship between socialisation and pleasure. However, there is a lack of research that looks at the relationship between networking and pleasure, which, as argued in this thesis, can be best understood through an experiential lens. This research contributes by looking at the experiential facilitators for networking and finding the importance of both mundane and extraordinary pleasure in the facilitation of networking.



## 1.4. Background

### 1.4.1. *Business at Festivals*

The use of festivals for trade in Europe can be traced to Normans, who ‘stimulated trade in the areas under their control in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by the establishment of great fairs’ (Maitiú, 1996, p. 21). These fairs were venues of enjoyment and entertainment where trade was done amidst pleasure and fun. Because of their inherent pleasure-centric versatile character, festivals not only provide platforms where trade (buying and selling) and business transactions can be executed in the festival premises (for example, the trade fairs of Normans and the Inupiaq Eskimo Messenger Feast (Fair, 2000)) but also help promote products (for example, promotion of wine in Australia at wine- and/or food-related festivals (Famularo et al., 2010)). These are just some of the ways in which festivals can directly influence trade and commerce.

In late medieval England, festivals were used for trade and exchange of secondhand goods. Davis’s (2010) review of ‘regulations, court rolls, wills, manorial accounts, literature, and even archaeology’ of the years between 1200 to 1500 AD showed how marketing of secondhand goods in late medieval England was carried out. Referring to *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries . . . AD 1276–1419* by Riley (1868), Davis (2010) states that ‘Westchepe on Sundays and other festival days’ (p. 275) were used to sell secondhand goods in an enjoyable environment.

Amusements and entertainment, as well as the consequent pleasure within a festive environment, attract large crowds; therefore, merchants and vendors can gather in that setting to take advantage of it (Milman, 2010). The availability of a larger number of prospective customers at one place can offer good business opportunities to traders. For example, Harborplace in Baltimore, Maryland (USA), is a festival market that attracts visitors not only for entertainment and recreation but also for purchasing various goods and services (Maronick, 2007). Another example is the Inupiaq Eskimo Messenger Feast, which ‘was an institutionalised festival event in the historic times . . . through which rival groups, as well as allies, maintained

formalized means of sharing, trading, gaming, courting and exchanging information' (Fair, 2000, p. 464). Trading festivals tied to Messenger Feast in particular regions were celebrated throughout Alaska and in the North; trading and transactions were usually followed by dancing, gaming and other forms of enjoyment (Fair, 2000). Therefore, use of festivals for trade and business in addition to pleasure, enjoyment and entertainment appears to be very common among the Eskimos of the North.

Crowther's (2011) paper states that festivals that are social and offer entertainment and escapism from normal routine can 'offer an intimate, and potentially seductive, environment through which to activate a range of sales-related objectives' (p. 77). The pleasure is therefore an inherent characteristic of festivals. According to Crowther (2011), such events can offer an effective platform for trade and commerce because they facilitate a conduit for face-to-face interaction between the provider and their customers, and face-to-face contact is a powerful interactive medium to do business. The experiential (i.e., hedonic) and interactive character of festivals can play a very important role not only in selling products to new customers but also in gaining customers' loyalty. In spite of being a *temporary* event, fairs and festivals are able to efficiently 'support processes of interactive learning, knowledge creation and the formation of international *networks*', which are crucial marketing activities (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008, p. 855).

Trade-centric festivals are effective platforms where participants can exchange information with their target audience, develop relationships and network with important stakeholders (Smith et al., 2003) not in a formal but in an informal and pleasurable environment. The trade-centric festivals are often called 'trade fairs', and in these fairs, actors are able to gather their respective industries or lines of business and are able to develop *complex cooperation* and *multiple networks* with both '*local and non-local*' partners (Ramírez-Pasillas, 2010). For example, Ramírez-Pasillas's (2010) statistical data from the Lammhult cluster (a small community of 2,000 inhabitants with a dominant furniture industry in southern Sweden) has shown that 'firms were directly or indirectly inter-connected (*networked*) with other firms participating at ITFs (International Trade Fairs)' (p. 175). Therefore, participation in industry festivals and fairs offers the opportunity to meet and network with important

actors from an industry who gather at the same place at one point in time, and the relationships developed in trade fairs can be with both local and global partners, and all these happen pleurably and enjoyably.

Blythe (2010) refers to two types of visitors (tyre kickers, who do not intend to buy but pretend to do so, and day trippers, who simply want a day out for enjoyment), and he states that their reasons for attending fairs and fests could include *entertainment* and *enjoying* a day out, i.e., having a *break from daily routine*. This is unlike offices that have a relatively more formal environment. Williams and Dargel (2004, p. 312) state that places that have pleasant environments encourage people to ‘want to *spend longer in and to return*’ whereas unpleasant environments are avoided. Festivals allow exhibitors and visitors to carry out business in a relatively relaxed, entertaining and therefore pleasant environment. Therefore, a pleasant environment, as well as the opportunity to meet both local and global stakeholders/actors at one place and the ability to cooperate with one another, makes festivals and fairs conducive environments for networking.

So the long history of combining business and pleasure at festivals suggests the importance of pleasure in business networking. Chapter 2 elaborates further on the significance of festivals historically, where there has been a combination of business and pleasure, but this aspect has been largely overlooked in the existing literature. What this results in is a theoretical gap in terms of our understanding of the role and the nature of festivals in contemporary society. In other words, historical evidence and instances suggest festivals as a venue for combining business and pleasure, but the existing literature does not sufficiently acknowledge and/or elaborate on this. This further justifies the context of film festivals in my research instead of using any other B2B networking event.

#### ***1.4.2. Business at Film Festivals***

Film festivals are held at an

established venue usually organised around screening and prizes, dedicated to introducing movies of a certain style to a paying audience, attended by distribution executives seeking product and by opinion makers and journalists seeking stories, as well as a paying audience; prizewinners gain industry attention and the ability to advertise their prizes in the publicity campaigns as a 'stamp of approval' recognized by eclectic moviegoers. (Montal, 2004, p. 316)

Sheetman (2005) argues that (international) film festivals 'are entangled spaces in which filmmakers and audiences negotiate aesthetic, ethical, political, and practical traditions and communities' (p. 252). Film festivals have an old and rich history which dates back to the early twentieth century. The oldest is the Venice Film Festival, established in the 1930s by the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini; the Cannes Film Festival is the second oldest, debuting in 1946; and the third oldest is the Berlin Film Festival, launched in 1951 (Pratley & Klady, 1998, p. 2; Gore, 2001, p. 13). These three film festivals are still in business. However, film festivals have both proliferated and changed, and those which were once influenced by art and politics no longer dominate the film festival sector (Baillieu & Goodchild, 2002). This is because film festivals have drifted from traditional culture and politics towards more of an entertainment and business model. Gore (2001) observes that film festivals in the current era are a 'veritable market of celluloid, wherein dreams are bought and sold; lives are made and destroyed' (p. 15), but besides all this, they are an exciting game of business.

According to Montal (2004, p. 316), film festivals can benefit the film industry as a marketplace, bringing global buyers and sellers together to encourage deals that might otherwise require lot of travel and far-flung communications. Similarly, Hudson and Tung (2010) argue that attending and exhibiting at film exhibitions is effective because it offers an opportunity for one-to-one direct marketing in a highly charged environment. Montal (2004) further states that film festivals, in addition to providing a cost-effective market (for sales and transactions

related activities), also offer efficient publicity for films and facilitate networking in the film industry. Film festivals provide an alternative distribution network where filmmakers can gain an audience for their films, develop their reputation within the industry and possibly find a commercial partner, such as a sales agent, distributor or financier. In addition to filmmakers, technology organisations regard film festivals as ideal venues where they can promote their products and services, hence, for example, Ger (2009) notes how Sony uses festivals as an alternative to other forms of advertising or public relations to connect with festival goers in a more cost-efficient way. Also, 'to promote Hong Kong to overseas producers, HKFSO (Hong Kong Film Services Office) regularly participates in many trade shows and film festivals including the AFCI and the Busan International Film Commission Locations Trade Shows, and the Berlinale and Cannes Film Festivals' (Hudson & Tung, 2010, p. 199). Another example noted by Hudson and Tung is the Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission (NIFC), which used the 2004 Cannes Film Festival to hold a press conference to announce a production fund aimed at attracting filmmakers to use Northern Irish locations. This shows that many entities (such as film commissions) are already using film festivals to promote their own interests.

Because of the apparent advantages of festivals, they can significantly contribute to the commerce and trade of the film industry. For example, according to Madichie's (2010) findings, the lack of global box office appeal of Nigerian (Nollywood) films cannot be detached from the poor marketing strategies (i.e., poor marketing communication and product design and placement strategy) they adopted. To address this problem, Madichie recommends that

Nigerian movie producers (and directors), distributors, marketers and all other stakeholders – must organize national, regional and international networks and/or networking *events* in order to ensure that Nollywood movies have the requisite forum for shared access (marketing communications especially), ideas and more importantly technology and technical know-how (product strategies and production methods). (Madichie, 2010, p. 646)

According to Durie et al. (2000, p. 53–56), film festivals can be useful for filmmakers by attracting the attention of distributors and large sales companies, who

use such film markets to become informed of what is in the pipeline and update their knowledge of film trends, as well as buying and selling films. Festivals can offer an effective marketplace because they provide a highly charged environment with likeminded people congregating at the same place (Hudson & Tung, 2010). The importance of film festivals as marketplaces is such that festivals like the London Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, whose aim is to provide the gay community with a ‘space where they can see films that speak to them about their lives and their identities and issues in a safe and welcoming environment’, has ‘worked very closely with many distributors over the years’ (Robinson, 2007). Robinson (2007) notes that many programmers from other festivals or film distributors looking for films to show or distribute attend the London Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.

Therefore, film festivals are rich pastures that offer a favourable environment for B2B networking in the film industry. Not only policymakers (as mentioned earlier) but also industry professionals and leading business entities are using film festivals to build relationships and network, besides making real-time transactions. Particularly in the film industry, it is an ideal place to network for all business activities and interests related to film. Film festivals offer this opportunity to network in an informal environment rather than a formal setting. However, as illustrated in Chapter 2, current research on film festivals do not sufficiently combine a focus on ‘doing business’ with an understanding of the hedonic nature of such festivals. Therefore, there is a need to develop a more comprehensive theory incorporating both hedonic and mundane aspects of experiences to offer insight into the nature of doing business at film festivals. In doing so, this study has relevance beyond the film industry through an understanding of how business and pleasure are linked in the context of networking.

## **1.5. Summary**

To address the gap outlined in existing literature, this thesis starts with an overview of existing research into festivals generally, with a specific focus on film festivals. This illustrates the divergent literature that contributes to our understanding of the nature and role of festivals and film festivals, clearly highlighting the gap that exists with regard to developing a holistic theory of ‘doing business’ at these film festivals. This leads us to a review of the literature on experiential marketing, which provides the theoretical framework for this thesis before outlining the methodological approach and research methods used to address the research questions. Following this, the chapters will explain, analyse and discuss the results from the primary research. The first of these findings and discussion chapters is on the importance and role of hedonic experiences for B2B networking, followed by a chapter on the importance and role of mundane experiences, and the last of these is on the nature and characteristics of these experiences. The final chapter summarises the findings of the study, highlights the contributions and implications and outlines the limitations and scopes for future research.

## **2. Film Festivals**

### **2.1. Introduction**

To understand how business is done at film festivals, it is important to explore previous research, which has taken festivals and film festivals in particular as its focus. This illustrates the divergent nature of such research, which focuses on the social, hedonic or business nature of film festivals. In saying this, these studies collectively provide a good working framework for understanding the production and consumption of festivals while identifying a research gap with regard to the centrality of film festivals for doing the business of film and furthermore, to unpack these B2B interactions further. This chapter begins with a review of literature conceptualising festivals in general, and then film festivals in particular. I then write about background, statistical trends, key events, key stakeholders and types of film festivals. To help develop the classification/types of film festivals, this chapter reviews the existing literature on festivals in general to identify the different roles of festivals. Finally, this chapter ends with a summary.

### **2.2. Conceptualising Festivals**

Festivals are not a new phenomenon but an integral part of human civilisation. Sumerians of southern Mesopotamia, one of the oldest known civilisations, which existed between 2500 and 2000 BC (Brown Reference Group, 2008), are known to have celebrated the Akitu Festival (Başgöz, 1967; Sherwin-White, 1983; and Lendering, 2010). Similarly, the festival of the Olympic Games, which ‘were closely linked to the religious festivals of the cult of Zeus’, had a ‘secular character’ and marked the accomplishments of young men ‘as well as encouraging good relations between the cities of Greece (ancient)’ (www.olympic.org, 2011). Also, the Pentecost (descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus Christ’s apostles) Festival in São Luís, Brazil, attracts participants of all ages, genders and statuses who get immersed, enjoy and celebrate through ‘sound (music), appetising smells and visual stimuli’ (p.



8) and, of course, dancing (Reily, 1994). Therefore, festivals have long been an important part of human society and civilisation.

The term *festival* can be traced in Latin words *festum*, which means ‘public happiness’ and ‘an event that is jolly and playful’, and *feira*, which refers to absenteeism from work to honour the gods. Therefore, both Latin words portray festive happenings (Falassi, 1987). Over the years, the term *festival* has been used in multiple contexts since functions vary from ‘celebration . . . (to) education, marketing, competition, business, politics, entertainment, fun, and games’, and its roles and meanings are evolving within the aspect of festivity (Getz et al., 2010, p. 31). Similarly, Finkel (2009) states that the motivations to establish festivals could range from community-based aesthetic purposes to politically instrumental and commercial intentions. Therefore, festivals have multiple motivations and purposes, ranging from public enjoyment to commerce.

Jaeger and Mykletun (2009, p. 332) see a festival as ‘a *public, themed* celebration with a formal program. It has a *core activity* (which is aligned with the primary objective of the festival, for example, documentary film festivals will exhibit documentary films) and *additional activities*. The festival has a *timescale*, in which it accomplishes both the core activity and the additional activities’ (2009, p. 332). This means it is *temporary* in nature. Furthermore, based on empirical observations in Norway, Jaeger and Mykletun (2009) found that although festivals are mainly categorised as music, arts, sports or market festivals, the largest groups of festivals were *thematic* festivals. Thematic festivals are specialised festivals and have mostly ideological reasons behind their creation, for example, celebrating and displaying one particular culture. For example, although the overarching theme of the Burning Man Festival appears to be ‘anti-market’ (Kozinets, 2002), every year a different theme is adopted, such as ‘Caravansary’ in 2014 (Burning Man, 2014).

Manning (1983) states that festival celebrations have four main characteristics, namely *performance*, *enjoyment*, *public* and *participatory*. In comparison to those identified in the previous paragraph, Manning’s characteristics highlight the social, hedonic and experiential aspects (these aspects will be discussed

in detail while reviewing the literature on experiential marketing in later sections) of the festival. According to Manning (1983), performance is an important aspect in festivals; for example, it may entail dramatic displays of culture. Entertainment gives enjoyment and fun, but it could be ‘tinctured, consciously or unconsciously, with ideological significance or pragmatic intent’ (Manning, 1983, p. 4). Pleasure from entertainment is not necessarily linked to pragmatic and rational decision-making (this will be discussed in detail while reviewing the literature on experiential marketing in later sections), and therefore, this suggests that pragmatism contradicts with entertainment, which could be problematic. The centrality of the public is also very important, as social celebrations cannot take place in social exclusion or isolation, and finally, it is important that celebrations are participatory since ‘celebration actively involves its constituency; it is not simply a show put on for disengaged spectators’ (Manning, 1983, p. 4). Therefore, during a festival, the *public participates in a performance that is enjoyable*.

Drawing on Pine and Gilmore (1998), Jaeger and Mykletun (2009) explain how festivals offer an *experience* to the *participating* stakeholders. Looking at Manning’s (1983) characteristics, it is clear that these—performance, enjoyment, social aspects and the participatory nature of the festivals’ celebrations—are ones that individuals experience. Jaeger and Mykletun’s (2009) argument on experiential offerings of festivals to participatory stakeholders coalesces with Manning’s (1983) characteristics. Pine and Gilmore (1999) state that guests (who are important stakeholders in festivals according to Karlsen and Nordstrom (2009)) can participate both actively and passively to engage in an experience. Also, participation from engaged, interested and important stakeholders is very important at festivals (Manning, 1983, p. 4). Therefore, stakeholders play an important role. Paying too little attention to different stakeholders may have adverse effects on festivals, for example, fewer visitors and even poorer revenues (Mossberg & Getz, 2006).

Using multiple case studies from Sweden, Norway and Finland, Karlsen and Nordstrom’s (2009) qualitative study found that festivals tend to cooperate with multiple stakeholders (for example, employees, volunteers, sponsors and attendees), who may assume multiple roles, for example, stakeholders (such as the local

authority) may play the role of advisors, coproducers, facilitators, suppliers and/or regulators in the festival. This further illustrates Jaeger and Mykletun (2009) and Manning's (1983) emphasis on participation and stakeholders; in other words, festivals' characteristics include a reliance on participatory stakeholders. While Jaeger and Mykletun (2009) and Manning (1983) particularly focused on the participation of the audience/guests of festivals, Karlsen and Nordstrom (2009) show that other stakeholders are important too, and their participation is dependent on mutual benefit. Festivals and the stakeholders enter into relationships 'in which they would cooperate in mutually beneficial ways and become interdependent' (Karlsen & Nordstrom, p. 139). For example, while festivals benefit from restaurants' supply, restaurants benefit from commercial gains because of the festival. This interdependence and mutually beneficial relationship are not specific to festivals, but this example illustrates Karlsen and Nordstrom's (2009) argument on how stakeholders' cooperation, other than customers, audience and guests of the festivals, is also important. Finally, Karlsen and Nordstrom's (2009) study found that 'the festivals were seen to engage in long-stretched, "loose" and glocal (locally as well as internationally bound) networks' (p. 130). Karlsen and Nordstrom's (2009) paper illustrates how a festival is a product of complex cooperation and multiple networks among various stakeholders. Therefore, festivals' character includes *mutual dependence* on/among *multiple stakeholders* (who may assume multiple roles) and *networks* (long-stretched, 'loose' and glocal). This, therefore, not only adds to the characteristics found by Manning (1983) and Jaeger and Mykletun (2009) but also highlights their explanation on the participatory characteristics of festivals.

These general characteristics of festivals provide insight into the nature and character of documentary film festivals. Documentary film festivals are increasingly organised, hosted and managed to fulfil various functions, varying from celebration of filmmaking to film exhibition and business networking. Festivals help in bringing the film community together, and at the same time, they also serve a number of commercial purposes, for example, transactions, pitching sessions and securing funding. This is the reason why documentary film festivals tend to have core activities, for example, showing films along with a number of additional activities, such as networking and/or other sessions. Film festivals are not closed but open

communal platforms which involve participation and cooperation from a number of stakeholders, for instance, filmmakers, organisers and commissioners. To ensure that film festivals are venues of celebration and stakeholders (particularly the audience/guests) experience pleasure from their participation, performance and enjoyment need to be an important part of the festival schedules. These performances and enjoyments, for instance, in the form of cocktail parties, cultural shows, live music and late night discos, are important parts of the festival schedules, as is evident in the programme lists of reputed documentary film festivals such as the Sheffield Doc Film Fest, the True/False Film Fest and the HotDocs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival. As evident in their respective websites, these events often serve as platforms for networking as well.



**Exhibit 2-1 Sheffield DocFest (Sheffield DocFest, 2015)**



**Exhibit 2-2 Scene at the Toronto Documentary Forum at HotDocs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival (Indiewire, 2010)**



**Exhibit 2-3 Scene from networking parties at True/False Film Fest (Missouriglobal, 2013)**

## **2.3. Film Festivals**

### ***2.3.1. Background***

Film festivals have an old and rich history which dates back to the early twentieth century. The oldest is the Venice Film Festival, established in the 1930s by the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini; the Cannes Film Festival is the second oldest, debuting in 1946; and the third oldest is the Berlin Film Festival, launched in 1951 (Pratley & Klady, 1998, p. 2, and Gore, 2001, p. 13). These three film festivals are still in business. However, film festivals have both proliferated and changed, and those which were once influenced by art and politics no longer dominate the film festival sector (Baillieu & Goodchild, 2002). This is because film festivals have drifted from traditional art and politics towards more of an entertainment and business model. Gore observes that film festivals in the current era are a ‘veritable market of celluloid, wherein dreams are bought and sold; lives are made and destroyed’ (2001, p. 15), but besides all this, they are an exciting game of business.

### ***2.3.2. Statistical trends***

Thousands of film festivals have been organised globally, and many have disappeared since the Venice Film Festival was organised in the 1930s by the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini (Rhyne, 2009). There are no accurate statistics on film festivals because they are temporary events that appear and disappear, and there is no single agency that keeps an account of all of them. The research on film festivals is also very limited (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009). In the case of documentary film

festivals, there is even less information on statistical trends. However, in general, there are over 4,000 film festivals according to the website [www.filmfestivals.com](http://www.filmfestivals.com).

### **2.3.3. *Key events at film festivals***

Film festivals usually have a *core event*, namely film screenings, and *additional events*, such as film marketing, networking activities, seminars and talk shows. For example, at Galway's Film Fleadh (in Ireland), the main event is to showcase international films, yet the festival hosts additional events such as master classes, public interviews, debates, workshops, seminars (Galway Film Fleadh, 2011a), and it offers a venue where films/projects can be bought and sold (Galway Film Fleadh, 2011b). Similarly, core and additional events can be found in many other film festivals, for example, the Sheffield Doc/Fest ([www.sheffdocfest.com](http://www.sheffdocfest.com)), the Berlin International Film Festival ([www.berlinale.de](http://www.berlinale.de)), the Cannes Film Festival ([www.festival-cannes.fr](http://www.festival-cannes.fr)), the Venice Film Festival ([www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)) and the Edinburgh International Film Festival ([www.edfilmfest.org.uk](http://www.edfilmfest.org.uk)). While the key event of showing films is common among all film festivals, additional events vary from one festival to another.

### **2.3.4. *Key stakeholders***

There are a number of stakeholders at film festivals, such as film actors, filmmakers, audiences, distributors, government bodies, regional businesses and other professionals from the film industry (cf. Durie et al., 2000; Hudson & Tung, 2010; Madichie, 2010; and Currid-Halkett & Ravid, 2012). Just like any other festival, documentary film festivals are also attended by a number of key stakeholder-professionals from the industry, and filmmakers and commissioners are two very important ones among them. The festivals are dependent on filmmakers to exhibit their films, and the networking events are centred on them to help them meet prospective buyers, for example, commissioners and distributors. They are also the primary customers for networking services because unlike other professionals such as organisers, who often invite commissioners, they pay to attend the networking events. This is because there are more filmmakers than commissioners in the industry. However, commissioners often need to bear the costs of their transportation and

accommodation (just like the filmmakers). It is seldom that the film festivals cover these costs, and if they do, it depends on the status and reputation of the commissioner as well as the financial situation of the festival. It is in the interest of the commissioners to attend film festivals because it is a rich source and pool of talents they need. Filmmakers attend these networking events to meet other key players who are often invited to attend the festivals, including film financiers, distributors, sales agents, broadcasters, film funds and producers. At documentary film festivals and in the networking events taking place there, commissioners are the key buyers who often play the multiple roles of financier, broadcaster, funding body and producer, making them very important attendees besides filmmakers. In a nutshell, commissioners are an essential part of the networking service, which film festivals offer and charge for, to the filmmakers.

Networking opportunities between the filmmakers and the commissioners are very important in the documentary film industry. These professionals depend on each other, and the film industry depends on their collaboration. Therefore, encouraging both formal and informal social relationships is not only in the interest of the festival organisers, filmmakers and commissioners but also of the wider industry in general. This is the reason why, as discussed in the introduction, policymakers and funding bodies are increasingly encouraging networking opportunities between these professionals at the film festivals. This study thus investigates the facilitators of networking between filmmakers and commissioners at the documentary film festivals and the networking events there.

### ***2.3.5. Types of film festivals***

There is a lack of research on the types of film festivals, so to understand the typology of film festivals, it is useful to look at the roles that they play. To do this, it is beneficial to understand the roles played by festivals in general. Therefore, this section starts with the generic roles of festivals, followed by an elucidation of film festival typology.

There has been a growth in the number of festivals both nationally and internationally over the past few decades. Alongside this, academic interest in festivals has also grown. This has resulted in a body of work on festivals ranging from historical analyses of festivals in terms of their religious, political and social roles to the role of festivals in enhancing social cohesion, as well as explorations of festivals as third spaces where people can escape from the humdrum of normal life. One problem emanating from this diverse range of literature on festivals lies in this diversity itself, both in terms of the types of festivals and approaches to examining them. This chapter addresses this by plotting out the landscape of film festivals to illustrate the range of festivals, which exist, and the roles played by these. This sets the scene for future work on festivals in general and contributes to the literature on informal marketplaces and marketing in the cultural sector.

As discussed above, festivals are temporary spaces for entertainment, celebration and festivity that allow people a break from everyday routine to come together to form a community, which then creates, maintains and reinforces cultural meaning and social structure. Sometimes, these communities can develop into permanent networks of geographically dispersed stakeholders. Festivals are centred on performances of some kind, in which the public actively participates and coproduces. These performances can take a variety of forms, such as music, arts, sports and markets. The functions that festivals perform are varied, comprising a complex combination of social, cultural, political and economic roles (e.g., Finkel, 2009). The social and cultural functions of festivals are intimately related and therefore difficult, and perhaps unnecessary, to disentangle.

The social/cultural role of festivals can be traced back to some of the oldest known human civilisations, such as the Akitu Festival, during which the Sumerian population of southern Mesopotamia celebrated the sowing and cutting of barley (Lendering, 2010); the Festivals of Min (Spalinger, 1998) and Opet (Hornell, 1938), during which the ancient Egyptians celebrated their living and dead pharaohs; and the first Olympic Games, where the ancient Greeks celebrated athletic prowess alongside religious sacrifice ([www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org), 2011). A key function within all of these festivals is the *marking of important religious and cultural moments*, often through

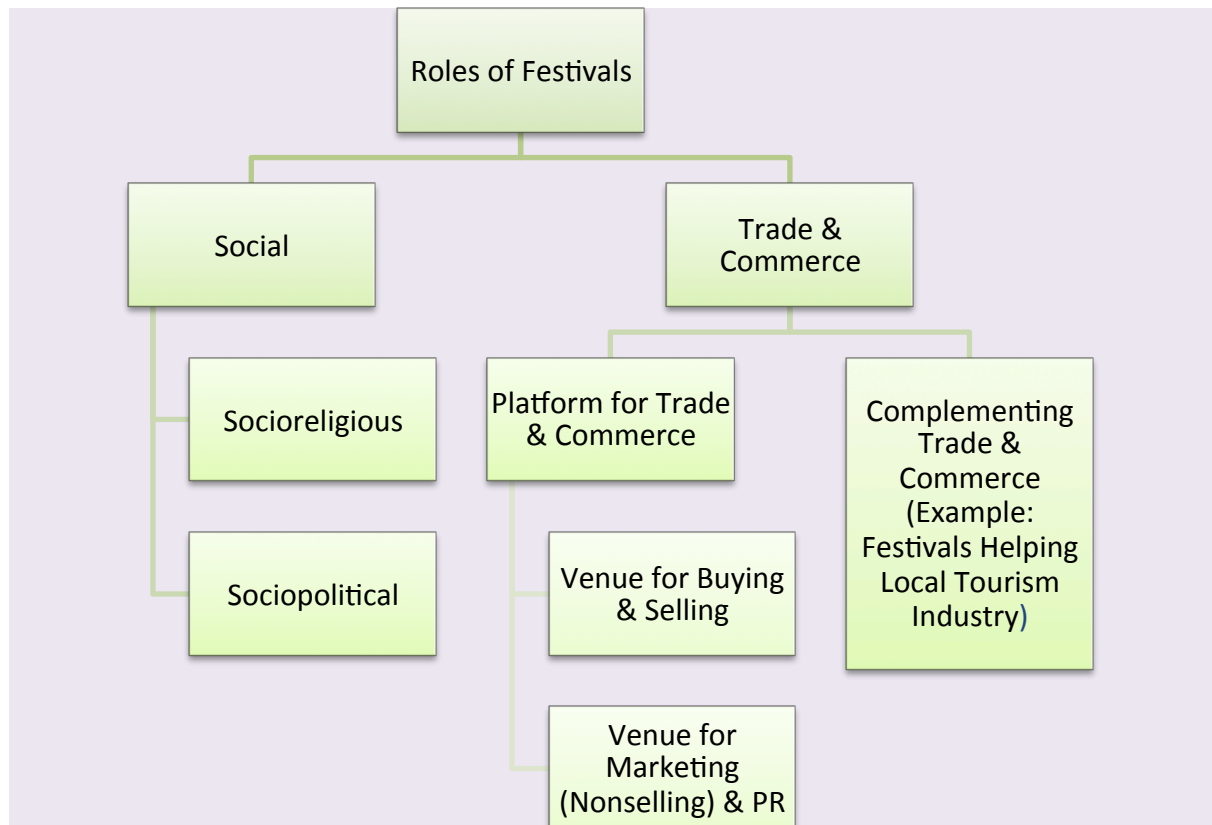


ritual and even sacrifice. For example, during the Akitu Festival, the head of a sheep is offered as a sacrifice to the gods and is thrown in the river as a part of a rainmaking ceremony to ensure a good production of barley (Başgöz, 1967). Other kinds of important *social/cultural achievements are celebrated*, such as supreme athleticism in both the ancient and modern Olympic Games, and first-rate performing arts at festivals such as the Glyndebourne Festival held annually in the UK. An important outcome of these social celebrations is that a *sense of solidarity* is formed, which then creates and reinforces the bonds holding communities together. For example, the celebration of the Muharram Festival in Durban, South Africa, marks the death of a Muslim martyr, but Hindus and Muslims jointly participate in this festival, turning it into a pan-Indian festival. Muharram has played an ‘important role in forging a pan-Indian “Indianness” within a white and African colonial society’ (Vahed, 2001, p. 77) for a heterogeneous collection of Indian indentured workers who arrived between 1860 and 1911 and, therefore, in constructing a sense of community.

Closely related to the social and cultural roles are the political functions of festivals. Festivals provide an opportunity for those in power to express their beliefs and values and thus *reinforce support for those in power*. For example, in addition to being a very important religious festival for the Hindu Bengalis of West Bengal, the Durga Puja Festival was also a significant medium for the Left Front government (1977–2011), headed by the Communist Party of India to highlight their Marxist political ideology. Durga Puja celebrates the triumph of the Hindu goddess Durga, who represents the economically and socially disenfranchised, over the demon Mahisa, who is a symbol of arrogance, corrupt power and ill-gotten wealth, and thus, the religious and political messages are congruent (Rodrigues, 2003). However, more often, the political function of festivals revolves around the provision of space in which disenfranchised and oppressed members of society can be *temporarily empowered* by communally exploring (sometimes radical) alternatives to the dominant ideology. According to Bakhtin (1968, p. 268–270), festive traditions have a tendency to express a constituency’s ‘criticisms, their deep distrust of official truth, and their highest hopes and aspirations’ and thus offer some sort of emancipation from suppressive authority, social order and/or rules. Festivals can be ‘symbolic (but important and quiet real) battlefields for waging competitive struggles for power,

prestige and material objectives' (Manning, 1983, p. 7). The Burning Man Festival is a contemporary example of an expression of liberation from the exploitative *ethos* of the capitalist market that weakens human relations in society and dampens self-expressive practices (Kozinets, 2002).

Festivals also have an important and direct role to play in trade and commerce, and this has been discussed in detail in Section 1.4.1 (Business at Festivals) of this thesis. The role of festivals is not necessarily limited to a direct involvement in trade and commerce; they also *support commerce indirectly*, outside the festival premises. For example, 'local festival activities can enrich peak season tourism and attract more low-season tourism' (Lee et al., 2008). Jaeger and Mykletun (2009) found that Norwegian festivals, such as the Sámi Easter Festival in Kautokeino and Karasjok and the Sea-Fishing Festival in Sørvær and Finnmarksløpet (the Sled-Dog Race), are being used in the marketing of both the host region (Finnmark) and the nation itself. In addition, local residents of the host destination are important stakeholders in festivals who can benefit from them both in the short and long term (Ritchie et al., 2010; Jago et al., 2010). For example, festivals are likely to facilitate development and economic activity in the community, which, in turn, benefits local residents. Festivals can, however, also leave a costly legacy to the host community, such as debt, underutilised infrastructure, pollution and the displacement of residents (Karadakis et al., 2010). This notwithstanding, the economic impact of festivals on the host community is generally positive, with hotels and restaurants often doubling their capacity during a festival, increasing the possibility of visitors' and tourists' future returns/visits to the region, boosting local employment and enhancing the image and reputation of the region (Alves et al., 2010). Thus, many rural towns and villages host festivals as a means of boosting their economy (Goulding & Saren, 2010).



**Figure 2-1 Roles of festivals**

### *Film festival classification*

To truly understand the role played by film festivals in negotiating the space between the filmmaker, the film consumer and the market, it is necessary to clearly map out the types of film festivals which have developed and, in doing so, the range of strategic objectives which motivate festival organisers. This allows us to explore the motivations of professional participants at festivals, as well as to consider those of the full range of consumers who attend. This should enable researchers to develop more pertinent research on festivals and help festival organisers to position themselves appropriately within this ever-evolving international marketplace.

Film festivals provide opportunities for consumers to view films not on general release or films that are curated to present a story or a range of viewpoints on a subject. Festivals may also provide special events such as master classes and talks by the filmmakers, critics or academics, which provide the audience with additional insight into the filmmaking process or the subject matter presented within the film.

From the perspective of the filmmakers, festivals allow them to screen their films to general audiences, as well as to possibly gain the attention of industry professionals. These general principles can be applied to all film festivals, but it is also important to distinguish between types of festivals to gain a comprehensive understanding of the field. Therefore, published documents and previous research on film festivals informed the development of a comprehensive typology of film festivals based on the role performed. This typology is presented in figure 2-1, and each role is discussed in detail, in the following sections.

### *Audience-centric festivals*

Film festivals can play a role as an alternative distribution outlet for films, which are seen as lacking mass appeal or are made by filmmakers who do not have direct access to global film distributors. In light of this, it is interesting to consider the prevalence of *genre-specific* film festivals, in other words, festivals which focus on exhibiting films of just one or two genres. For example, Frightfest ([www.frightfest.co.uk](http://www.frightfest.co.uk)) and Fantastic Fest ([www.fantasticfest.com](http://www.fantasticfest.com)) focus on horror films; the Sci-Fi-London Film Festival only exhibits science fiction films; and the Maelstrom International Fantastic Film Festival seeks to ‘offer exposure to films that traditionally are overlooked by the festival circuit from genres including action, fantasy, horror, and science fiction’ (Maelstrom International Fantastic Film Festival, 2011). Thus *genre-specific* film festivals are an important type of festival as they appeal to specific audiences.

The above section considers *audience-centric* festivals, which aim to provide a chance for film fans to view films before general release, often films that do not have a general release in the country in question, or to watch films on specific topics with an audience of fans. This type of festival fits into many of the general accounts of festivals already discussed and many of the communal consumption observations made about attendees of music festivals (Connel & Gibson, 2003; Shuker, 1998) are equally applicable to these audience-centric film festivals. However, to fully understand the film festival landscape, we need to look beyond the fan audience and their engagement with film festivals. According to Mintel (2006), the UK film

industry plays a vital role in the ‘economic, social and cultural’ life of Britain. A film festival can play an economic, social and/or cultural role depending on the films it exhibits and its objective. Hence, in addition to the audience-centric role of film festivals, it is important to examine the role of film festivals from economic, social and cultural perspectives.

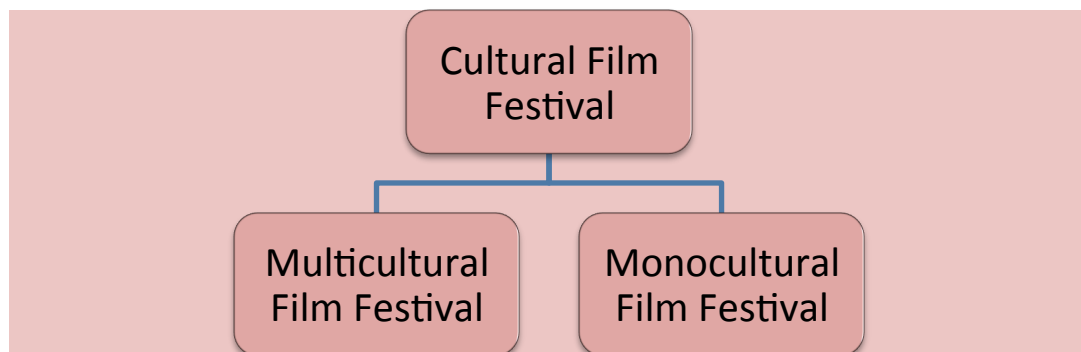
### *Cultural role*

As film is a cultural product, film consumption should be considered from a cultural perspective. Culture can be defined as ‘the accumulation of shared meanings, rituals, norms and traditions’ amongst the members of a society, and, as a result, culture helps define human community (Solomon et al., 2006, p. 499). In addition, Solomon et al. (2005, p. 219) define culture as ‘the learned distinctive way of life of a society’, with dimensions that include religion, aesthetic systems and language. Film festivals can be seen as filling a cultural gap in the market where cinema screens are dominated by the small number of films, which are on general release in a given period. Fans can use film festivals to see films prior to their general release or films which are unlikely to receive a general release. Festival goers can increase their cultural capital by attending talks or other special events during a festival. The festival programmer can be viewed as a curator or an interpreter, identifying films which fit together in line with the objectives of the festival.

From the above, a cultural film festival could be defined as one that exhibits and promotes cultural traditions (ideas, customs and social behaviour) of a particular group of people who have inherited such traditions by learning socially from their previous generation. We can conceptualise ‘culture’ as referring to both ‘national/regional’ culture or relating to specific, nongeographically bounded cultural groups (Solomon et al., 2006). Therefore, since cultural film festivals help in promoting culture, many organisations use the medium of film festivals to promote particular cultures. For example, the French Embassy in the United States promotes French culture in North America through films screened in French Film Festivals in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco (Embassy of France in the United States, 2008). One British example of a cultural film festival is the Rai International

Festival of Ethnographic Film, the primary objective of which is ‘to promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue’ (Rai International Festival of Ethnographic Film, 2008). Therefore, this festival showcases and exhibits films with the objective of encouraging and promoting cultural diversity and intercultural exchange of ideas.

There are many film festivals in the UK that exhibit films to promote the culture of individual countries or peoples, for example, the London Kurdish Film Festival ([www.lkff.co.uk](http://www.lkff.co.uk), 2009), the London Norwegian Film Festival (Royal Norwegian Embassy in London, 2005), the London Korean Film Festival ([www.koreanfilm.co.uk](http://www.koreanfilm.co.uk), 2010) and the Bangladesh Film Festival (Film London, 2005). These festivals exhibit country-specific films (*monocultural film festivals*) to promote the culture and cultural issues of the respective countries. One difference between monocultural film festivals and the Rai International Film Festival is that, even though both aim at promoting and showcasing culture, the Rai International Film Festival exhibits films from more than one culture (*multicultural film festival*). Figure 2-2 below shows the two types of cultural film festivals.



**Figure 2-2 Generic typology of cultural film festivals**

### *Social role*

The use of festivals for sociopolitical causes has already been considered. For example, festivals such as Durga Puja, the Burning Man and the Peebles Beltane festivals illustrate how festivals can be an opportunity to express popular sociopolitical ideologies and beliefs, such as challenging a suppressive social order or authority as well as liberation from subjugation. Similarly, social films are those that help inspire people ‘to *change* policy, professional practice and individual behaviour’

because they offer ‘dramatic, sensitive but authentic treatment of social issues in film which powerfully connects the audience to the real emotions and real people that lie behind our assumptions, stereotypes and prejudice’ (Social Film Drama, 2011). A film festival is social if it exhibits films relating to society and social subjects, issues concerning the relationships of people in the society and any issues pertaining to a social cause. In fact, if the birth and history of film festivals in Europe is examined closely, it is evident that the phenomenon of the film festival itself is a social product.

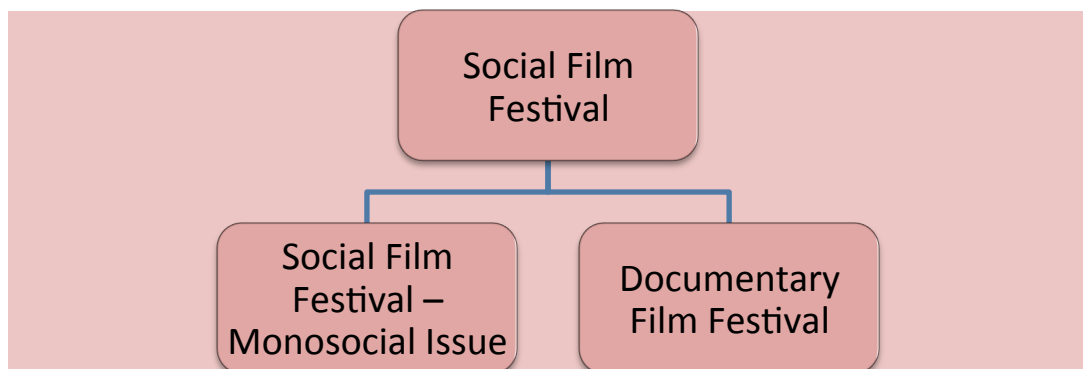
For example, according to Rhyne (2009), the Cannes Film Festival soon ‘became part of France’s national post-war project of reframing European cultural identity in the wake of fascism and defending it from a burgeoning American cultural imperialism’ (p. 11). It has already been mentioned how festivals can be a product of social ambiguity and tensions. As such, the Venice Film Festival gained success because of its ability to address ‘nationalistic sentiments that divided European nations at the time and simultaneously addressing the necessary international dimension of the film industry’ (Valck, 2007, p. 24).

Another example is the Berlin Film Festival, which was founded in 1951 to regain ‘the city’s role in European arts and culture and to reiterate its participation in the global market of Hollywood and European film commodities’ (Rhyne, 2009, p. 12). Rhyne’s and Valck’s (2007) discussions explain and highlight how film festivals can be social products. Therefore, it is important to understand the current social role of film festivals in society. We can see from the cases of Cannes, Berlin and Venice that the role of film festivals can change over time. This is in line with our assertion that film festivals play social, cultural and political roles as well as provide alternative ways for films to connect with audiences. While these major film festivals no longer play the same role as that which inspired their initial formation, they continue to have an important social role through their significance in the global film industry and the role of the film markets to which they are attached, in setting the agenda for art house films which are programmed around Europe (and sometimes more globally).

One example of a social film festival is the Human Rights Watch Festival, whose purpose lies in ‘bearing witness to human rights violations and creat[ing] a

forum for courageous individuals on both sides of the lens to empower audiences with the knowledge that personal commitment can make a difference’ ([ff.hrw.org/about](http://ff.hrw.org/about)). The films at this festival are concerned with the social issue of human rights, which are compromised in many societies, and examine the relationships between human rights issues and society. Films screened at the 2012 festival included films about homophobia, women’s rights, racism and civil resistance from around the world.

*Documentary film festivals* are a further example of social film festivals. According to the New Zealand International Documentary Film Festival, documentary films provide an important insight into the problems and issues that society faces; within a cinematic experience, these are usually emerging, independent and low-budget films (Documentary Edge Festival, 2011). Other examples of such festivals include the Sheffield International Documentary Festival ([www.sheffdocfest.com](http://www.sheffdocfest.com)) and the International Film Festival Rotterdam ([www.filmfestivalrotterdam.com](http://www.filmfestivalrotterdam.com)). Figure 2-3 illustrates the two types of social film festivals: those with a monosocial issue, which exhibit films on only one social issue such as human rights, and documentary film festivals, which exhibit films portraying more than one issue.



**Figure 2-3 Generic typology of social film festivals**

#### *Economic role*

The economic role of film festivals can be quite vast. The literature reviewed in Section 1.4.2 (Business at Film Festivals) of the introduction shows that film festivals can benefit the film industry as a marketplace, bringing global buyers and sellers together to encourage deal making that might otherwise require lot of travel



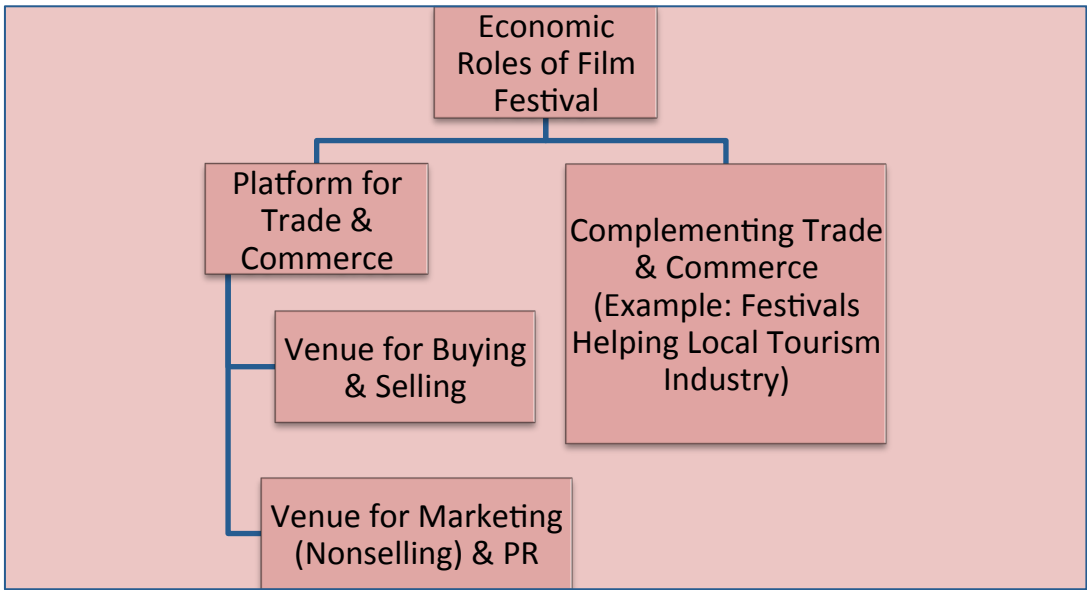
and far-flung communications. Besides providing a cost-effective market (for sales- and transactions-related activities), film festivals also offer efficient publicity for films and facilitate networking in the film industry. Film festivals provide an alternative distribution network where filmmakers can gain an audience for their films, develop their reputation within the industry and possibly find a commercial partner, such as a sales agent, distributor or financier. In addition to the filmmakers, technology organisations understand film festivals as ideal venues within which to promote their products and services, hence, for example, Sony uses festivals as an alternative to other forms of advertising or public relations to connect with festivalgoers in a more cost-efficient way.

The literature review in that section also shows that attending and exhibiting at film exhibitions is effective because it offers an opportunity for one-to-one direct marketing in a highly charged environment. As a result, many entities (such as film commissions) are already using the medium of film festivals to promote their own interests. For example, ‘to promote Hong Kong to overseas producers, HKFSO (Hong Kong Film Services Office) regularly participates in many trade shows and film festivals including the AFCI and the Busan International Film Commission Locations Trade Shows, and the Berlinale and Cannes Film Festivals’, and the Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission (NIFC) used the 2004 Cannes Film Festival to hold a press conference to announce a production fund aimed at attracting filmmakers to use Northern Irish locations.

Film festivals not only offer trade and commerce opportunities to participants, but they may also offer indirect benefits to the host community. One such example of a film festival and tourism existing hand in hand is the Virginia Festival of American Film ([www.virginiafilmfestival.org](http://www.virginiafilmfestival.org)). According to Hudson and Tung (2010, p. 201) this festival ‘attracts numerous filmmakers to screenings and panel discussions, simultaneously exposing them to the wonderful scenery of the area’. The festival is able to offer not only opportunity for businesses and commerce but also for leisure and tourism since the festival is held adjacent to Virginia’s spectacular Blue Ridge Mountains. This opens up the economic possibilities for the tourism industry and local businesses. Film festival tourism refers ‘to the organized effort to use film

festivals as a central incentive to attract cultural tourists or consumers in addition to film professionals, like buyers, filmmakers and actors, drawn by the theme or the importance of the festival for the film industry’ (Mueller, n.d.).

The benefits of film festival tourism to the local economy is significant; for example, the Santa Barbara Film Festival generated an additional \$7.3 million in revenue for the local economy of Santa Barbara County (Mueller, n.d.). Because of the apparent benefits, many tourist entities are financing film festivals; for example, the 2007 Bangkok International Film Festival was financed by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (Bangkok International Film Festival, 2007). Therefore, film festivals tend to indirectly complement trade and commerce beyond the boundaries of the festival. In the previous discussion of the trade and commerce roles of festivals (in general), it was concluded that festivals have three roles: (1) to offer a platform for selling and transactions; (2) to offer a venue for marketing (nonselling) and promotion; and (3) to indirectly complement trade and commerce in the host community. This section shows that these roles are equally applicable to film festivals. Figure 2-4 illustrates the economic roles of film festivals.



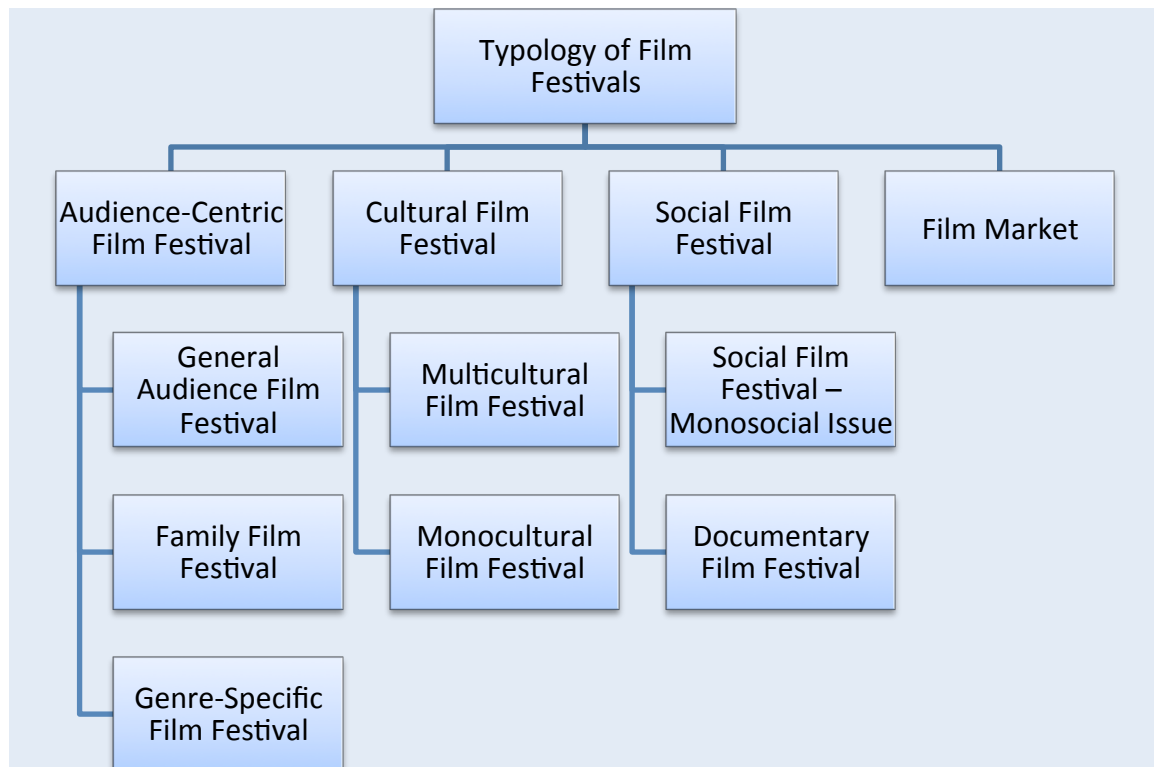
**Figure 2-4 Economic role of film festivals**

Based on film festival websites (for example, Galway Film Fleadh, 2011b; Berlin International Film Festival, 2011; American Film Market, 2010) and from Iordanova's discussion (2010, p. 12–38), it can be argued that festivals help in the *formation of community* whereby its members share interests or identity and experiences by 'virtue of their attendance at the festival' (p. 13). This facilitates networking opportunities; for example, filmmakers can network with distributors, potential producers and journalists at festivals which can give them crucial exposure (Elsaesser, 2005). In turn, networking opportunities offer platforms for filmmakers and other industry representatives not only to trade and execute business deals but also to meet important people from the industry for marketing, promotion and more networking (snowballing from one person to another).

Both the Galway Film Fleadh (2011b) and the Berlin International Film Festival (2011) have a film market where film industry professionals can engage in deal making as an additional activity attached to its core activity, i.e., exhibiting films. Other examples of globally renowned film festivals that are effective marketplaces for films are the Festival de Cannes ([www.festival-cannes.fr/en](http://www.festival-cannes.fr/en), 2015) and the American Film Market in Santa Monica ([www.ifta-online.org](http://www.ifta-online.org), 2015). These film markets help distributors and filmmakers congregate at one place to discuss and execute business deals in an easy and cost-effective way. Therefore, film festivals can play an economic role by providing a marketplace for the film industry, in addition to assisting in cost-effective and trouble-free negotiation of film industry business.

### *Typology of film festivals*

The above discussion has revealed four generic types of film festivals: audience-centric film festivals, cultural film festivals, social film festivals and market film festivals (which plays an economic role), and these can be further divided in subtypes, as illustrated in Figure 2-5 below.



**Figure 2-5 Generic typology of film festivals**

The types of film festivals depicted in Figure 2-5 differ from each other in their objectives and the types of films they screen. For example, audience-centric film festivals screen films with their target audience very much in mind and might exhibit films for a very specific segment of society. On the other hand, the scope of cultural film festivals is not limited to audience; rather, mainly the types of films screened determine it. Cultural film festivals are interested in exhibiting films that explore ideas, customs and social behaviours of a particular group of people. Social film festivals, by contrast, exhibit films that examine relationships and arrangements in society rather than cultural norms. The fourth type, namely the film market festival, differs from the rest because of its primary objective of promoting the business of films and providing a marketplace for stakeholders in the film industry. It should be noted that not all film festivals fit into just one category; in fact, many fit into several of these types.



**Figure 2-6 Roles (merger of typology) of film festivals blended**

Figure 2-6 demonstrates how features of more than one type of film festival overlap. A film festival might play more than one role depending on its objectives and the films it screens, thereby falling into more than one category (as illustrated in Figure 6). For example, even though the Sheffield International Documentary Festival is a social film festival which exhibits films portraying social issues, according to the official website (Sheffield Doc/Fest, 2011), ‘MeetMarket is the pitching initiative at Sheffield Doc/Fest, designed to match documentary makers’ most innovative project ideas with UK and international decision makers’. Therefore, this festival is not only a social film festival but could also be categorised as a market film festival since it acts as a marketplace for the films it screens. Similarly, the London Gay and Lesbian Film Festival falls into both the audience-centric film festival category while simultaneously fitting into the category of social film festival. In addition, the London Gay and Lesbian Film Festival also works very closely with many distributors from around the world who visit for business, so the festival also sits comfortably in the film market category. In the same way, there are other film festivals such as Galway’s Film Fleadh ([www.galwayfilmfleadh.com](http://www.galwayfilmfleadh.com)) which not only exhibit various types of films but also hold a film market at the same time, thus falling into two categories.

## 2.4. Summary

Festivals are public and themed celebrations with formal programmes, which could have core activities and additional activities within a fixed timescale. They are temporary events and are public and experiential in nature. They involve performance, enjoyment and participation. Festivals require cooperation and participation from and between multiple stakeholders. Just like festivals in general, film festivals share these characteristics. Film festivals have a rich history dating back to the 1930s, and since then, many festivals have come and gone. This is one of the reasons why it is difficult to accurately collate statistics on film festivals. Film festivals are proliferating all over the world and supported by various examples this study has explored different types of film festivals, to create a typology of film festivals. This typology illustrates the different motivations underlying types of film festivals while recognising that features of more than one type of film festival can be present in a single festival. In doing so, the typology should be viewed as fluid; while the categories proposed have emerged from existing market realities, it is acknowledged that as the market develops, the typology may need to be expanded or contracted.

A festival may be established for a particular reason, but over time, whether deliberately or unintentionally, the objectives and nature of the festival may change. Our typology offers classification dimensions based on the aims and objectives of festival organisers. The benefit of this typology lies in offering a deeper understanding of the range of motivations involved in exhibiting at or attending film festivals. The typology offers festival organisers a clear understanding of why audiences may engage with a festival and the types of activities that they would expect or desire depending on its nature. Additionally, as many festivals rely on public funding, our typology allows funders to develop appropriate evaluation mechanisms dependent on the specific objectives of the festival.

Film festivals play very important roles, and these roles have been used across many film festivals with different objectives. The recognition of film industry professionals attending film festivals as consumers of the core events (film

exhibitions) and additional events (for example, networking) and understanding their experiences to facilitate better opportunities for them is absent from studies of festivals of all kinds. This thesis aims to address this gap by looking at the documentary film festivals and understanding how the filmmakers and commissioners, the two important festival stakeholders, consume and experience networking opportunities at a festival. There is little insight into ‘how’ business is done and focused on at film festivals; to understand this, it is important to look at the ‘experience’ of attending such film festivals, and therefore, the following chapter will review key literature on experiential marketing.

## **3. Literature Review**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter has examined the nature and role of festivals and, more specifically, documentary film festivals in society. This chapter progresses this dissertation into an examination of key areas of the literature, which shed light on doing business. Existing literature will illustrate the importance of networking in the film industry. Networking has been found to be essential in getting jobs in the film industry by, for example, Storper and Christopherson (1987), Krätke (2002), Blair et al. (2003) and Christopherson and Righor (2010). However, the focus of these studies has been on employment rather than on ‘doing business’ in film. As film festivals have been established (in Chapter 2) as places where businesses are done, it is necessary to examine the role of networks in this context in more detail and in doing so, this thesis illustrates the gap within the literature regarding ‘how’ such networking is undertaken. In this study, networking is seen as facilitated by the experience of participating in the film festivals, and therefore, exploration of the area of experiential marketing is also necessary in this chapter.

We know that when individuals enjoy working, it motivates them to work and perform better (cf. Frederick & Fast, 2001; Leonard, Beauvais, & Scholl, 2001; Larsson, Rosenqvist, & Holmström, 2007). Therefore, understanding the role of pleasure in networking and the importance of experience in understanding networking at festivals will help to explain how professionals experience relevant networking opportunities and related services and facilities. This will eventually help to explain what helps them to network. The literature on hedonic consumption experience will help to understand why pleasure is important in consumption, and the dynamics of producing such experience. Pleasure has many facets, and this chapter will delve further into examining the ordinary and mundane nature of this experience (besides extraordinary pleasure) in consumption.

With the advent of research in experiential marketing, the relevance of the theory on co-creation of experience in experiential marketing has recently gotten



attention. Scholars such as Tynan and McKechnie (2009a) have argued that consideration of co-creation of experience can help to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of experiential marketing. The literature will be reviewed to gain an understanding of how networking value and experience are co-created, as well as the plasticity and temporal nature of this co-creation. Finally, the literature review will provide an understanding of the relevance of experiential value in the B2B context. The literature in this chapter has drawn results, theories, debates and discussions from a wide range of disciplines in marketing, management, human resources, geography, sociology, urban planning, public policy, and a number of other disciplines. This approach was necessary because there is relatively less research on what facilitates networking at film festivals, and the research phenomenon is beyond one discipline. Achieving unity of knowledge has helped to build a holistic theoretical framework to investigate the aim of this study.

## **3.2. B2B Networking and Its Importance**

### *3.2.1. Definition of Networking*

Forret and Dougherty (2004) define networking as ‘individual’ attempts to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or career’ (p. 420). This definition shows that networking is a proactive action, which is undertaken with the aim of building relationships with people who have the potential to help those involved in the action, particularly in their work or career. People expecting this help undertake this action of developing relationships irrespective of whether or not assistance is ever provided (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). In other words, networking is a preemptive action expecting prospective assistance in either the immediate or far future.

While networking, people develop and maintain relationships not only with people who are in the same career but also beyond and for more than one purpose. In Wanberg, Kanfer, and Banas’s (2000) definition of networking, individual actions are ‘directed towards contacting friends, acquaintances, and other people’ who can help in getting ‘information, leads, or advice’ (p. 492). This definition, written in relation

to job searches of a sample of unemployed individuals, shows that the action of networking involves developing and maintaining relationships with constellations of people. In these constellations, professionals have relationships not just with people who are in the same profession and/or in the same industry, but also with their friends and family who can directly or indirectly help (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000). The prospective uncertain help can yield a range of outcomes, including getting important information and advice and helping to know relevant people and leads.

The literature discussed in the above two paragraphs conceptualises networking as an individual action, but the collective dimension of networking cannot be discounted. In Gilmore and Carson (1999), networking is defined as an ‘actual process of liaison with contacts within the network; it is about individuals and companies working alongside each other and cooperating through the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and technology’ (p. 31). In this definition, networking is a process which involves actions from a network of individuals and/or business, and there is a mutual corporation between them to help each other. The network, however, is prone to change depending on the current circumstances, i.e., external and internal environment of the company, industry and the market (Gilmore & Carson, 1999). This makes networking a fluid and evolving process.

In spite of this, networking involves working towards a common goal, i.e., developing and maintaining the relationships, at least for some time. Muijs, West, and Ainscow’s (2010) definition of networking argues networking as at least two entities ‘working together for a common purpose for at least some of the time’ (p. 5). Networking is not necessarily an indefinite and static process; in other words, parties involved do not have to continue developing and maintaining relationships indefinitely. At the same time, it is necessary for the parties involved to develop and maintain relationships, at least for some time, to encourage collaborations and participate in joint activities (Muijs, West, & Ainscow, 2010). This shows networking as a process between participating actors, which can continue to encourage collaboration at least for some time, if not longer, despite the possibility of changing unpredictably in future and stopping.

The B2B networking process can be both intentional and emergent. In intentional networking, businesses develop relationships based on rational intentions and deliberate actions from networking partners (Achrol & Kotler, 1999). Achrol and Kotler's (1999) paper looks at how organisation of marketing evolved and would change in future based on the complex and continuing evolving nature of business networks. On the other hand, emergent B2B networking can be more incidental and organic and evolve between two or more people, people and organisations, and two or more organisations (Ritter, Wilkinson, & Johnston, 2004). But such emergent B2B networking does not always have to be incidental. As mentioned by Ritter, Wilkinson and Johnston (2004), who studied loosely coupled business networks in their paper, emergent B2B relationships can occur because of the intentional actions of their participants; similarly, in intentional B2B networks, relationships evolve over time.

The current literature defines networking as both individual actions and collective processes. In relation to action, networking is a preemptive and proactive action from an individual to build and maintain relationships with fellow participants in the network (Forret and Dougherty, 2004). In networking, as the discussion in this section has shown, relationships are built not just with people who are in the same profession or industry but also with friends, acquaintances and other people. These relationships are made for several reasons, including career progression and getting help in their work by getting information, leads, or advice. The networks are loosely coupled and constantly evolving. The scopes of evolution of networking include the changing relationships between the parties within the network, evolving expectations and perceptions between relevant parties and the external environment. As a process, networking is seen as one that involves participation from more than one individual in the network to collaborate with each other, and the network can be formal as well as informal. The networking process does not have to continue forever because it is likely to be influenced by the external and internal circumstances of the actors, and therefore can stop at any time, and can be both intentional as well as emergent. Nevertheless, the process of networking encourages collaboration at least for some time, if not forever. The next section explains the importance of networking.

### 3.2.2. *Importance of Networking*

- *Importance of networking for businesses*

Research on B2B networking shows that it involves individuals, groups and companies and helps to develop, manage and foster relationships that are mutually beneficial. According to Wasserman and Faust (1994), who looked at methods and applications of social network analysis, the idea of networks is grounded in establishing links between individuals, groups of people, departments within the organisation and/or businesses, and these links offer mutual benefits to those in the network. This is the reason why B2B networking can involve individuals, groups as well as businesses. Tretyak and Popov (2009) critically analysed and applied the concepts of B2B networks to explore relative case studies of networks in academia. In this paper, they suggest that networking helps to develop, manage and foster mutually beneficial relationships between them because networks emerge from mutual trust and understanding among the actors in the network, and this is the reason why they agree to work together (Tretyak & Popov, 2009). Thus, networking develops gradually and over a period of time, and it is based on proactive commitment and actions of the participants. This consequently results in mutual commitment and dependence, in both formal and informal relationships, helping participants to gain competitive advantage from networking, for example, access to new opportunities (Coviello & Munro, 1995). Coviello and Munro's (1995) paper examines the entrepreneurial high technology firm's use of networks for international market development using empirical data from four in-depth case studies.

Networks are formed in a number of ways and in many contexts, making it complex in nature (Granovetter, 1985). In relatively newer business networks, pursuing narrow self-interests can form networks. However, in more established business networks, it could be a norm of their respective industry/sector. In the paper on the effect of social interaction on networking, Granovetter (1985) explains that networking is an ongoing process and is formed by being continuously constructed and reconstructed during the interactions between the networking members. Networking and the culture (including organisational culture) not only shape the

members within the network but are also shaped by them; therefore, social relations play an important role in formation of networks and in networking.

However, existing studies have shown that while B2B networking helps to access new opportunities, participants should be careful. It is necessary to pay attention to how and with whom these social relationships are established and ensure that these relationships do not weaken the firm's position within a network (Coviello & Munro, 1995). It is possible that the professionals and organisations could become weak in areas where they collaborate with network partners. For example, if a business becomes too much dependent on their partners to understand market dynamics, meaning taking no initiative, such as sales/support offices or through ongoing market research, it could weaken them (Coviello & Munro, 1995). At the same time, not networking in the market where businesses are increasingly more interconnected than ever before is not an option either (Kandampully, 2003).

So instead of becoming weak in networking, effective use of networking in an environment where businesses are dependent on each other can help participants to gain competitive advantage by connecting their knowledge and using it efficiently. The manner in which businesses network with each other to take advantage of their collaborative strengths make them relatively more dependent, in the e-business paradigm of the global marketplace (Kandampully, 2003). This means that networking is more important now than ever before. The flow of goods, services and economic links are no longer one way but involve a complex network of local and global businesses, and their respective partners, knowledge and activities (Bryson, 2001). The link between network dependency and knowledge management is critical in the current business environment, as it helps businesses to easily access and use the knowledge within the network (Bryson, 2001).

However, although knowledge is an important asset in today's business, it can no longer help to achieve competitive advantage on its own. Instead, as research has shown, it is how businesses connect their knowledge and use it as a driving force by networking with other businesses to help them to gain competitive advantage (Sweet, 2001). This usage of knowledge is further beneficial in encouraging

collaboration between network partners and innovation. Innovation and collaboration are closely linked, and B2B networking creates opportunities for these. Lee, Pak and Lee (2003) found in their research that when businesses collaborate in the network, it leads to innovation. These innovations further strengthen the relationships and fuel appetites and motivation for further improvements and business development. However the major and common hindrances in achieving this collaboration between those networking are lack of trust, ineffective goal setting and different (and at times contradictory) governance models (Chapman & Corso, 2005). It is important that those businesses involved in B2B networking trust each other, as this establishes realistic and mutually beneficial goals, and work actively towards achieving it. B2B communication needs to be clear, interactions between them should be constant and consistent, and any difference between governance models must be addressed appropriately. This will result in better innovation and collaboration; for example, businesses involved in early stages of product development or entering new markets can benefit significantly from networking, although this does not mean that participants at other stages will not benefit, as there is something for all parties to benefit from networking (Rampersad, Quester, & Troshani, 2009).

- *Importance of networking for professionals*

Just like business entities, professionals can also benefit from better career progression opportunities from B2B networking. Research shows that when professionals network with other professionals, they are able to solve business problems by developing cooperative goals (Tjosvold, 1997). This does not mean that only individuals from the same professions establish relationships but that professionals from various backgrounds can. For example, dentists can benefit from networking with other professionals, such as financial bankers, suppliers and others who can provide them with the ideas, suggestions, and advice to adopt their practices (Tjosvold, 1997 and Chapman & Corso, 2005). However, the challenges of networking between professionals are competitive goals, which interfere with an individual's willingness to discuss issues and talk openly and constructively. Therefore, Tjosvold (1997) argues that it is important to reduce competitive goals

while building on corporative goals and developing interpersonal skills to engage in open-minded discussions while networking.

Existing studies show that networking is an important *investment* in the career of professionals. For example, networking effectively can lead to differentiated career progression and salary (Wolff & Moser, 2009). In other words, those who network are likely to progress better in their career and earn more wages, in comparison to those who do not network. However, those with family and other additional responsibilities might find it difficult to invest their time and money in networking. For example, professionals with a young family may find difficulty in dividing time equally among work, networking (which involves socialising after working hours) and the family. However, those with nonworking spouses or relatively less or no family responsibilities will find it easier to invest time and money into socialising and developing their networks (Chapman & Corso, 2005 and Wolff & Moser, 2009). Therefore, it is not just the intention to network but also the professionals' commitment to family and personal life that play a crucial role in their ability to network.

- *Importance of networking for competitors*

Businesses and professionals who share similar and/or complimentary goals, networking is important for them. It is also important for their competitors to network with each other as the current studies have shown. For example, networking in international trade events can assist in vertical integration, for example, exchange between both B2B and B2C provider and customer (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008). It can also assist in horizontal integration, for example, facilitating interaction between competitors and/or businesses. Networking (and hence interactions) between competitors is necessary to facilitate *coopetition* as it is mutually advantageous relationships where two competitors compete yet cooperate with each other (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000). This relationship addresses the issue of competitive goals mentioned earlier. If competitive goals discourage businesses and professionals to cooperate fully with each other, they can strategically develop relationships and network with competitors to cooperate where needed and compete where they must.

However, networking between competitors may lead to collusion, something that is not necessarily always in the interest of third parties, such as suppliers and customers. The current literature shows that in such cases of collusion, networking may yield negative repercussions (such as reducing overall competition, maintaining prices and moderating the innovation process) for the businesses and professionals (Walley, 2007). But when the competitors network and cooperate not just for their mutual benefit but also for the benefit of third parties like consumers, their relationship is not collusive as argued by Walley (2007) in his paper on conceptualising coopetition. However, the negative repercussion of coopetition is that it exposes businesses to opportunist competitor-partners and they become prone to damaging effects from sharing knowledge on their innovations with them (Bouncken & Kraus, 2013). Coopetition can trigger radical innovation but at the same time can harm the extremely novel revolutionary innovation, as Bouncken and Kraus (2013) found by looking at empirical results from 830 SMEs. Nevertheless, the collaboration between competitors tends to be more productive and could offer mutually beneficial relationships (Walley, 2007; Bouncken & Kraus, 2013). Cooperating with competitors is not only beneficial for the short term, but it is also beneficial for the industry as a whole. The competitors can co-operate and work together to develop the industry and the market, at the same time competing with each other for their respective strategic goals (Wang & Krakover, 2008). This means that companies can benefit from long-term development of the industry and the market.

Therefore, the literature reviewed in this section clearly suggests that networking plays a very important role in today's business environment because it helps to access not only resources for employment and business opportunities but also collaboration and innovations. It is important for businesses and professionals who can complement and support each other to gain competitive advantage but also competitors. Turning to the context of this study, within the field of the cultural industries, networking is important in the film industry too.



### 3.3. Networking in Film

In the film industry, availability of work depends on knowing the right person and being in the network. According to Blair, Grey and Randle (2001), ‘personal networks in the film industry are central to finding work and to the groups people work with’ (p. 183). Informal networking helps film industry professionals find work and progress in their career, so personal contacts within the film industry is an important means of learning of potential opportunities for the professionals. Unlike industries where work is more stable, employment is limited to projects in the film industry and professionals in this industry work as freelance labour, as the labour and capital inputs in the production have become more variable (Christopherson & Storper, 1989). This exclusive project-based nature of work has meant people in the film industry relying on contacts both to source work and opportunities but also to secure their current jobs and prospects (Blair, Grey, & Randle, 2001). Sourcing work and opportunities here is an example of businesses looking for suppliers or skilled professionals and unemployed professionals looking for jobs through networks. Securing current jobs and prospects through networking would involve building social capital and knowledge, which will strengthen their credibility in the current job/profession. However, a closed network in the film industry has also meant that those who are members of relevant networks benefit from it, whilst those outside the network are excluded from the opportunities (Grugulis & Stoyanova, 2012).

This reliance on links and contacts has resulted in a loose informal interpersonal network of professionals, businesses and industry-specific clusters in the film industry (Coe, 2000). Film industry professionals congregate at social events and geographical locations to develop relationships with other professionals (Currid-Halkett & Ravid, 2012). The networks in the film industry are mostly located in specific locations, such as cities, which are hubs of production, although networks in different locations are also linked. There is a relationship between ‘high concentrations of star labour pools, social relationships among them, and the social institutions within the cultural industries’ (Currid-Halkett & Ravid, 2012, p. 2648). In other words, professionals congregate in those places, which have prominent social institutions in the film industry, and as the congregation increases, the social

relationships/networks among them also deepens.

This network in the specific geographical location and links between the networks of different geographical locations have resulted in common production structures, such as freelancing, which means professionals need to rely more on their contacts and networking. For example, there is a similarity in the labour markets of London and Los Angeles; freelancing dominates in both markets (Blair, Culkin & Randle, 2003). The links between the labour markets (i.e., the global networks between regional clusters) have meant that different markets started practising similar production structures. Networking is relevant not just in one market/city/country; its relevance is also universal, and this is because of the global links between the different networks in the film industry (Krätke, 2003). So this means that the formation of networks in the film industry is a result of kinetic energy generated from the consequences of existing networks.

From a more micro perspective, formation of networking and networks in the film industry happens by establishing contacts not only with colleagues but also with professionals encountered at social events. Blair, Culkin and Randle (2003) argue that ‘other than those contacts met through employment, contacts can also be accumulated through social gatherings of an industry and a personal nature’ (p. 629). The social gatherings usually occur at industry-specific events, such as film festivals, film unions and professional associations. Although usually these events are not specifically instituted for networking purposes, freelancers and professionals in the film industry often use the social milieu and the gathering at these places for the purpose of developing interpersonal networks (cf. Coe, 2000; Blair, Culkin & Randle, 2003; Currid-Halkett & Ravid, 2012). Networking also forms beyond these professional social events, for example, after meeting someone at a friend’s party/home and being acquainted with mutual friends. However, this would depend on the lifestyle of the professional as well as ‘to a considerable extent, industry-bound social circles in which they move’ (Blair, Culkin & Randle, 2003, p. 629). Networking also helps in coproduction especially for international filmmakers because of large production budgets. This necessitates the development of international networks between film companies (Currid-Halkett & Ravid, 2012). So,

while the studies that have been referenced above are largely about individuals and their careers in film, there is a need to consider how film productions are dependent on collaboration and therefore the development of networks across borders. The literature review in this section has also shown how and why networks are formed in the film industry, as well as the importance of networking to work in the film industry. The context of this thesis also includes festivals, and it is relevant to review the literature on networking at festivals and fairs, which the next section is about.

### **3.4. Networking at Festivals and Fairs**

Although festivals are temporary events, their ability to assist in creating knowledge, support interactive learning and develop social relationships make them effective to build trust and confidence among the target audience. Based on statistical data from telephone surveys of approximately 400 marketing decision makers, Kirchgeorg et al.'s (2010) study has shown that these events 'are suitable primarily as an instrument to nurture confidence in brands and to sustain customer loyalty' (p. 63). Exhibitors can use festivals with other communication platforms to effectively pursue marketing objectives. Because of apparent advantages, in the late '90s, trade festivals and fairs accounted for more than 22% to 25% of the typical US business market's promotional budget, which is only second to personal selling but ahead of print advertising and direct mail (Herbig et al., 1998). Since then, the use of festivals for networking has grown exponentially. Festivals and fairs 'are recognized, by exhibitors and visitors alike, as a significant marketing tool that can substantially influence a company's ability of harvesting knowledge, and to compete and succeed in the rapidly globalizing business environment' (Seringhaus & Rosson, 1998, p. 398). This is possible through networking at trade-centric fairs and festivals. Trade fairs are an effective business platform because they help traders in a tangible and experiential manner to contact and build relationships with their target customers. Herbig et al. (1998) and Tafesse and Korneliussen (2011) point out that such events help to gather information about competitors and the overall environment in the market, through networking, which can further enhance the respective traders' offering.

As discussed in the second chapter, Harbourplace in Baltimore and Inupiaq Eskimo Messenger Feast are festivals that attracted people to trade in a celebratory environment. These festivals attracted large crowds because of dance, music and other forms of enjoyment and pleasure offerings. The availability of a large number of people at one place is a rich source of customers for vendors and tradesmen, which is why they too participated at these trade festivals. Before we go on any further and discuss networking that happens at trade fairs, it is important to explain what trade fairs are. Trade fairs are festivals that are experiential and involve participation from actors (Seringhaus & Rosson, 1998) and also facilitate networking in the respective industry (Herbig et al., 1998; Smith et al., 2003; Geigenmüller, 2010; Jämsä et al., 2011). These are events which offer amusement and entertainment to the visitors and attract individuals as well as organisations to one place, creating a social environment to develop networks and informal relationships. While festivals' primary objectives are not necessarily to offer opportunities to trade and network, these are the primary objectives of trade fairs. This is the reason why trade festivals are often called trade fairs even though they are social, experiential and informal in nature, which are characteristics of festivals (as discussed in Chapter 2). The social, experiential and informal nature of trade fairs is because they are located outside the respective offices of the participants and are temporal in nature, just like festivals are. The trade-centric festivals help to develop complex cooperation and multiple networks with both 'local and nonlocal' ('glocal' as discussed earlier in the characteristics of festivals in Section 2.3) partners (Ramírez-Pasillas, 2010) and offer opportunities for additional entertainment activities, such as parties, recreation and hospitality (Herbig et al., 1998). These are not permanent events but temporary clusters/gatherings (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008) and visitors' purpose in attending these events include entertainment and enjoying a day out, i.e., having a break from daily routine (Blythe, 2010).

Networking happens at these festivals and trade fairs, which attracts people and encourages them to network with each other. Crowther (2011) theorises that events that are social and offer entertainment and escape from normal routine (three characteristics of festivals as identified earlier in the characteristics of festivals) can 'offer an intimate, and potentially seductive environment through which to activate a range of sales-related objectives' (p. 77). According to Crowther (2011), such events

offer an effective platform for trade and commerce by facilitating a conduit for face-to-face interaction between the provider and their customers. And face-to-face contact is a powerful interactive medium to do business, which is increasingly rare in advanced capitalist markets. The experiential, participatory and interactive characters of festivals play a very important role to not only sell products to customers but also develop new relationships and nurture old ones.

### *Examples*

There are a number of examples where festivals and fairs have been crucial in helping exhibitors with business opportunities. For instance, Kurmakka (a Finnish organic export and marketing SME) received its first enquiry in 1996 for an export order of organic liquorice at the BioFach trade fair in Germany (Jämsä et al., 2011). Recently, the UK announced 16 new export deals during Export Week (7–11 April 2014) at the International Festival for Business 2014. This event brought together businesses and professionals in one place from across different geographical locations and encouraged them to network with each other (International Trade Expo, 2014). This shows how festivals and fairs are instrumental in developing business. Trade fairs and festivals are able to offer opportunities for buying and selling at one place (Herbig et al., 1998) by bringing people together and facilitating opportunities to establish links. For example, in Kurmakka's case mentioned above, the company was able to identify and create business opportunities through acquaintances at a trade fair.

This ability to link with relevant people and entities is also the reason why festivals are being increasingly used by religious organisations to solve 'marketing-like' problems (e.g., Kotler & Levy, 1969). For example, 'spiritual tourism among Muslims is observed to be taking on a different dimension and many international festivals, seminars and conferences are being organised to draw Muslims together to integrate their professional, spiritual and intellectual capabilities' (Haq & Wong, 2010, p. 138). If the purpose of an entity is to connect, inform and build relationships with new audiences, festivals can be excellent platforms to do so as seen in religion-centric events/festivals. For example, according to Haq and Wong (2010, p. 138), the Bumitra Islamic Tourism Expo organised in Malaysia and the International Halal

Product Expo organised in Brunei ‘facilitate non-Muslims to take part in Muslim functions, which create awareness for non-Muslims about Islam and an opportunity to market spiritual tourism’. It is not just businesses and religious organisations but also nonprofit, nongovernment and public organisations that use festivals and fairs to link with the relevant people and promote their interests. For example, the UAE’s Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development and Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation promote UAE’s culture locally and internationally, amongst both Emiratis and non-Emiratis using *festivals*, and this was reflected at Manchester’s International Festival 2009, where Al Hakawati, the ancient Arabic form of storytelling, was performed (Raven & O’Donnell, 2010). Another example is the French Embassy in the United States, which promotes French culture in North America through films screened in French Film Festivals in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and links the nation and its culture with like-minded and relevant people (Embassy of France in the United States, 2008).

Also, Australian cities such as ‘Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane organise big Islamic festivals promoting Islamic culture, music and fashion’ (Haq & Wong, 2010, p. 144). This helps the festival to attract and link with wider audiences. Similarly, festivals are being used to promote science in Croatia, to offer lectures and show how various scientific discoveries work in real life, which also helps to attract and develop relations with scientists and experts from various fields of science (Vrana, 2010). Not only does the Science Festival promote science in Croatia but according to Vrana (2010), it also attracts important stakeholders such as public libraries to promote their services in the community and contribute to the development of science. Bringing all these people together at one place offers a unique opportunity and a melting pot for productive relationships and innovations. Therefore, festivals offer a unique platform to attract relevant stakeholders and participants from different cross sections of society and industry. For example, in 2008, the Festival of Life ([www.festivaloflife.net](http://www.festivaloflife.net)) attracted over 1,200 visitors including people from the United States of America, across Europe, and all over the UK who are interested in living foods and environmentally friendly ways of living (Nutrition & Food Science, 2010). This offered a unique opportunity for the participating organisations and individuals to meet relevant stakeholders not just from

industry but also from wider society, including opinion and policymakers, and the gatekeepers who help to create business opportunities directly or indirectly. Participants were able to consequently link better with aspiring health-conscious, eco-minded people. Alves et al.'s (2010) study on the Cherry Festival on Fundão shows not only that such events can promote the business of local people but also that when people participate in the respective festivals, they become more aware of their capabilities and business opportunities. Meeting competitors, suppliers, prospective partners and the information available and co-created (by the participants) at the festivals creates a unique opportunity for the participants to emerge from these temporary festive spaces better informed of what they are capable of achieving in the market.

A final example of the role of festivals as promotional platforms, is the University of Michigan's annual Energy Fest which seeks to reduce energy use, build relationships with important stakeholders and 'share information on a range of other energy conserving measures across campus' (Marans and Edelstein 2010). This is another example of using festivals to link with relevant stakeholders and co-create respective value/s with them. Former US Vice President and Nobel Peace Laureate Al Gore has also used the Cannes Lions Festival in June 2007 to network with and urge advertising professionals to take a leading role in tackling global environmental problems (Malmelin, 2010). Al Gore used the promotional and marketing potential of festivals at the Cannes Lions Festival but also used it to network with reporters, journalists and other celebrities, which in turn also helped him to promote his cause. These are examples of festivals' role as promotion platforms.

Festivals and fairs are effective venues in establishing acquaintance by helping businesses to exchange information with their target audience and develop relationships and network with important stakeholders (Smith et al., 2003). These events help in developing complex but important and strategic relationships not just between two people but also between many people and organisations from local and foreign markets. For example, Ramírez-Pasillas's (2010) statistical data from the Lammhult cluster (a small community of 2,000 inhabitants with a dominant furniture industry in southern Sweden) has shown that 'firms were directly or indirectly inter-

connected (*networking*) with other firms participating at ITFs (International Trade Fairs)' (p. 175). This example also reiterates the point discussed earlier that participation in festivals and fairs offers the opportunity to meet and network with important actors from the respective industry who gather at the same place at one stretch of time, and the relationships developed in these spaces can be with both local and global partners.

*Therefore, it is clear that networking happens at festivals, but why?* Bathelt and Schuldt's (2008) empirical study found that fairs foster temporary clusters that support formation of networks. Their paper argues that networking can assist in vertical integration, for example, exchange between suppliers and B2B customers, and/or could be horizontal in dimension, for example, facilitating interaction between competitors in a noncompetitive environment. The importance of networking and establishing relationships between competitors has been discussed in Section 3.2.2. Also, in addition to networking, fairs often offer the opportunities for other entertainment activities, such as parties, recreation and hospitality (Herbig et al., 1998). At these events, offering visible and relatively more stimulating show activities can help exhibitors to leave a memorable experience in the target audience's mind. Blythe (2010) suggests that irrespective of who they are, all visitors are likely to have at least some motivation to be entertained in such trade events. This creates a comfortable environment to interact with each other and develop relationships in a relatively less formal environment.

Festivals offer comfortable environments to interact and develop relationships because people experience entertainment and enjoyment from participating there. It is not necessary that all people who attend these festivals will definitely buy but might just pretend to do so, and their motivation to visit the event could just be a day out for enjoyment (Blythe, 2010). While seeking an opportunity to break away from daily routine errands, the entertainment and enjoyment at festivals could be an ideal refuge for some to spend the whole day there. Williams and Dargel (2004, p. 312) state that places that have a pleasant environment influence people to 'want to *spend longer in and to return to*' whereas unpleasant environment are avoided. Festivals and fairs allow exhibitors and visitors to carry out business in a



relatively relaxed, entertaining and therefore pleasing environment. So festivals can provide an ideal place for businesses to network and build relationships with those who will not necessarily buy but are happy to spend a good time at the event.

This opportunity to network in a jolly environment and the people's intention to have a day off, taking a break from daily routine and to have fun at trade-centric festivals, are reasons why festivals are increasingly focusing on nontransactional functions. Japanese trade show cultures, for instance, are considered more informational and promotional rather than a sales event (Smith et al., 2003). The purpose behind this is evident in Blythe's (2010) conceptual paper, which goes on to argue that current sales-led approaches to exhibitions could lead to wastage of resources. This is because visitors of trade exhibitions are more likely to be interested in a dialogue and interaction to co-create a meaningful discussion than engage in sales pitch/talk. Besides, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, not all customers attend festivals to buy but to break away from their daily routine and to have a good time in a pleasant environment. Too much focus on selling could result in customers feeling pressurised, and in extreme cases, they might experience harassment to buy. This can make the environment unpleasant. This is the reason why festivals are increasingly becoming not just venues for selling and transactions (which we can see in a number of fairs mentioned earlier in this section, for example, the trade deals at BioFach Trade Fair and International Festival for Business) but also ideal places for nonselling activities, such as promotion and building of relationships (Herbig et al., 1998; Smith et al., 2003; Blythe, 2010). Therefore, trade fairs and festivals offer both selling and nonselling opportunities (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011). And this incorporation of nontransaction-centric objectives at festivals, such as networking in a fun environment, eventually ignites the emotions in people, which is needed for better networking opportunities at festivals.

Therefore, the pleasurable experience, informality, socialisation and entertainment at the festivals and fairs have made festivals a productive space for networking and linking with the target audience not just for businesses and professionals but also for other entities interested in expanding the horizon of their relationships with relevant stakeholders. The ability to network at festivals helps

professionals and organisations to achieve various business objectives, for example, exchange, communication, strengthening relationships and promoting themselves in their respective networks to establish more useful contacts. Because of the purpose of this research, it was relevant to review the literature on business and networking especially in context to film festivals; the next section will review this.

### **3.5. Business and Networking at Film Festivals**

As discussed earlier, festivals offer unique opportunities for businesses to network and trade, and this is also the case at film festivals. Based on film festival websites (for example, Galway Film Fleadh, 2011b; Berlin International Film Festival, 2011; American Film Market, 2010) and as mentioned in Chapter 2, film festivals help in the *formation of community* whereby the members (of the community) share similar interests, identity and experiences by ‘virtue of their attendance at the festival’ (Iordanova, 2010, p. 13). This facilitates networking opportunities; for example, filmmakers can network with distributors, potential producers and journalists at festivals which can give them crucial exposure (Elsaesser, 2005). In turn, networking opportunities offer platforms for filmmakers and other industry representatives to not only trade and execute business deals but also to meet important people from the industry for marketing, promotion and more networking (snowballing from one person to another). These are the reasons why film festivals are effective marketplaces. Both the Galway Film Fleadh (2011b) and the Berlin International Film Festival (2011) have a film market where film industry professionals can engage in deal making, as an additional activity attached to its core activity, i.e., exhibiting films. Other examples of globally renowned film festivals that are effective marketplaces for films are the Festival de Cannes ([www.festival-cannes.fr/en](http://www.festival-cannes.fr/en), 2015) and the American Film Market in Santa Monica ([www.ifta-online.org](http://www.ifta-online.org), 2015). These film markets help distributors and filmmakers congregate at one place to discuss and execute business deals in an easy and cost-effective way and explore the opportunities of coproduction.

According to Montal (2004, p. 316), film festivals can benefit the film industry as a marketplace, bringing global buyers and sellers together to encourage

deal making that might otherwise require lot of travel and far-flung communications. Film festivals are also important venues to network and relevant for individual career goals as noted above, but these are also places that facilitate networking for coproduction. In the current environment of financial cuts and budget constraints, networking to coproduce facilitates opportunities for both parties within the network, which is why increasingly film festivals are hosting a more focused coproduction market, for example, Berlinale Co-Production Market (Berlinale, 2015). Montal (2004) further states that film festivals, besides providing a cost-effective market (to sell and other transaction-related activities), also offer cost-effective but efficient publicity for films and facilitate networking in the film industry. Film festivals provide an alternative distribution network where filmmakers can gain an audience for their films, develop their reputation within the industry and possibly find and network with commercial partners, such as a sales agent, distributor or financier. This is the reason why big brands in the industry are harnessing the benefits of networking and film festivals. For example, in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2.2.), we have seen Sony using film festivals for advertising and PR to connect with the target audience. Similarly, HBO Bryant Park Summer Film Festival ([www.bryantpark.org](http://www.bryantpark.org), 2014), Disney Princess Film Festival ([www.inthecitycanberra.com.au](http://www.inthecitycanberra.com.au), 2014) and Viacom sponsoring 2014's Redstone Film Festival ([www.bu.edu](http://www.bu.edu), 2014) are other examples of how big brands are using these events.

Film festivals facilitate in offering the chance of one-to-one meetings with the professionals attending the event in a focused business setting (Hudson & Tung, 2010). The one-to-one meeting is one of the most important reasons why professionals from the film industry attend film festivals, which (one-to-one meetings with the relevant professionals) is otherwise a difficult prospect. For example, it is often difficult for younger filmmakers to interact and meet well-established producers in a casual environment outside film festivals (more on this will be discussed in the results and discussion chapters). It is not just individual professionals and big companies but also public organisations that find attending the festival useful. For instance, the Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission (NIFC) used the 2004 Cannes Film Festival to hold a press conference to announce a production fund aimed at attracting filmmakers to use Northern Irish locations (Hudson & Tung, 2010).

Similarly, to promote Hong Kong to overseas producers, the HKFSO (Hong Kong Film Services Office) regularly participates in many trade shows and film festivals including the AFCI (Association of Film Commissioners International) and the Busan International Film Commission's Trade Shows, and the Berlinale and Cannes Film Festivals. This shows that public organisations in the film industry are also increasingly using the medium of film festivals to promote their own interests.

These networking practices at the film festivals, along with the ability to facilitate networking for the film industry, has encouraged the policymakers to support this activity at film festivals. For example, according to Vartiainen (2013), head of the MEDIA Unit in European Commission, 'networking activities has been a core objective of the MEDIA Programme of the European Union' to improve the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry. Similarly, the UK film policy review by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport argues for facilitating networking opportunities for the British film industry (Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2012). This is the reason why both the European Commission and British authorities fund and support those film festivals that offer and facilitate networking opportunities (MEDIA Desk UK, n.d.; BFI, n.d.).

Film festivals are important because unlike other festivals in general, their particular character involves attracting specific and key stakeholders from the film industry. For example, people who come to film festivals include filmmakers, film financiers, distributors, sales agents, broadcasters, film journalists and critics, film funds, major studios, producers/commissioners and film lovers. The congregation of these stakeholders is particular to film festivals, who depend on each other to make films. There are a number of offerings at film festivals, which vary from one to the other, for example, networking events, film exhibitions, talks and seminars, etc. However, what makes film festivals unique to other festivals is the ability to attract the relevant stakeholders within the film industry. This study explores what facilitates networking opportunities by understanding how commissioners and filmmakers consume and experience the networking opportunities and related services that are provided to them at the documentary film festivals. Therefore, it was useful to review the literature on consumption experience.

### **3.6. Experience**

What we can see from the discussion in the above sections is that networks and networking are important and that film festivals provide ideal venues within which to develop networks through networking activities. But what we do not know is specifically how these networks are established. Understanding this requires us to explore the ‘experience’ of the film professionals at these festivals. In doing so, we review the literature on experiences within the marketing field to develop the conceptual framework for this study. As most research on experiences within marketing come from the consumer perspective, this review starts with discussing contemporary thinking in the area of experiences: consumption experience, producing experience, mundane consumption experience, co-creation of experience, and experiential value in B2B context.

#### **3.6.1. Consumption Experience**

Although experience is seen as a source of knowledge and skill, observations of facts and events (Nass, 1994), in the literature on consumption, experience is conceptualised as an emotional feeling, which is aroused during the consumption process (Carù & Cova, 2006). In other words, the emotion-laden experience has the ability to occur to a greater or lesser degree in almost all consuming situations (Holbrook, Chestnut, Oliva, & Greenleaf, 1984; Holbrook, 1986). This differentiates consuming from buying, i.e., consumers do more than merely buying by processing information, by engaging in imaginative, emotional and appreciative consumption experiences (Olshavsky & Granbois, 1979; Woods, 1981). The reason behind this is the fact that consumers are feelers, besides thinkers and doers, and this is the reason why the emotion-laden experience is significant in their consumption (Addis & Holbrook, 2001). As a result, the consumption experience can occur before, during and after the consumption process (Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2002).

Arnould, Price and Zinkhan (2002) divide the consumption experience in the following period in time or sequence: (1) Searching for, planning, daydreaming, foreseeing or imagining the experience of consumption can occur prior to the actual

consumption. (2) During the consumption, choosing and paying, the packaging of the products, and encountering the service and its environment lead to purchase experience. (3) This is followed by the following consumption experience, which includes the sensation, the satiety, and the satisfaction/dissatisfaction. (4) And finally, postconsumption, individuals remember the consumption experience, and the nostalgic experience activates reliving a past experience through feelings. This means that consumption experience is not just limited to the service encounter at the point of sale but also goes beyond it.

Since feelings and emotions are important in consumption experiences, pleasure from fantasies, feelings and fun becomes important too in this experience (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Consumers' need for fun and pleasure during their consumption stresses the important role of hedonic consumption experience (Addis & Holbrook, 2001). Hedonic experience in consumption involves individuals experiencing products in multiple sensory modalities including tastes, sounds, tactile impressions and visual images (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Recent research has started framing experience in the B2B context as 'consumption experience'. For example, Cayla et al.'s (2013) research found business parties are relevant for B2B relationships because they are hedonic and festive. The hedonic and festive experience offers pleasure and fun, and these emotions are important for maintaining relationships. Their paper shows us that professionals are humans at the end of the day; aside from merely processing information, they also engage in imaginative, emotional and appreciative consumption experiences of networking activities. This is the reason why it is important to (1) frame experience in a B2B context as 'consumption experience' and (2) as explained in Section 1.3, frame film festival attendees (professionals attending the B2B networking event) in terms of consumption. However, there is very limited research on this topic. The results from this research, discussed in the analysis and discussion chapters, have contributed towards understanding this better.

Although there is scant research on the relevance of hedonic consumption in the context of B2B networking, a lot has been researched and published on hedonic consumption in the B2C context. The landmark papers of Holbrook and Hirschman

(1982) and Hirshman and Holbrook (1982) are among the first to have introduced explicitly the notion of experience in marketing and consumption, by arguing for the recognition of experiential aspects in consumption. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) differentiate the experiential approach to marketing from the then-prevailing information processing view and, in the process, defined the experiential nature of consumption as symbolic, hedonic and aesthetic, through the pursuit of fantasies, feelings and fun (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

In the same year, another paper published by Hirshman and Holbrook (1982) look at hedonic consumption in more detail while comparing it with traditional views in marketing. The literature in experience marketing gained further momentum in the 1980s from the ‘consumer behaviour odyssey’. The odyssey was the result of a research trip during the summer of 1986 where several consumer researchers (Russell Belk, Beth Hirschman, Morris Holbrook, Sid Levy, Jerry Olson, Dennis Rook, John Sherry, Melanie Wallendorf, Bill Wells and Harold H. Kassarian) banded together to travel in a van from California to Massachusetts, observing different aspects of consumer behaviour, using a variety of methods in a wide range of settings (Holbrook, 1987; Kassarian, 1987). Results from the ‘consumer behaviour odyssey’ show a shift towards acknowledging experiential aspects in consumer behaviour during the 1980s. In 1989, Belk et al. published their article based on the data collected during this excursion in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. This article documents ‘the properties of sacredness that consumers invest in material and experiential consumption’ and argued that ‘consumers accord sacred status to a variety of objects, places, and times that are value expressive’ (Belk et al., 1989, p. 30). By expressing these values through their consumption, consumers are able to take part in their celebration of their link to the society (as a whole) and to a particular individual.

The roots of this experiential perspective can be found during the 1950s and 1960s. Studies on motivational research (for example, Dichter, 1960) are among important precursors to the research on experiential aspects in consumption (Hirshman & Holbrook, 1982). They looked at emotional aspects of consumption and how products arouse and/or satisfy fantasies. Boyd and Levy (1963) argue the

necessity to go beyond needs and behaviour patterns to study the total ecosystem in consumption ‘in which their (consumers’) products play a part’ (p. 129). One of the examples Boyd and Levy (1963) use in their paper is of a gardener who might wish to mow his lawn as painlessly as possible yet he might take pleasure lavishing utmost care for his rose bushes. The gardener gives extra time to the roses simply because he enjoys doing the job; in comparison, the gardener who does not love mowing as much as he loves pruning and attending his rose plants will water and mow the grass only when he is obliged to do so. Such interest during that period could be due to awareness of the role of pleasure in human behaviour and at the same time curiosity (among both academics as well as businesses) in understanding why certain products are purchased and others are not and differences between customer segments (Boyd & Levy, 1963). This interest in experiences of consumers is visible in Jacoby et al.’s (1976) paper too, which argues time as a valuable resource which customers are likely to use as a substitute for money and vice versa.

In his presidential address at the eighth meeting of the Association for Consumer Research, Kassarian (1978) challenges the applicability of ‘information processing’ and ‘high involvement decisions’ by customers in *all* situations. Kassarian (1978) notices that consumer behaviour towards a product, which requires less involvement, is different from the ones where higher involvement with a product is needed. Some decisions made by consumers could be insignificant and produce unimportant solutions. Similarly, Jacoby et al.’s (1977) paper illustrates the importance of ‘psychological characteristics of the decision maker’ (unlike ‘information processing’ and ‘high involvement decisions’), such as emotions, social class and peer pressure. Additionally, ‘situational factors *extrinsic* to the product’ such as ‘fashion changes’ play an important role in product disposition (p. 26). The literature (see Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) shows the relevance of subjective *time* resource and *psychological* conceptualisation of ‘emotion and situational factors’ (that are extrinsic to the product) in experiential consumption.

So the literature shows that it is not necessary for consumers’ purchases to be dependent on the rational decision-making process. In illustrating this, Olshavsky and Granbois (1979) confirm Kassarian’s (1978) argument (challenging the applicability



of ‘information processing’ and ‘high involvement decisions’ by customers). Although Olshavsky and Granbois’s (1979) paper did not explicitly discuss experiential aspects, it was one of the earliest papers to question the widely accepted theories of the 1970s (which focused on the role of choice process, evaluative criteria and procedures, and the information-processing perspective in the customer’s decision-making process). This is an important paper as it facilitates a discussion, which later encouraged academics (such as, Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) to differentiate the experiential approach in consumer research from the then-prevailing information processing view.

Non–problem solving approaches in consumption eventually gained popularity, this ultimately resulted in understanding the experiential approaches in consumption. According to Olshavsky and Granbois (1979), purchases could occur because of a number of reasons including culturally mandated lifestyles, reminiscence from childhood preferences and/or influence of co-consumers, rather than being preceded by a choice process and information processing. Sheth (1979) continues this argument by suggesting that some aspects of consumer behaviour might ‘have not been very successfully understood by the rational problem-solving approaches of the decision making tradition’ (p. 416) and there is a need to look at non–problem solving aspects in choice behaviour and to explore symbolic aspects of a product in marketing. Non–problem solving and symbolic meanings in later years were integrated into the experiential perspective by academics, such as Holbrook and Hirschman (1982).

In the literature on experiential consumption, there are number of aspects which are not product features, yet they affect the consumption experience. For example, Holbrook and Schindler (2003) explore the nature and types of nostalgic bonding. In this article, they explore the experiential essence of nostalgia, look at the day-to-day emotions or mundane activities in which nostalgic phenomena are rooted and, in the process, they attempt to understand the role of nostalgia in the consumption experience. Holbrook and Schindler’s (2003) article highlights the importance of acknowledging ‘nostalgic bonding as a complex yet pervasive aspect of the human condition’ (p. 124) and ‘the meanings that they (people) attach to the role

of nostalgia in the consumption experience’ (p. 125). This means that nostalgia affects and is a part of people’s consumption experience, and this consumption could be of any product. It is not just the product that is crucial, but the role of nostalgia is also important in any consumption experience. How people remember can affect how they network with people they have met before or are familiar with, besides the festival and location of the festival. Besides nostalgia, other examples of extrinsic aspects that influence consumption experience are the space in which the product is displayed and/or consumed (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle, 2006) and the emotional state of consumers (Minkiewicz, Evans, & Bridson, 2014). The space in which a product is displayed affects the senses of human beings and therefore has the potential to influence the pleasure or displeasure during the consumption of the product. Similarly, depending on whether an individual is angry, happy or sad, it could affect whether or not and how much he or she is going to enjoy experiencing consumption of the product. Therefore, an array of issues is relevant in producing pleasurable experience for consumers.

### **3.6.2. Producing Experience**

With the progress in research on experiential aspects in consumption experiences, the 1990s also saw an upsurge in publications on producing experiences, i.e., staging hedonic consumption experiences for B2C customers. Articles in this area started appearing in nonacademic, practitioner magazines, such as *Advertising Age*. Pollack’s (1996) article in *Advertising Age* highlights and substantiates how ‘experiential marketing’ was used during the 1990s by businesses. For example, businesses took their products to the streets to offer consumers the opportunity to *experience* samples of their goods and services in the hope that experience would lead to purchase. Practitioner Tony Pace (who was the managing director of Momentum IMC, McCann’s event marketing unit in the 1990s) was quoted in Pollack (1996) to have stated, ‘[H]ere is an accelerating trend (referring to customers’ experiences), worldwide, toward the use of non-traditional marketing communications that link clients with their customers and allow real interaction’.

Producing extraordinary hedonic experiences is an effective marketing practice. Arnould and Price (1993) argue for producing extraordinary experiences in marketing for greater customer satisfaction. They investigate the provisions for producing extraordinary experiences within the commercial consumer/marketing framework and suggest the need for extraordinary experience to be staged: ‘service establishments may *orchestrate* affective, narrative, and ritual content through the skills, engagement, emotions, and dramatic sense of service providers’ (p. 28). One could also interpret this replacing the concept of ‘experience’ with that of ‘extraordinary experience’ to deliver greater customer satisfaction. According to Schmitt (1999), while traditional marketing sees ‘consumers as rational decision-makers who care about functional features and benefits’, experiential marketers view ‘consumers as rational and emotional human beings who are concerned with achieving pleasurable experiences’ (p. 53). Schmitt (1999) argues that since traditional marketing ‘has been developed in response to the industrial age’ (p. 55) (when customers’ were perceived to be seeking only utilitarian value), there is a need to look at consumer experiences rather than just the features-and-benefits approach used by traditional marketing.

According to Schmitt (1999), since customers’ experiences have the ability to provide values that are sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and relational, experience is then able to replace functional values (features and benefits). Customers’ satisfaction is not necessarily limited to the functional features and benefits of products; rather, they are keen to enhance their overall consumption experience as *emotions* often play a very important role in consumers’ decisions (Schmitt, 1999). Therefore, Schmitt argues that experiential marketers cannot depend only on traditional academic and market research methods (analytical, quantitative and verbal); instead, the methodologies have to be eclectic, and ‘methods and tools’ to be diverse and multifaceted.

Four characterises of experience marketing	Five types of experiences (also known as strategic experiential modules [SEMs])
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Customer experience</li> <li>2. Consumption is a holistic experience</li> <li>3. Customers being rational as well as emotional animals</li> <li>4. Methods are eclectic</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sensory experiences (SENSE)</li> <li>2. Customers' inner feelings and emotions which influence affective experiences (for example, mood and emotions—joy and happiness) - affective experiences (FEEL)</li> <li>3. Engaging with customers to offer creative cognitive experiences (THINK)</li> <li>4. Physical experiences, behaviours and lifestyles (ACT)</li> <li>5. Social identity experiences that result from relating to a reference group or culture (RELATE<sup>1</sup>).</li> </ol>

**Figure 3-1 Schmitt (1999) offers four characterises of experience marketing and five types of experiences, also known as strategic experiential modules (SEMs)**

Schmitt's (1999) paper offers ways for businesses to produce experiences; for example, he explains that SEMs (as explained in the above table) can be used or implemented to produce holistic experiences that help in integrating individual experiences into what he calls a 'holistic Gestalt'. To produce appropriate and effective experiences, for businesses to succeed in employing experiential marketing, he argues for organisational change that employs creative people who can bring in new ideas and methodologies in marketing, having a new spirit (which is sensitive to the sensual and emotional aspects of human nature) within the organisation and to not be hesitant in seeking external help to manage their customers' experiences. Schmitt (1999) argues that managers should consider new approaches within the organisation to maximise on new opportunities available from what he terms as 'experience marketing' (which involves producing/staging experiences for customers to sell products).

Service providers' involvement is important in producing hedonic experience. Carù and Cova's (2006) study of consumers of classical music concerts 'introduces and develops the subjective operations that consumers undertake in their efforts to be submerged (or immersed) in the consumption experience' (p. 4). They argue that the service provider is required to support the consumer 'throughout the

<sup>1</sup> RELATE incorporates aspects of SENSE, FEEL, THINK, ACT and RELATE, yet it 'expands beyond the individual's personal, private feelings, thus relating the individual to something outside his/her private state' (Schmitt, 1999, p. 62).

immersion process' (p. 12) to help consumers (particularly those that are hesitant) participate, actively engage and ultimately immerse themselves in the experience. This article also shows that research in the field of experiential marketing evolved (from looking at consumer behaviour in general during the '90s and the previous years) in the noughties by focusing on specific contexts, such as classical music concerts.

In 2009, in an effort to bridge the gap between theory and practice in 'experience marketing', Tynan and McKechnie (2009a) stressed the application of mutual value creation or co-creation of value, which also requires participation of the customers, as well as service providers in producing experiences. This paper explains the importance of 'experiences' in conjunction with 'co-creation of value' (from S-D logic) in marketing. They linked 'experience marketing' with S-D (service-dominant) logic (see Vargo & Lush, 2004; and Lush & Vargo, 2006) that emphasises 'the active role of customers in co-creating a valuable holistic experience as opposed to products and services *per se*' (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009, p. 502). The link between co-creation of value and experiential marketing will be discussed in more detail in a later section in this chapter. Rinallo et al.'s (2010) paper, which is one of the few papers that looks at producing experience in B2B context, also argues for an active role from the service providers in designing and setting valuable experiences for visitors of trade shows where value is often co-created between exhibitors and their target attendees.

During the '90s, the field of experience production received a lot of attention from practitioners as well as likeminded academics with the publication of Pine and Gilmore's work on 'experience economy'. Pine and Gilmore (1998) went a step further in arguing for staging experience as a product in itself rather than merely examining it as a part of any product consumption which previous articles argued for. Pine and Gilmore (1998) used a long-term perspective to distinguish four stages in the progression of economic value, i.e., commodities, goods, services and experiences. They also offer clear economic distinctions between commodities, goods, services and experiences as shown in Figure 3-2. Pine and Gilmore (1998) developed the

argument that an experience can be a distinctive economic offering in itself and could be seen as distinct from services, as services are from goods.

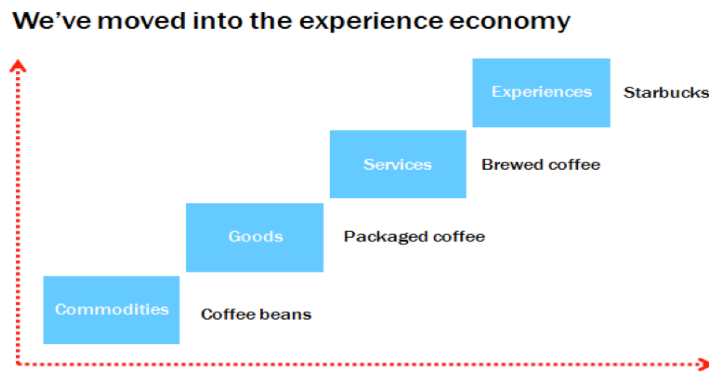
This was an interesting evolution in the literature of experience marketing because it moved away from the conceptual framework of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) (mentioned earlier), to 'experience as a product'. According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), since experiences tend to be highly differentiated products, which can therefore command relatively higher premium prices, 'experience' itself can be a core product that can be sold to consumers. An experiential product is one which offers hedonic and often extraordinary experiences to the one who is consuming the experience. The core offering in this product is the experience (Pine and Gilmore (1998) use the example of the experience in Disneyland) unlike other products where the experience is supplementary to the core offering.

But in light of the literature (as discussed in the earlier section), Pine and Gilmore's (1998) concept of experience can be a product in itself, and experience economy might be confusing because all products have the capability to produce and/or evoke (or even necessitate) an experience of sorts, and Pine and Gilmore's (1998) article clearly indicates that all experiences will involve certain products. It might not be appropriate for one type of experience to be singled out as a kind of product in itself. Nevertheless, Pine and Gilmore's (1999) book offers some interesting and important strategies to stage experience for consumers, and this is useful because depending on the type of product and desired outcome, marketing managers can use the four realms of an experience model to stage appropriate experiences for their consumers. The strategy seems to encourage 'marketing managers' to aim at achieving the 'sweet spot', so that the ultimate (or the richest) experience can be delivered to the customers and ultimately to make the most money from them.

However, not all academics were convinced that the notion of producing experience is novel and useful. For example, in 2000, Holbrook critically reviewed articles published mainly during the 1990s. In his article, Holbrook not only acknowledges the contribution of various academics during that period, such as Pine

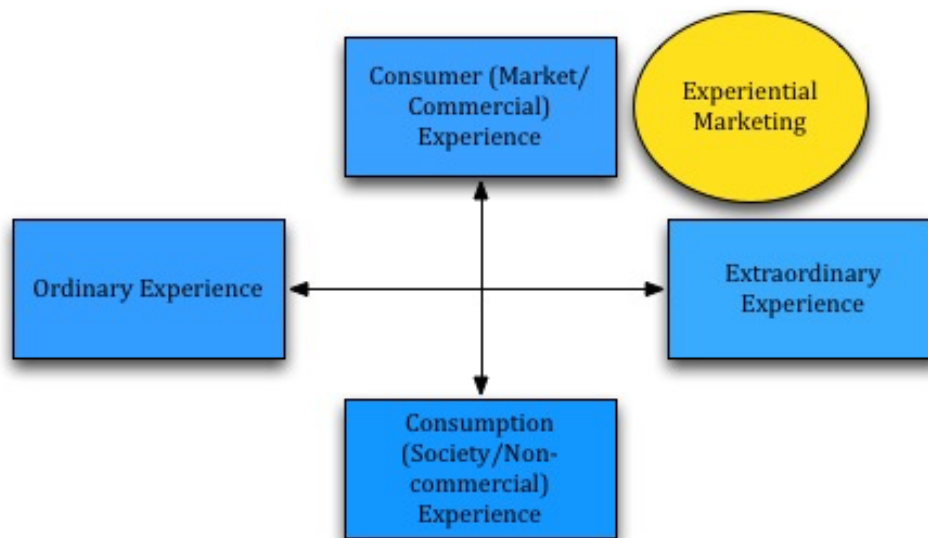
and Gilmore (1999), Schmitt (1999) and Wolf (1999) but also criticises the authors and their articles. One of the interesting criticisms is that some of the theories/concepts/ideas of certain prominent academics/authors of the 1990s (such as Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt, 1999 and Wolf, 1999) might have been considered as novel, but they may not necessarily be true. These academics might have failed to acknowledge previous academics and articles that may have discussed these theories/concepts/ideas in some shape and form or another. For example, on Pine and Gilmore's (1999) claim on presenting the 'concept of experiences as a distinct economic offering' (p. 207), Holbrook (2000) argues that it is 'false claims to intellectual primogeniture' (p. 179). Similarly, the strategic experiential modules (involving *SENSE*, *FEEL*, *THINK*, *ACT*, and *RELATE*) offered by Schmitt (1999) have been argued by Holbrook (2000) to have a strong similarity with 'the framework that underlies our (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) conceptualization of fantasies, feelings, and fun or the three F's' (p. 182). Also 'traces of (say) Thorstein Veblen ([1899] 1967) or Stefan Linder (1970) (appears) in Wolf's comments on leisure and the scarcity of free time' (Holbrook, 2000, p. 184). These examples show that some of the theories which might have been introduced as a novel concepts might have been previously discussed, but Holbrook's (2000) criticism does not end here.

Holbrook (2000), who is one of the prominent academics in experiential marketing, disagrees with a number of theories and concepts put forward in articles of the 1990s. For example, he disagrees with Pine and Gilmore's (1999) ideological view of commerce (where experience is an evolved form of product from services, which moved from goods, and goods in turn from commodities—as seen in Figure 3-2 below), as well as Schmitt's (1999) suggestion that 'it is consumers more than merely our views of consumers that have changed' (p. 181); instead, Holbrook suggests that 'our own understanding of them has been radically revised' (p. 182).



**Figure 3-2 Economic progress as a succession of stages from commodities to goods to services to experiences, based on Pine and Gilmore's (1999, p. 22) ideological view on experience economy**

One of the arguments that Holbrook (2000) puts forward is one that contradicts not only Pine and Gilmore (1999) (that experience can be sold as a distinctive offering/product) but also a number of other academics who may have argued for producing and staging extraordinary consumer experience. His argument states, 'I believe that every consumption event provides some form of experience(s)' (Holbrook, 2000, p. 180). Later, Carù and Cova (2003) extended this argument further to suggest that it is important to consider all types of experience, including those that occur with family, friends and the wider community, as seen in Figure 3-3 below.



**Figure 3-3 The 'less ideological view of the consumption experience', i.e., the typology of consumption experience put forward by Carù and Cova (2003, p. 282)**



In spite of the limited but interesting research on ordinary experiences, it did not get much impetus from fellow researchers. There is room to understand the relevance of ordinary or mundane consumptions in offering hedonic experiences.

### **3.6.3. Mundane Consumption Experience**

In the absence of an existing standard definition of ‘ordinary and mundane’ in consumption experience, it is important to define the scope of ‘ordinary and mundane’ in this research. While looking at the consumption of blue jeans, Miller and Woodward (2012), argued that ‘ordinary’ must not be taken for granted; in fact, it is far from something to disparage. This importance reflects in how they have explained ‘ordinary’, i.e., it is ‘something embedded in everyday routine and practical actions rather than made explicit’ (pp. 145–146). Miller and Woodward (2012) found that ‘understanding how routines come to be and how they fade away, the rule of internalised expectations . . . all help us in our appreciation of how the ordinary works as an often taken-for-granted aspect of everyday life and practice’ (pp. 151–152).

Kleine III and Kernan (1991), Kleine III, et al. (1993) and Laverie et al. (2002) show that ordinary and mundane is something that is rooted in everyday life, but it also indicates that the ordinariness or the mundaneness is situational. In other words, something that is ordinary or mundane depends on the context. For example, a sandwich can be ordinary for a New Yorker as it is a regular option for an everyday meal; however, for an Assamese living in a remote village of Assam, who has not necessarily eaten a sandwich in his/her life, a sandwich can be exotic. From the experiential perspective, an ordinary and mundane experience is one which ‘corresponds to everyday life, routine, the past, and the passive acceptance of events’, and offers simple pleasure (Carù & Cova, 2003, p. 275). For the purpose of this chapter, ‘ordinary’ and ‘mundane’ have been used synonymously and defined as simple and basic occurrences in everyday life, which are situational and contextualised. In this research, mundane experiences in consumption are not limited to tangible products but extend to processes and intangibles and refer to those aspects that do not necessarily involve fantasies and extraordinary feelings and fun.

Scholars from a variety of fields have researched the concept of ‘ordinary and mundane’ in different contexts. For example, in the anthropological field of ‘material culture study’ the research carried out by scholars such as Daniel Miller is noteworthy. Miller’s studies (for instance, see Miller, 2009, 2010) are fascinating as they contribute to an understanding of human relationships with ordinary materials. He challenges a number of traditional views, for example, theories related to semantics and materialistic superficiality. The notion that something stands for or represents something, for example, the wearer of denim jeans feeling special and being associated with a fashion trend, is not always true. Miller and Woodward (2012) argue that people also wear jeans just to be ordinary and not to stand out, because a lot of people wear jeans and it helps them to blend in. The experience of ordinary is an important pleasure, for example, for immigrants wear jeans to not stand out in a host community. In the field of ‘sustainable consumption’ research, scholars such as Phipps and Brace-Govan (2011) and Phipps, et al. (2013) explain the sustainable consumption of mundane elements, such as water and communal toys, play an important role in human lives. Although their papers are aimed towards the literature on theories to understand improving sustainable consumptions, they give us interesting insights on the importance of a mundane product like water in human consumption and pleasure in everyday life.

Similarly, in the field of consumer research, there has been some interest in mundane products and consumption, especially from scholars such as Robert E. Kleine III. For example, Kleine III and Kernan (1991) looked at the contextual influences on the meanings that are ascribed to ordinary consumption. Kleine III et al. (1993) and Laverie et al. (2002) looked at the semantics of ‘social identity of self’ through mundane consumption and show the relevance of mundane products due to their complimentary relations with other products. Carù and Cova (2003) argued the importance of taking the full breadth of the experience phenomenon into account, including ordinary consumption experience such as that which occurs with family, friends and the wider community. While critically reviewing the literature on experience marketing, one of the things that Holbrook (2000) emphasises is that ‘every consumption event provides some form of experience(s)’ (p. 180). He makes this comment while critically commenting on the literature on extraordinary

experience and the staging of memorable experience (see experience economy by Pine and Gilmore (1999)). Everyday life mostly includes ordinary experiences grounded in elements obtained in other ways, for example, family and friends (Carù and Cova, 2003). Holt (1995) argues that the ordinary aspect of objects and mutual-meaning creation helps to facilitate enjoyment from ordinary situations, such as home runs in baseball games. Looking at consumer behaviour surrounding the Christmas celebration, McKechnie and Tynan (2006) found that the ordinary behaviours of parents during Christmas turn the celebration into an extraordinary event for both younger and older generations, such as preparing meals and giving presents. Therefore, as evident in the literature review in this section, scholars have acknowledged the importance of ‘ordinary consumption’ experiences in the B2C context, but the B2B literature has not explored yet the ordinary in a B2B context. The result of this study has addressed this gap in the analysis and discussion chapters. Ordinary experiences created with friends and family in everyday life show that experience is co-created with others too, but just like the literature on mundane experience, the literature on co-creating experiences is also scant.

#### **3.6.4. Co-Creation of Experience**

##### *Value Co-Creation*

Over the past decade, since Vargo and Lusch (2004) first published their work on the S-D logic, the idea of co-creation has taken centre stage in the field of marketing. In service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2008) (hereafter S-D logic), the role of firms is to propose and co-create value and provide service with its customers, and the customers’ role is to co-create value ‘through the integration of firm-provided resources with other private and public resources’ (Vargo et al., 2008, p. 148). According to Vargo and Lusch (2008), customers are not just a compulsory coproducer of value but also always the co-creator of value (which includes coproduction role of customers), implying the value-creation process is interactional.

Although researchers used the terms ‘co-creation’ and ‘coproduction’ to describe the dialogue and interactions (during product design, production, delivery and consumption) between the customer and the supplier (Payne, Storbacka, Frow, &

Knox, 2009), there is a difference between the two terms. A customer's engagement with the production process, which is managed by the service provider, is coproduction in the service process, whereas in co-creation, customers are in-charge of creating the value and service providers are invited to this process as co-creator (Grönroos, 2011). The user creates the value for the user; in other words, the customer as user of a service is party to business interaction and engagement, which creates value. This is because value is created for users when the user uses the product and integrates resources provided by the firm with other necessary and available resources in a self-service process and not necessarily when it is produced (Grönroos, 2011). This also shows how the concept of value lines up with the theories on experience discussed earlier. When Pine and Gilmore (1998) talk about customers' active participation and involvement in creating the experience, or when Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), Schmitt (1999) and others mention about customers using their multiple senses experience pleasure during their consumption experience, the consumer is party to the business engagement and creates value for themselves by integrating their resources with the firm's during their consumption process, i.e., while engaged in usage. The 'S-D logic offers an understanding of marketing that emphasises the marketing of service and not of goods or services, to be achieved through dialogue, the co-creation of value with network partners and a focus on experiences' (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009a, p. 502). Vargo and Lush (2004), who introduced 'S-D logic', have also emphasised the importance of experiences in marketing. Therefore, SDL is quite central to the consumption experience. Going back to the difference between co-creation and coproduction, during coproduction the invention of the value is firm-scripted, whereas in co-creation it is relatively less firm-scripted but customers are enabled to do their own value-creation activities mutually with the firm (Grönroos & Voima, 2013).

Chathoth et al. (2013) have listed six differences below between co-creation and coproduction:

1. While co-production involves participation of customers to create the core-offering by sharing inventiveness and design process, co-creation is tied more closely towards usage (as discussed earlier), consumption, value that

occurs at the time of use, consumption, or experience (value-in-use) and the notion that value can be determined only by the customer. Therefore the co-creation is able to create unique personalised experience.

2. Customers' role is relatively more passive in co-production, in comparison to co-creation.
3. Since in co-production, customers' participation is seen in the development of the product, managers and employees are the key actors, to manufacture, standardise and inventory products without customers' involvement. Whereas in co-creation customers' play a more central role to create as well as in service provision, to improve the value-in-use.
4. While co-production tends to be more firm-centric, co-creation is customer- and experience-centric.
5. In co-production firms generate innovation but has relatively more control. But in co-creation customers have more control on the product to engage with it imaginatively, creatively and constructively in ways not necessarily intended by the provider;
6. Co-creation tends to be based more on constant and intensive dialogue with customers as well as other stakeholders, like suppliers, government, and community, in comparison to co-production, which tends to be less transparent from this perspective.

Value in this respect of S-D logic can be attained in use rather than in exchange. This means that value is 'derived and determined in use – the integration and application of resources in a specific context' instead of 'in exchange – embedded in firm output and captured by price' (Vargo, Maglio, & Akaka, 2008, p. 145). The value determined by exchange remains an important component in the co-creation of value. This means that the roles of producers and consumers are not distinct in the context of the S-D logic, which means that value is co-created, jointly and reciprocally, though integration of resources and application of competences of all stakeholders (Vargo, Maglio, & Akaka, 2008). This could range from combined efforts of firms, employees, customers, stockholders, government agencies, to all other entities related to any given exchange, although the value is always determined by the beneficiary (e.g., customer). While referring to service-dominant logic and

service logic, it is important to acknowledge the similarities and differences between the two concepts, as Grönroos and Gummerus (2014) pointed all out:

<i>Similarities</i>		
Objective	A perspective on value creation for business and marketing	
Meaning of service	Application of knowledge and skills to resources to support someone's value creation	
Resources used	The resources used by a provider (goods, service activities, information, or any other type of tangible or intangible resources) are not important for the implementation of a service perspective	
<i>Differences</i>		
Level of perspective	<i>SL</i> Managerial; defined concepts	<i>SDL</i> Systemic; abstract; metaphorical
Goal of the service perspective	Value creation, where service functions as a facilitator; through service, the user's value creation gets facilitated, which enables the provider to capture value by providing service	Service is exchanged for service
Value	Defined as value-in-use	Value used with different meanings in different contexts
Value generation process	A process including all actions by all actors involved, which ultimately leads to value for a user (as exemplified by the customer)	Not explicitly discussed; implicitly, an all-encompassing value creation process including all actors (e.g. provider, customer, others) involved
Locus of value creation	Customer's creation of value-in-use	Not explicitly defined; implicitly, an all-encompassing process including actions by providers, customers, and other actors
The nature of value as value-in-use	Evolving as value-in-use in a cumulative process, with favourable and unfavourable phases throughout the customer's value creation	
Value in use: contextual influence	The qualifying dimension of a utility-based value concept evolving during use; when social, physical, mental, or other contextual factors are altered, the level of value-in-use changes	Sometimes replaced by the expression value-in-context, which disguises the qualifying aspect of value-in-use as being created during the many forms of use
Value spheres	Three, distinctly different value spheres: a provider sphere closed to the customer, a customer sphere closed to the provider, and a joint sphere where customers and providers directly interact and may co-create value	Not explicitly included; implicitly, one value sphere for an all-encompassing value creation process, in which all actors involved co-create value
Interaction	Explicitly defined with a clear, conceptual distinction between direct and indirect interactions; direct interactions with intelligent resources (people, intelligent systems) enable co-creation; indirect interaction with non-intelligent resources (most products and systems) do not	Not explicitly defined, only implicitly addressed through foundational premises
Co-creation	A joint directly interactive process in which the actors' (e.g. provider's and customer's) processes merge into one collaborative, dialogical process, such that a co-creation platform forms	Actions taken by all actors involved in a process (e.g. providers, customers), regardless of how they relate to each other
Value co-creation	Actions taken by the actors on a co-creation platform, where the actors may directly and actively influence each other's processes (e.g. supplier service process and customer consumption and value creation processes)	Actions contributing to value for customers during an all-encompassing value creation process by all actors involved (e.g. providers, customers, others), regardless of how they relate to one another or the process
Driver of value creation	The customer drives value creation and is in charge of it	The provider drives value creation and is in charge of it
Division of roles in value co-creation	The provider may engage with the customer's value creation and co-create value with the customer	The customer may engage with the provider's process and co-create value with the provider
Value creation: customer's role	The customer both creates and determines value (as value-in-use)	The customer only determines value (as value-in-use)
Value creation: provider's role	The provider compiles resources embedded with potential value-in-use through which the customer's value creation is facilitated	The provider co-creates value
Value co-creation: customer ecosystem's role	During interactions with persons in the social ecosystem, the customer may socially co-create value with them	Abstract; not explicitly discussed
Marketing: making promises through value propositions	The provider can go beyond making promises by offering value propositions and undertake direct, interactive actions on a co-creation platform to actively and directly influence the customer's value creation and value fulfilment	The provider can only offer value propositions
Marketing: keeping promises	By co-creating value with its customers, the provider may extend the keeping of promises beyond product performance;	Not explicitly discussed

Table 3-1 Difference between service logic and service-dominant logic (Grönroos & Gummerus, 2014, pp. 213–214)

As shown in Table 3-1 above, from Grönroos & Gummerus, 2014 (pp. 213–214) the similarities between service logic and service-dominant logic are that both are perspectives on value creation for business and marketing, and in these perspectives, knowledge and skills are applied to the resources to support value creation. However, as the table 3-1 shows, there are several differences between the two logics; for example, in service logic, value is defined as value-in-use whereas in service-dominant logic, value is used with different meanings in different contexts. In service logic, the value generation process includes all actions by all actors involved, which ultimately leads to value for a user, such as customers; similarly, the locus of value creation is the customer's creation of value-in-use. But in service-dominant logic, the value generation process and the locus of value creation are implicitly mentioned to imply an all-encompassing value-creation process for all actors, including providers, customers and others involved. In service logic, co-creation is an interactive process in which the providers and customers' processes merge into one collaborative process. However, in service-dominant logic, it does not matter what the actions of the providers are; customers and actors relate to each other, as long as actors are involved in the process of co-creation. In service logic, customer drives value creation and is in charge of it; in service-dominant logic, the provider drives and is in charge of it. In service logic, the customer creates as well as determines the value-in-use whereas in service-dominant logic, the customer only determines value-in-use.

Co-creation is a way for firms to create value with the customers, for the customers, besides the firm and other stakeholders involved in the co-creation process. Co-creation involves proactive involvement by firms in the value creation strategy through co-opting consumer competences (Durugbo & Pawar, 2014). This proactive involvement of firms encourages actively involving stakeholders to customise, personalise and invent solutions to co-create the values for consumers, and customers are very important stakeholders in this process. However, the challenge to implement this could be the ability to harmonise the 'relationship between: (i) the level of customer involvement and technique selection strategies, (ii) costs and consensus during co-creation, (iii) organisation constraints and the transformation of existing value to co-created value, and (iv) dialogues and co-creation relationships



(i.e. individuals working on common or different activities)' (Durugbo & Pawar, 2014, p. 4,383). To overcome this challenge, dialogue and interaction are important at multiple levels between relevant stakeholders, multiple times and using multiple mediums.

Although involvement of consumers in the service offered by the producers is pivotal in the value co-creation process, it is not necessarily always the case. In other words, as Grönroos (2011) argued, 'the unique contribution of a service perspective on business (service logic) is not that customers always are co-creators of value, but rather that under certain circumstances the service provider gets opportunities to co-create value together with its customers' (p. 279). This is an important argument because it helps to understand that customers do not always, but only under certain circumstances, co-create value. Co-creation of value should not be expected on all occasions, and in all circumstances and situations; rather, it emerges as a complex phenomenon.

Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, the beneficiary (e.g., the customer) always determines the value, but what makes this co-created value interesting is that it is experiential in nature. As Grönroos (2011) states, 'value is always uniquely and both experientially and contextually perceived and determined by the customer' (p. 295). Similarly, Vargo and Lusch (2008) acknowledge the phenomenological and experiential nature of the value that is co-created, but Grönroos (2011) argued that the expression phenomenological could be interpreted in more than one way (i.e., from value being experientially perceived to experientially determined) and hence can be vague. Nonetheless, he accepts that the value co-created is dependent on the phenomenological context and is therefore experientially perceived and evaluated by consumers.

Being experiential in nature, it is important to note that value is co-created not only between producer and consumer but also between consumers themselves. Rowley, Kupiec-Teahan and Leeming (2007) found in their research that innovative strategies of firms could foster a sense of community among users and facilitate communication with the community to develop and maintain community-based

relationships, thereby co-creating value between consumers themselves. This is not necessarily about developing new products by coproducing but rather about co-creating their service experience as a community. This means that instead of individual customer co-creating value with the producer, consumers co-create value together as a community between themselves (Rowley, Kupiec-Teahan, & Leeming, 2007). This will of course benefit the company, which will spur, directly and indirectly, further community development.

Co-creation of value among a group of consumers is a complex process. 'A group can be defined as the assemblage of two or more people who share common interests or goals, perceive or may develop some form of cohesiveness and who interact with one another on a social respectively task-oriented level' (Finsterwalder & Tuzovic, 2010). In a group of consumers, each one is an individual in their own right; therefore, the respective consumer-provider interaction will vary from one consumer to another. 'Focusing on group service processes, it can be assumed that they potentially develop a much higher complexity due to the personal sphere and variability of each customer's performance in co-creating the service while being a group member' (Finsterwalder & Tuzovic, 2010, p. 112). This means that in a group setting, different levels of consumer behaviour can occur, meaning the collective consumption experience created could vary from one situation and/or time to another. Nevertheless, the experiential value is co-created between and by the consumers, which, as discussed earlier, is evaluated by the consumers. Since this study aims at understanding the experience of networking, it was relevant to closely examine the aspect of co-creation of experience. The discussion in this section on service logic and service-dominant logic has shown that the value-creation processes is very important, but distinguishing the two logics has shown the relevance of service-dominant logic in the creation of experiences, because the co-creation of experience at the festival is not just limited to provider and customers but extends beyond to include other actors participating at the event, and the value co-created can have different meanings in different contexts for different people. The following section discusses these aspects of co-creation of experiences in more detail.

### *Co-Creation of Experience*

While the previous section has examined the literature on co-creation of value, this section reviews the literature written specifically on and related to co-creation of experience. As discussed earlier, experience is a unique value to consumption, and various scholars have acknowledged this since the publication of landmark papers: Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) in the 1980s. Since Vargo and Lusch's consolidated research on value co-creation and S-D logic, scholars have examined the concept of co-creating value from the perspective of co-creating experiences. According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), the concept of co-creation is about allowing the customers to co-construct the service experience to suit their context. This means that to create an experience environment it is important that consumers are able to actively participate in dialogue and consequently co-construct personalisation of their experiences. This of course means that even though the product might be the same, because of customers' participation, they construct different experiences for themselves (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Therefore, personalised consumer experiences through conversation and interaction between customers, firms and consumer communities are important in the value co-creation process.

S-D logic has also been studied in the context of experience marketing specifically; in fact, it has been argued that this logic could help in bridging the divide between theory and practice of experience marketing. Tynan and McKechnie (2009a) argue in their conceptual paper the importance of 'managing the marketing experience through its whole lifespan including the pre- and post-experience stages' (p. 511). However, they argue that it is important to acknowledge the relevance of active participation from customers and others in the network, to co-create the experience rather than merely taking the approach to stage experience for customers. This means sharing information, meaningful dialogue and interactions between all parties and this is accompanied by sharing of risks (privacy related) by all parties (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009a). The value here is the experience, and this value is co-created by members of the whole network including businesses, customers, shareholders, partners within the supply chain and other stakeholders.

Recent papers took a step further in understanding how consumers co-create their experience using empirical research. Minkiewicz, Evans and Bridson's (2014) paper also sheds light on what influences the nature of customers' consumption experiences. These influencers include the emotional state of consumers, their previous exposure to the experience and interactions with those who accompanied them and the design of the servicescape. Minkiewicz, Evans, and Bridson (2014) show that in the heritage sector, heritage customers co-create their consumption experience through coproduction, engagement and personalisation. Coproduction involves active participation in activity/ies performed in the experience, engagement involves a psychological state of cognitive and emotional immersion and personalisation involves tailoring experiences to customers' own needs through customisation, interactions with the provider and technologies available to them. Therefore, producers (or the service representatives) and customers together play an important role in co-creating the experience.

While existing research places a lot of emphasis on producers and consumers co-creating experiences together, few focus on how experiences are co-created by and between consumers themselves. Consumer-to-consumer (C2C) interaction facilitates both co-creation of value and evaluation of that value (Chen, Drennan, & Andrews, 2012), the reason being social interactions occur during consumption experience, and these interactions and subjective interpretations from these interactions influence the experience value of consumption (Flint, 2006). This is evident in Tynan and McKechnie's (2009b) and McKechnie and Tynan's (2006) papers, which show how consumers co-construct with their family (co-consumers) the hedonic meanings through the celebration of Christmas. Similarly, Seo's (2013) paper on eSports argues that multiple online and offline interactions among consumers play important roles in enriching and sustaining the experiential value in the consumption of eSports. This study is about networking experiences and it was relevant to also understand the existing literature related to how networking value can be co-created, besides the experience in general reviewed in this section.

As discussed in the earlier sections, the networking value is an important aspect at the B2B events for participatory professionals and businesses, especially in the arts and cultural industries. The market value of products in the art and cultural industries is linked to the subjective influence of other people (Preece & Kerrigan, 2015). Therefore, their economic value is ‘determined by intangible (and ephemeral) social value formed from and within specific context by particular people’ (Currid, 2007, p. 386). What Currid (2007) terms ‘social value’ seems to represent a combination of Bourdieu’s social and cultural capital in that members of a group are connected to each other, primarily through shared cultural capital. But crucially, Currid (2007) notes the importance of the ‘social situation’ within which such capital is formed and solidified. The context can be subjective in nature and people’s interpretation can also be subjective (Shankar & Goulding, 2001). Nevertheless, key industry figures’ subjective opinion matters within the social milieu of the artists (Currid, 2007).

Experiential value is about ‘the extent to which a product creates appropriate experience, feelings, and emotions for the customer’ (Smith & Colgate, 2007, p. 10). Experiential value offers experience, feelings and emotions, which is hedonic in nature. In other words, experiential value relates to pleasurable and hedonic experiences, which are also subjective in nature. So the similarity between Currid’s (2007) social value in her paper titled ‘economics of a good party . . .’ and experiential value is that both revolve around pleasure. Currid (2007) explains that the pleasure in the informal social parties stages scenes that help artists and other professionals to know each other and their artistic/cultural skills and offerings, which then helps to create value of themselves and/or for their cultural offerings. The difference between Currid’s (2007) social value and Pierre Bourdieu’s (1985) social capital is that Currid’s (2007) work seems to take further our understanding that social pleasurable environment creates value for people and their cultural offerings by encouraging formation and development of bonds in such environment, and this is beyond the social capital one has gained in their upbringing and social class.

Studies have shown the importance of social value and networking in art and cultural products (Currid, 2007) and how, to create value, networking works to facilitate interaction between different networks, actors and/or firms in the film industry. For example, Storper and Christopherson's (1987) paper shows how the film industry is organised around the transactions among a network of small firms that are vertically integrated, and networking facilitates interaction between these small firms. Blair et al.'s (2003) empirical paper shows networking helps to facilitate interaction between someone who is looking for a job and someone who has a job to offer in the film industry. These networks are important because of the structure of the film industry as discussed by Storper and Christopherson (1987). This structure results in Blair et al.'s (2003) findings about the jobs being temporary in this industry. Similarly Cattani and Ferriani's (2008) paper shows that one is in a better position to create social value to progress in the film industry when he or she networks socially because it facilitates interactions and connections with the relevant people in the industry. Currid-Halkett and Ravid's (2012) study illustrates how, to create value, networking works to facilitate interaction between different networks, actors and/or firms in the film industry. Existing research also highlights the importance of business events like film festivals in the film industry to create networking value for career progression and business development (for example, Durie et al., 2000; Kerrigan, 2010; Currid-Halkett & Ravid, 2012). However, co-creation of networking value is a relatively new area of research, not only in film marketing but also across the broader marketing literature.

In the case of networking value, co-creation is not limited to providers and consumers but also extends between consumers themselves, i.e., consumers co-create the networking value through resource integration (for example, a filmmaker's project and commissioners' useful contacts and financial support) and applying their competencies and skills (for example, their good communication skills). Understanding what Currid talks of as social value points to the need to understand the social milieu within which such co-creation takes place. As mentioned earlier, networking is about developing, managing and fostering mutually beneficial relationships, so in a manner, it can be said that it is co-created by the consumers anyway. For a network to emerge between two or more entities, there has to be active

involvement and participation to work together and mutual trust between the entities (Tretyak & Popov, 2009). This *active involvement* and *participation* in creating the networking value is important because as Wasserman and Faust (1994) argues, the idea of networks is grounded in establishing links between individuals, groups of people and departments within organisations and/or businesses, and these links offer mutual benefits to those in the network.

So these links, between various parties, are built on mutual commitment and mutual dependence to achieve their respective objectives (Holm, Eriksson, & Johanson, 1999). Therefore, for networking value, it is not just limited to co-creation of value between provider and consumers but also between consumers themselves. While offering ‘networking opportunity’ is a service, it is not necessarily the same as those services which involve interaction between individual customers and provider. Rather it is a service which involves interactions between consumer groups, and as mentioned earlier, co-creation of value among a group of consumers is a complex process. Therefore, consumers’ experience in evaluating the co-created networking value is complex because of the phenomenon of experiencing it with multiple parties. However, relatively less research has been done to understand how the consumer-participants in the networking events co-create value between themselves and consumption of the co-created networking experience. The primary results in this study will help to understand this in detail.

Also, in spite of the growing interest from academics and researchers in co-creating experiences and networking, and what we know about this from the existing literature, there is scant research on this in the context of B2B marketing and of course in relation to the film industry. This is besides the fact that there is limited research on the complex and temporal nature of consumption experience in general and consumption experience of B2B networking in particular. The results from this study bring attention to this issue and aims at addressing this gap in the academic literature.

### *Plasticity and the Temporal Nature of the Consumption Experience*

Experience is temporal and is prone to change. In reference to experiential consumption, Addis and Holbrook (2001) argue that ‘since the consumption outcomes entail constantly evolving aspects of subjective responses’ (p. 59), the experiences are variable. Hirshman and Holbrook (1982) have stressed the temporal nature of hedonic consumption by questioning temporal shifts in hedonic energy and dynamic patterns of product usage. Tynan and McKechnie (2009a) have also acknowledged the temporal aspect of consumption experience making it complex and expensive to orchestrate as the ‘interaction with the customer can be extended over time (consumption experience), involve large numbers of touch-points and (consumption experience) require substantial amounts of interaction with many parties in the network and brand community’ (p. 510).

When consumers consume in groups, as discussed earlier, the co-creation process is complex, but the changing and evolving nature of the experience further augment this complexity. Minkiewicz et al. (2014) found in their research that the emotional state of customers and the design of the experience space, among other factors, influenced the manner in which people personalised and engaged in their experience. However, business managers ‘cannot control how individuals go about co-constructing their experiences’ (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004, p. 11). Furthermore, Hirshman and Holbrook (1982) stated that ‘individual differences in ethnic background, social class and gender cause products to vary greatly in the emotions and fantasies they inspire in a consumer’ (p. 99). In the same year, another article by Hirschman (1982) showed that an individual’s preference for leisure activities and hedonic consumption depended on their ethnicity. At B2B networking events, participant-consumers’ backgrounds will vary considerably, and therefore, their experience and participation in co-creation of networking value collectively is likely to vary from time to time and situation to situation.

This indicates that consumption experience is also plastic in nature. ‘Plastic is the very idea of its infinite transformation’ and is associated with materials in our daily life which can be moulded and shaped, resulting in sudden transformation



(Barthes, 2009, p. 110). Plasticity is being real yet infinitely malleable, and this makes reality possible within the scope of an inscribed virtual condition (Toth, 2013). Therefore, the concept of plasticity is about changeability and modifiability and is dependent on the subjective self-consciousness of humans (Dijck, 2008). Since the value of art and culture and its consumers and gatekeepers are constantly in flux, because of the constantly evolving but influencing social dynamics (Currid, 2007), and as discussed earlier, in ‘group consumption’, networking experience is prone to change from time to time and/or situation to situation, the experience is plastic in nature.

However, the temporal and plastic nature of hedonic experiences has not been examined in detail not only in the context of B2B marketing but also more broadly. While examining the nature and characteristics of the experiences that facilitate networking, the results in Chapter 7 in this thesis will address this gap and contribute in understanding the temporal and plastic nature of hedonic experience.

### **3.6.5. Experiential Value in B2B Context**

Film festivals play an important role in facilitating networking among the professionals in the film industry. According to Kerrigan (2010), the marketplace in a film festival is a platform where film industry representatives congregate at one place to discuss and execute business deals in an easy and cost-effective way. Film festivals offer opportunities for face-to-face contacts, detailed exchange of information, transactions and building relationships. Positive relationships built at the festivals can help people (working in the film industry) in future through positive word-of-mouth recommendations, suggestions and sources of information, and as evident in Blair et al.’s (2001) study, these are very important to work in the film industry. Therefore, besides the cultural, social and other economic roles of film festivals, they are also an important B2B networking event.

Filmmakers and commissioners are important stakeholders at film festivals and their experience matters. While the documentary film industry is dependent on the filmmakers and the commissioners, filmmakers and commissioners are dependent

on each other. Even though they are important stakeholders and the interaction between them at the film festival has a direct effect on the industry, there is relatively insufficient research to understand their experiences at the festivals. Understanding this will help to know what facilitates networking between these professionals.

Recently, however, there has been some progress on consumption experiences in relation to experiential marketing in the B2B context, for example, Rinallo et al.'s (2010) paper. This paper is very important because it is one of the first studies that aimed at investigating business visitors' experiences and behaviours from an experiential perspective in marketing. This paper contributes by showing that industrial marketers who employ experiential marketing techniques in their 'exhibition stands' are likely to increase their trade show performances and improve networking opportunities. It gives an interesting perspective on business visitors' behaviour in context to designing and setting valuable experiences for them. It shows the importance of product attributes, the quality of interactions between the stand personnel and other visitors, and facilitating learning opportunities.

However, existing studies do not see much influence of fun, fantasies and hedonic feelings on the business customers' behaviour, at business-centric events. For example, Rinallo et al. (2010) found 'visitor behaviour at trade shows is not characterised by the "fun, fantasies and feelings" that motivate hedonic consumer experiences. This is not to deny that industrial buyers may occasionally have fun or experience unforgettable moments at trade shows. However, sensorial stimulation is not, most of the time, an end in itself' (p. 253). Components such as background music, exhibition stands, aesthetic appeal have minor impact on visitors' satisfaction. Therefore, Rinallo et al.'s (2010) argues that 'some of the tactics that work in the context of consumer markets, where consumers may be motivated by autotelic activities (e.g., fantasies, feelings and fun), may be ineffective or even counter-productive' in B2B markets, i.e., market-centric events (p. 256). Similarly, Gopalakrishna, Roster, and Sridhar (2010) also argue that 'industrial shoppers may be less inclined to indulge in hedonic aspects of consumption' (p. 247).

### 3.7. Summary

The discussions in this chapter have shown us that networks and networking are important in the film industry to not only find jobs and employment, but also to create opportunities because of the temporary nature of work in the industry. What we also know from existing literature is that film festivals provide ideal venues within which networks can develop through various networking activities. Film festivals attract professionals and relevant stakeholders from the industry; this makes it an ideal platform for the professionals to initiate and develop relationships. Many film festivals provide these platforms for professionals to meet and develop relationships; for example, some target specific audiences while others are broad and general networking venues for all professionals from the industry.

However, there are limited studies which help to understand what facilitates networking at the festivals. The study by Cayla et al. (2013) has shown hedonic experience and parties play important roles in facilitating B2B networking and relationships. But Cayla et al.'s (2013) study was set in a different research context (tennis tournaments), and therefore, their conceptualisation does not embrace aspects of festivals, particularly film festivals. The relevance of fantasies, feelings and fun in human consumption is well documented in the existing literature, as we have seen above. However, limited research on this in the B2B context has meant that there is little understanding on how hedonic consumption influences B2B networking at festivals. While addressing these gaps, this study frames film festival attendees (documentary filmmakers and commissioners) as consumers. While this is not common in the literature, it has helped us to understand the relevance of hedonic experience in consumption. It gave us an analytical lens which has helped to understand why experiential aspects of consumption (fantasies, extraordinary feelings and fun) are important in the consumption of networking services and how they facilitate networking opportunities. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

In addition to the relevance of fantasies and extraordinary feelings and fun, the literature review has shown the relevance of ordinary pleasures and experiences. The

literature on experience marketing emphasises that every consumption event provides some form of experience. Everyday life mostly includes ordinary experiences grounded in elements obtained in other ways. So it is important to take the full breadth of the experience phenomenon into account, including ordinary consumption experience. In spite of the ordinary being important in consumption and that, as discussed in the previous section, experiential consumption facilitates networking, there is no research to understand how ordinary experiences are facilitated. So we know little about it, and it is important that we find out more to facilitate networking better. The results in this study address these gaps. Chapter 6 will explain how ordinary hedonic experiences are not just attached to everyday objects, but they can also be gained from unusual and uncommon products, and unique/luxury products can also be experienced in an ordinary way. In doing so, it will show how ordinary facilitate hedonic experiences and consequently networking opportunities.

The literature review illustrates the centrality of value to the co-creation approach, with experience reframed as a type of value that is sought and can be co-created. In other words, experience can come into being by being co-created between all combinations of customers, businesses and others in the network. While most of the literature on experience comes from the consumer behaviour literature, Cayla et al. (2013) identified that experiences, particularly hedonic experiences, are important facilitators of networking and relationships. However, the B2B literature is limited in terms of offering appropriate theories to help us understand how those experiences come into being. This has motivated our turn to the consumer behaviour literature and the need to conceptualise film festival industry participants as consumers. Doing so has helped to understand how experiences come into being and how such experiences facilitate networking; this will be explained in Chapter 7.

Furthermore, although there has been progress in understanding the importance of pleasure in networking and what happens during networking, existing literature does not explain how consumer-participants at networking events co-create value among themselves. Existing literature suggests the temporal nature of social value in the film industry and the link between social value and experiential value during the consuming and doing networking activities. However, there is scant

research to show the nature of experiences co-created and how the temporal nature of social value affects it. This thesis also addresses these two issues while explaining how hedonic experiences, which facilitate networking, come into being in B2B context. The next chapter explains the methodologies used in this dissertation to collect primary data.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This thesis aims to explore the role of experience in facilitating networking in a B2B context, how these facilitators work together to facilitate experience and the nature/characteristics of these experiences. The literature reviews in the previous chapter shows that most of the research on consumption experience appears in the B2C marketing context. The existing literature also focuses on the importance of (a) networking in the film industry, (b) socialisation for networking and (c) pleasure in socialisation. There is still a gap, because of limited research, in consumption experience in the B2B marketing context and what facilitates networking between professionals at the B2B events. By framing B2B professionals in terms of consumption, this research has contributed in understanding the role and relevance of pleasure to facilitate networking among them, at the documentary film festivals. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology used in this study to collect primary data, which has resulted in this contribution.

This study has collected the primary data by observing commissioners and filmmakers at film festivals and interviewing them. In this chapter, I will explain and justify my research philosophy to explore the research aim. This will explain how the research has been shaped, how the methodology was adopted and how I have explored and explained the results in this study. I will then go in detail to explain what type of data I collected and used in this study and how I recruited filmmakers and commissioners to participate in my research. This will be followed by a discussion on how I collected the data, what happened during the data collection process that shaped my research, the challenges that I encountered during the data collection and how I overcame them, and how I analysed these data. Finally, this chapter will give a detailed explanation of the ethical actions, issues and aspects considered in this study.

## 4.2. Research Philosophy

Ontological and epistemological positions are important in research. While ontology has been defined as ‘philosophical assumption about the nature of reality’, epistemology means the ‘general set of assumptions about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world’ (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 60). In other words, according to Hackley (2003), ontology of a research study refers to deep assumptions about the nature of the reality being studied, whereas epistemology addresses questions such as ‘how can we know what we know, what kind of knowledge can we know, and what, indeed, is knowledge’ (p. 68). This means that ontology refers to the worldviews and assumptions in which researchers operate in their search for new knowledge (Lincoln et al., 2011), and epistemology means the process of thinking, i.e., the relationship between what we know and what we see. It is about the truth we seek and believe as researchers, and it is about the relationship between the researcher and that being researched (Lincoln et al., 2011). Therefore, it is important to understand the ontological and epistemological position of the research to understand the research better.

I believe that the truth depends on who establishes it and accepts that facts are all human creations. This ontological position is known as nominalism (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). The corresponding epistemological position for nominalism is the social constructionism approach (cf. Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Lincoln et al., 2011). Hopkinson and Hogg (2006) define this interpretive epistemological approach as ‘to understand a situation from the perspective of participants within that situation, and to explore the meanings through which they construct their reality’ (p. 158). This means that this interpretive approach understands any phenomenon through the words and meanings that people attach to reality because there isn’t a singular universal (i.e., ‘the’) reality but multiple realities. In other words, as researchers, our understanding is subjective and socially constructed. For example, while reviewing the literature, I acknowledge that the existing literature is influenced by each author’s social understanding and their upbringing as much as my own subjective understanding and interpretation of their written work. Similarly, my approach to

developing my methodology and subsequent data analysis is also influenced by my own subjective understanding of what is correct.

This paper acknowledges that reality is subjective in nature; therefore, it understands reality by understanding the words and meanings that the participants attached to it. Therefore, this research has taken a social-constructionist approach to understanding the phenomena of this study. One of the reasons why a positivist approach was not chosen in this study is that this study aimed to explore the experiences of the participants. Unlike pure/hard science, where the molecular formula  $C_6H_{12}O_6$  is glucose and it has been proven objectively in a controlled environment or the formula in algebra  $(a+b)^2$  definitely equals  $a^2+2ab+b^2$ , I believe human experiences are subjective and are socially constructed.

In this interpretivist approach, the purpose is to explore and develop understanding of the aforementioned research phenomenon, and it starts with drawing meanings and reflecting on the results; the data are mostly collected through conversations and are analysed using sense-making interpretations to finally understand the outcome of the research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). The implication of this in the thesis was that it was exploratory in nature, as explained above. Therefore, since the objective of this research was to explore the phenomena and deduce new theories and concepts from the empirical observations rather than to test any hypotheses, social-constructionist research was suitable for the study. The exploratory nature (of this study) and the fact that the truth depends on who establishes it and are all human creations (as explained above) meant that I had to focus on drawing meanings and reflecting on the results to explore (experiential facilitators of networking) rather than testing predetermined hypotheses. In other words, it was important to understand the experiences of the participants and how they constructed meaning from these experiences. The data were therefore mostly collected through conversations (data collection method is explained in detail below) with the filmmakers and commissioners (more details on samples and sample techniques later in the 'sampling method' section) and the outcomes of the results were understood using sense-making interpretations (data analysis method is explained later in more detail). Social-constructionist research tends to emphasise



exploratory research designs and assumes that theoretically informed interpretations of research data helps to generate rich description of relevant research issues. This study is social-constructionist in nature because the goal of this study is not the ‘truth’; rather, the goal is *hermeneutic understanding* or *verstehen*, which means that this study has attempted to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them (Shankar & Goulding, 2001).

	<b>Realist</b>	<b>Social-constructionist</b>
<i>What is reality?</i>	Objectively measured, knowable, separate from those looking at it	Subjective, interpreted by participants
<i>What is knowledge?</i>	Singular body of knowledge, agreed upon by scientists, generalisable	Multiple types and bodies exist, collaboratively constructed, context-specific
<i>The status of language</i>	Describes reality as it is but is independent of what it describes	Actively constructs reality, and is itself part of what it signifies.
<i>What’s the focus on?</i>	Deduction, explanation, prediction, creating general laws	Induction, description, understanding, generating local understanding
<i>General approach to research</i>	Abstract, reduction, hypothesis testing	Participatory, reflexive, theory-generating
<i>Useful characteristics for a researcher</i>	Creativity, rigour, analytical skill, interest in topic, capacity for hard work, tolerance for ambiguity, ability to interpret a mass of data, sense of humour	Creativity, rigour, analytical skill, interest in topic, capacity for hard work, tolerance for ambiguity, ability to interpret a mass of data, sense of humour

**Table 4-1 Characteristics of realist and interpretive research as stated in Lee with Lings (2008, p. 70)**

The table above explains the differences between realist and social-constructionist research. Since there is relatively little study done on the research topic and since the study is exploratory in nature, understanding the phenomena through observations of meanings that people assign to them has helped to explore new findings and underlying reasons. Furthermore, the focus of this study is ‘induction, description, understanding, generating local understanding’ rather than ‘deduction, explanation, prediction, creating general laws’. Also, I believe that it is important to acknowledge the subjective nature of human perceptions and to understand their reality (perceptions) as interpreted by the participants rather than trying to objectively measure human perceptions. Therefore, based on the table above, the social-constructionist research design suits the purpose of this study.

### **4.3. Research Approach**

There are two basic models of social science research: one is called deduction and the other is induction. The deductive approach proceeds with the theory, to hypothesis, to empirical analysis (Gummesson, 2000; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). On the other hand, in the inductive approach theory is the outcome of empirical research, i.e., the research starts from observations to theoretical results. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages (Gummesson, 2000; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). For example, while deductive forms of research are useful for generalisation of findings, a predetermined scope might result in restricted results. Similarly, inductive research is suitable for qualitative research and theory generation (Gummesson, 2000), but ‘pure induction is rare, or even impossible’ (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 22). The reason behind this can be traced to the logic that every researcher has an understanding on which he or she builds and initiates the study, and as discussed in the previous section, reality is subjective and socially constructed.

The literature review has informed the qualitative primary research in the beginning. In other words, this study started by reviewing existing literature to understand the relevant knowledge and studies that currently exist, followed by formulation of the theoretical framework. The primary research then focused on exploring the phenomenon and deducing new theories from the empirical

observations. At the later stages, findings from the primary research influenced and informed the revision of the literature reviewed. In this thesis, the literature review has also helped to explore the primary data and to develop theories from them, which was then subsequently related to the literature. This process has helped to explore the phenomenon, which is a relatively new area and enabled theoretical contributions to be offered. This approach was suitable in this study because the aim was not to test any hypotheses but to explore the reality and deduce new understanding and theories.

#### **4.4. Qualitative Methodology and Data**

Qualitative methodology involves collecting data, which is descriptive and helps to infer meanings from words and descriptions instead of statistical representation and inference of data. Unlike quantitative methodology and data, which uses numerical information and analysis, a qualitative approach uses descriptive information, for example, thoughts, behaviours, intentions, experiences and feelings (Zikmund, 2003). Qualitative methodology involves collecting words and meanings instead of numerical data for statistical analysis. So this approach collects, analyses and interprets data that cannot be meaningfully quantified or summarised by numerical values. This is the reason why it is particularly useful for exploratory research instead of testing hypothesis for generalisation (Parasuraman, Grewal, & Krishnan, 2004). However, qualitative methodology and data can be expensive and time-consuming to collect and analyse because the data is usually descriptive and wordy (Zikmund, 2003). This means that with fewer samples and/or in the absence of statistical inference, generalisation is usually difficult using this methodology and data. Nevertheless, in this research, qualitative methodology and data was found to be very useful. Qualitative methodology and data is about the words and meanings, which was useful for deeper and rich understanding of filmmakers and commissioners' experiences and deduce new exploratory theories and concepts from the data. According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), qualitative methodology can be defined as results using 'an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social

world' (p. 219). These are useful qualitative data that help to generate deeper understanding on how (process) and why (meaning) things happen as they do. It is particularly suitable to understand experiences, expressions, observations, opinions, feelings and attitudes (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). This is also the reason why qualitative methodology and data are particularly suitable for inductive research, i.e., to deduce new theories from empirical observations rather than to test hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2003). However, qualitative data delivered results in this study that, although rich, were complex and nonstandardised (Thorpe & Holt, 2008). This means that the qualitative data was rich with information, but at the same time, it was time-consuming not only to analyse the complex and elaborate information often hidden in words but also to collect the data.

There are number of studies on experience marketing and networking in the film industry that have used quantitative methodology and data. For example, Babin et al.'s (1994) article offered a scale using statistical analysis approach, which can be used to measure hedonic consumption experience (besides utilitarian value). Their scale suggested 'that expressions of pure enjoyment, excitement, captivation, escapism, and spontaneity are fundamental aspects of hedonic shopping value' (Babin et al., 1994, p. 654). Similarly, Currid-Halkett (2012) used statistical analysis to understand the role of human capital networks in the establishment of connectivity and dominance of geographical regions. Similarly, there are studies that adopted mixed methods too. For example, Arnould and Price (1993) explored 'the provision of extraordinary hedonic experiences on commercial, multiday river-rafting trips in the Colorado River basin' (p. 24). To explore this, they used survey methods as well as observations and interviews. The information from the survey was statistically analysed to draw inferences. Similarly, Blair et al. (2001) used both qualitative and quantitative data to describe and evaluate employment in the film industry.

But qualitative methodology and data also appears in a number of publications on experience marketing and networking in the arts and creative industries. For example, Caru and Cova (2006) used qualitative methodology and data, i.e., introspective reports filed by consumers who attended a series of classical music concerts as it 'introduces and develops the subjective operations that consumers

undertake in their efforts to be submerged in the consumption experience' (p. 4). Similarly, Holbrook and Schindler (2003) seemed to have understood the role of nostalgia in the consumption experience, by understanding the words and meaning that people attached to the respective and relevant reality. McKechnie and Tynan's (2008) and Tynan and McKechnie's (2009) qualitative methodology and data offer significant contributions towards understanding the hedonic meanings attached to Halloween and Christmas celebrations. Similarly, Grugulis and Stoyanova's (2012) qualitative methodology and data had meaningful contributions towards understanding the interaction between social capital and networks in the film and television industry.

This study has used qualitative methodology and data because it is suitable for interpretive approach taken in this study. According to Lee with Lings (2008), 'interpretive epistemology is generally concerned with understanding the world from the perspective of participants in that world . . . (and) gaining data on how individuals construct reality' (p. 65). However, collecting quantifiable data could limit this purpose of interpretive research by 'imposing a worldview upon reality' (Lee & Lings, 2008, p. 65). However, Lee and Lings (2008) have clarified that this does not mean that interpretive research cannot use quantitative data or all interpretive research is qualitative and vice versa. Both qualitative and quantitative research can be exploratory, yet 'it (interpretive research) is particularly apt for interpretive 'exploratory studies' that do not seek to confirm a hypothesis' (Hackley, 2003, p. 15). In other words, Hackley (2003) emphasises that studies that adopt qualitative methodology are more suitable for interpretive research than quantitative ones. Furthermore, in this research, being interpretive in nature, I was no more 'detached from their objects of study than are their informants' (p. 8), and this also makes qualitative methodology and data more suitable for this interpretive research (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

There are also other (besides the ones discussed so far) advantages that this research benefited from, from using qualitative methodology and data. First of all, this study aims at understanding the experiences of participants at the film festivals by understanding the meanings and words that they attach to the reality. Secondly, this

study takes the approach wherein the objective is to deduce understanding from observations rather than to test any predefined hypotheses/theories. Therefore, qualitative methodology and data were relatively more suitable for this study than quantitative research. However, using this methodology has also meant that the data was very complex, and it was very time-consuming to analyse the data. In other words, this research is a result of painstaking and time-consuming labour; nevertheless, not only has it achieved its objectives but the contributions that will be explained in the chapters to follow also shows that using this methodology and collecting this data was worth it. The qualitative data collected here is about the experiences of filmmakers and commissioners, during their consumption of networking opportunities at film festivals. The next section will explain where and how the filmmakers and commissioners were recruited in this study.

#### **4.5. Sampling Method**

As mentioned earlier, filmmakers and commissioners at documentary film festivals are two key stakeholders of the networking services provided by the festival organisers. Interviewing them is therefore relevant and important to understand what facilitates networking among them, how these facilitators work to facilitate experience and the nature and characteristics of these experiences. So this study recruited a number of filmmakers and commissioners who attend film festivals to participate in this study by being interviewed.

Nonprobability sampling is also often known as purposive sampling. According to Bahl and Milne (2006), sampling within the interpretive paradigms is mostly purposive, which seeks participants that will best help to understand the research problem and therefore the research questions or the conceptual framework guides it. In purposive sampling, the sample may be prespecified or emergent, i.e., consistent with our research goal of understanding the meaning of multiple selves, a sample is prespecified that represents ‘people across different age groups in both genders in order to get multiple perspectives and a rich understanding’ (Bahl & Milne, 2006, p. 202). Purposive (nonprobability) sampling has been used for this study because the eligibility criteria to select the sample were clear, i.e., industry

professionals (the participants were filmmakers—either film producers and film directors—and film commissioners of documentary films) who attended film festivals and participated in networking there; therefore, those participants who were approached and participated in this study met the ‘*eligibility criteria*’ (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 218). Purposive sampling helped to choose the correct sample, as there were many nonfilmmakers and nonbuyers present in the research location, i.e., film festivals.

In this research, it was difficult to not only locate the filmmakers and commissioners of documentary film festivals but to also convince them to participate in the study. Participation in this study did not give them any direct benefits or remuneration; hence, I had to depend on their goodwill. Furthermore, both established filmmakers and commissioners are normally very busy, especially the commissioners. Most of the time, filmmakers are busy in different locations on pre-/postproduction projects, while commissioners are normally at the helm of their organisations. Commissioners who were suitable for this study were those who visit film festivals and decide on commissioning or financing a project. This means that they were in considerably senior positions in the organisation, in other words, ‘heads’ of film commissioning divisions of either public broadcasting corporations/companies or private organisations. This obviously meant both filmmakers and buyers (commissioners) were very difficult to contact, let alone to convince them to take some time out to participate in a PhD research project without expecting anything in return. At the beginning of this study, when I contacted directly the commissioners and filmmakers, all requests were either turned down or did not get any response. Also, it was relatively challenging to get positive responses from established film festivals to the request to attend the festival to observe and recruit participants for my research. Therefore, this study contacted less prestigious film festivals and used contacts from personal networks, i.e., used convenience sampling initially. Once I interviewed some filmmakers and commissioners and eventually got to know and develop relationships with them, they acted as gatekeepers. This means they introduced me to other filmmakers and commissioners and organisers of prestigious film festivals who were suitable to participate in my study and even encouraged them to be a part of the research. Therefore, this study was able to recruit more

participants using participants' personal references and word-of-mouth references, i.e., the snowball sampling was used after the initial contacts were made through convenience sampling.

Convenience sampling is a sampling method which involves selecting sample units on the basis of how easily they are accessible (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Therefore, it is possible that the initial participants in the research are the result of the researchers' social network. Snowball sampling 'starts with someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in a study who is then asked to name others who would also be eligible' (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 218). This method is particularly useful when the participants or the individuals are not easily accessible, there are not many of them, it is hard to identify who belongs to the population and/or it is difficult to get hold of them. However, this method can easily fail based on the principle of bias, as it is possible to lure large samples using snowball sampling (and purposive sampling for that matter of fact) to achieve results that support the researchers' opinion (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Nevertheless, snowball sampling (and purposive sampling) addresses the problem of ensuring an adequate sample is available especially when the sample comprises people who are difficult to locate/find (Bahl & Milne, 2006; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Because of the challenges mentioned in the previous paragraph, snowball sampling and convenience sampling were used to recruit participants.

During this course of this study, I was able to visit three film festivals, namely, ZFF, GMM and IIFYF (these are random acronyms and actual names have not been disclosed because of ethical reasons and as assured to the organisers of these festivals). The change will be explained later in the section on ethical considerations. This study carried out observations in these three film festivals. Although the three film festivals are from different countries, the filmmakers and commissioners who attended these festivals had a similar composition of international participants. In other words, the filmmakers and commissioners who attended these festivals (particularly the networking events there) were from many countries, and these professionals were not dominated by one particular culture or country of origin. The three film festivals facilitated networking opportunities besides screening films;



however, their scopes varied. The characteristics of the three film festivals have been discussed in more detail (including organisation, facilities and modes of operation) in Table 4-4 below.

Total participants	43
Number of filmmaker participants	29
Filmmakers Participants Interviewed on Skype	13
Filmmakers Participants Interviewed from GMM	6
Filmmakers Participants Interviewed from ZFF	5
Filmmakers Participants Interviewed from IIYF	5
Number of male filmmaker participants	15
Number of female filmmaker participants	14
Age group of the commissioner participants	40 to 55
Number of commissioner participants	14
Commissioner participants interviewed on Skype	14
European commissioner participants	13
American commissioner participants	1
Status of the commissioner participants	Head of their respective commissioning divisions at the time of the interview
Average length of Skype Interviews	30 minutes
Average length of face-to-face Interviews	45 minutes

**Table 4-2 Sample profile description**

In total, I recruited 43 participants for interviews. Out of the 43 participants, 29 were filmmakers (FM 1–29) and 14 were commissioners (COM 30–43). Out of the 29 filmmakers, 13 were interviewed on Skype (FM 17–29); 6 were from GMM in Europe (FM 1–6), 5 were from ZFF in South Asia (FM 7–12) and 5 were from IIYF in South Asia (FM 12–16). Fourteen of the filmmakers were women, and 15 were men. Fourteen of the 43 participants were commissioners (COM 30–43), and they were between the ages of 40 and 55. All commissioners worked in European countries except one who worked in America, seven are female and rest are male, and all of them were the head of their commissioning divisions (at the time when they were interviewed) and were interviewed on Skype. On average, the Skype interviews were 30 minutes long, and face-to-face interviews were 45 minutes long. The Skype interviews took place after the face-to-face interviews.

## 4.6. Data Collection Methods

### *Interview*

In-depth one-to-one interviews were used to collect primary data. This is a data collection method used mostly in qualitative research methodology, and it is useful for interpretive, interactive and exploratory research (Hackley, 2003). This data collection method is particularly useful for interpretive research because it helps the researcher to understand reality by understanding the words and the meanings that participants or the interviewees attached to the reality. The purpose of the ‘in depth’ interview was to get more detailed knowledge on the research purpose and explore underlying, ‘*complex*’ reasons of apparently ‘*simpler facts*’ (Wengraf, 2002, p. 6). ‘The interview is an active text, a site where meaning is created and performed. When performed, the interview text creates the world, giving the world its situated meaningfulness’ (Denzin, 2009, p. 217–218). Therefore, the interview method is frequently used in interpretive research, and it delivers exploratory results which helps to deduce new insights and theories from the empirical observations. The interviews in this research were conducted face-to-face as well as using a VoIP platform called Skype (which will be discussed in detail in the next section).

Furthermore, the interviews were semistructured in nature; this means that while some of the questions were predetermined, the interviewer asked new questions to probe any issue that was not either discussed or was expected before the interview (Dawson, 2009). In other words, the interviewer asked and added new questions during the interview on issues that either needed further explanation or came up during the interview. However, the disadvantage of using this method is that it can be time-consuming and relatively expensive to collect and analyse the data, especially if used using open-ended questions (which is the case, as will be discussed later) (Denzin, 2009). Because of these reasons, if the researcher is not able to recruit a larger sample size, generalisability could be a problem. Nevertheless, this method was useful in this research because it helped to collect exploratory data (which was the purpose, as opposed to testing hypotheses for better generalisation) from 43 participants (besides the observation method) (Hackley, 2003). This method also helped to initiate the interview and also gave a structure and defined the scope for the

interview (Dawson, 2009). Some participants, especially commissioners, who are in senior positions in their respective companies, often requested for a brief outline of the interview questions. Having a set of questions helped in this respect too; although the questions were not sent before the interview, it helped to write a description of the questions that were going to be asked during the interview. Therefore, unlike structured and unstructured interviews, semistructured interviews used in the study gave me the flexibility needed for probing as well as helped me to keep the interview on track. The interview schedule used in this research is listed in Appendix 1 (in p286). However, it must be noted that the schedule was not prescriptive for all the interviews, and the questions asked were not in the exact same order. The schedule was used to give direction, and questions were asked from the schedule depending on the flow of the conversation in the interview, as this was found to be more fruitful than asking the questions in the listed order below. This means the questions and the order in which questions were asked were different for different people.

Finally, I used mostly open-ended questions during the interviews. As the interview schedule in Appendix I shows, the questions asked during the interview did not require simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ responses or choosing an option to answer. Rather, the questions were such that the interviewees had to explain experience, opinions, feelings and perceptions in their own words and the meanings, which they found suitable to attach to the reality. With this being an interpretive and qualitative study, open-ended questions were rather more suitable than close-ended questions. However, this does not mean that closed-ended questions were not used at all in this research, but their use was limited to a handful questions if there was any at all in any interview. Such questions were mostly asked to clarify any doubt.

### ***VoIP and its dynamics in my research***

As mentioned earlier, this study has used Skype (VoIP) to interview participants, besides interviewing them face-to-face. There is relatively less research and information on and related challenges to using VoIP to interview and collect primary data. Yet this method was useful and relevant to interview participants who were located at distant places in a cost-effective way. Skype-to-Skype calls do not

incur any additional costs like ISD phone calls and travelling. However, while using this method, I faced some new challenges as well as found opportunities to collect information which I did not anticipate before using it. These are (a) power relations between the interviewee and the interviewer and (b) opportunity to offer interviewees hedonic experience thereby resulting in productive data collection. When I revisited my desk research, to consult on best practices to address the challenges and build on the opportunity from using VoIP, I found there is not much written in this area. This is the reason why I picked up on this and felt it warranted further discussion.

### *Power and Authority Between Interviewee and Interviewer*

Between an interviewer and interviewee, the one who controls the interview has the power and authority to determine the course and outcome of the interview. Power in the interview refers ‘to the activities of interview participants which are directed towards reciprocally controlling the situation, and influencing the other person’s actions and conversation’ (Vähäsantanen & Saarinen, 2012, p. 494). Vähäsantanen and Saarinen’s (2012) empirical evidence shows that ‘power is exercised and distributed diversely and situationally between the interview participants (interviewer and interviewee) during the interviews’ (p. 493).

According to Kvale (2006), ‘a research interview is not an open and dominance free dialogue between egalitarian partners, but a specific hierarchical and instrumental form of conversation’ (p. 485). Vähäsantanen and Saarinen’s (2012) study shows that in a given interview, the interaction between one’s background and the setting of the interview are connected to the activities through which power is manifested, and these activities have consequent effect to shape the subsequent course and content of the interview. In their study, an individual’s background refers to gender, age, professional background, and personal history, and the setting of the interview refers to practices, motives, and presuppositions related to the interview. Their list below shows *activities* related to exercising and presenting power by the interviewer and the interviewees:

Power-related activities	
Interviewer	Deciding the topic and issues to be discussed
	Asking questions and seeking clarifications
	Closing the interview
	Responding to positions offered and control exercised by the interviewee
	Offering positions and interpretative frames to the interviewee
	Self-disclosure through sharing personal and professional backgrounds
Interviewee	Answering, giving his/her account, and deflecting questions
	Asking questions and seeking clarifications
	Controlling the use of time and closing the interview
	Offering positions
	Responding to positions, to self-disclosure, and to interpretative frames offered
	Testing, instructing, and questioning the interviewer
	Sexualising (flirting, sexual innuendo, and remarks on appearance) the interviewer

**Table 4-3 Activities related to exercising and presenting power by the interviewer and the interviewees (Vähäsantanen & Saarinen, 2012, p. 507)**

It is not just during the interview that power dynamics is relevant but also (a) before conducting the interview in arranging the interview stage and (b) also towards the end. Preinterview consideration should be given to arrange the interview stage for desirable course and productivity of the interview. Unless a researcher is domineering or intrusive, the minimal control from the interviewer could be beneficial to achieve better results from the interview (Corbin & Morse, 2003; Kvale, 2006). In research interviews, which are not open and dominance-free dialogue, the interviewer is able to set the stage for the interview in line with his or her research interest to better control the course for better productivity of the interview (Kvale, 2006). This is a power that the interviewer has at the beginning of the interview (Rapley, 2007). This (beginning) is a crucial stage as both parties access each other and start to establish how to behave and react to each other (Corbin & Morse, 2003), in other words, accessing to establish power and exercising power-related activities. Based on this, it could be argued that with appropriate but nondomineering and intrusive control, the interviewer can address any prospective and intrusive interviewee's control at the onset of the interview.

It is also important to take care and ensure that the interviewer has a good relationship towards the end and after the interview with the interviewee. It is not always easy to identify and locate participants from the target research population, but snowball sampling, i.e., referrals from the participants of the study, can help recruit new participants and generate productive data (Noy, 2008). However, for the

interviewer to have appropriate control over his/her participant to get a positive referral without offering any financial or other incentive, the interviewee has to trust and take interest in helping the interviewer. This means not only in the beginning and during but also at the end of the interview, the interviewer has to have appropriate control and power over the interviewee to get referrals when needed.

### *Interviewing on Skype*

Interviewing via Skype has a number of merits. It combines the advantages of both phone and face-to-face interviews. While face-to-face allows the interviewer to see the interviewees and vice versa, geographical distance poses problems. On the other hand, telephone interviews address the geographical distance issue, but the interviewer is not able to see the interviewees. A Skype interview combines the advantages of both face-to-face and telephone interviews and allows the researcher to easily record audio and video of the interviews in spite of the geographical distance (Hanna, 2012). The benefits also include low cost, ease of access, minimising ecological dilemmas (relating to pollutions from travelling long distances and climate change) and ensuring the safety of both the interviewer and the interviewee. However, Skype interviews are dependent on the reliability of Internet connection, technical know-how and Internet-enabled devices; furthermore, depending on Skype might also result in technical glitches inherent in Internet-dependent technology (Hanna, 2012). Deakin and Wakefield (2013) list the benefits and drawbacks of conducting Skype interviews:

	Benefits	Drawbacks
Recruitment	Allows interviewees and interviewer flexibility in terms of organising the interview time	Potential interviewees may be put off participating if they do not know how to use Skype
Logistical and technological considerations	Health and safety concerns reduced when interviewing at night Cost effective Time effective Greater flexibility of researcher and interviewee in terms of interview time In the vast majority of cases, no technological problems were encountered as researchers were appropriately trained in the use of Skype	In some cases, recording material will need to be purchased and interviews conducted in specific locations where Skype is available The distance between researcher and interviewee can make it easier for participants to drop out as they feel less commitment to the process than with face-to-face interviews Technological problems in some cases lead to issues in sound quality making recording difficult Technological or signal problems can make the building of rapport difficult
Ethics	There is no need to obtain phone numbers from participants  Interviewees can withdraw with the click of a button	Gaining informed consent verbally can make the beginning of the interview feel very formal and may not set the right tone for an interview Ethical issues may arise in taking video or audio recordings of the interview. Participants need to be made fully aware of this
Rapport	Anonymity can be easily ensured In the majority of cases, building rapport can be established just as well as in face-to-face interviews. Exchanging emails, messages or reports can facilitate this process	Participants may feel uncomfortable being filmed in their own home When interviewing a reserved interviewee, building rapport can be difficult
Audio or video	Audio and video allow interviewees to choose the level of contact they wish to engage in	Video is not possible in some cases as it can reduce sound quality
Absentees	Time and money have not been spent if the interviewee does not log on to complete the interview	Participants appear to be more likely to 'drop out' of the interview last minute or without notice

**Table 4-4 Deakin and Wakefield's (2013, p. 11) experiences of conducting Skype interviews**

*Real-time research scope – hedonic experience from engaging discussion*

Skype offers an opportunity for enhanced interview and research. It is not easy to identify what a person is doing on the computer and/or looking at on the screen while talking to someone on Skype. This means that the interviewer can research information in real time, and yet the interviewees might not be aware of it.

In comparison to face-to-face interviews, it is not possible to easily identify when and what an individual is looking at on the screen during Skype interviews. The visuals on the screen could be the Skype screen (with the video feed) or a browser with information. If used intelligently, it is not easy to detect what a person is looking at on the screen during Skyping. This of course means that the interviewer is able to research in real time on a web browser while Skyping.

The observation during the primary data collection was that when interviewees enjoyed participating in an engaging discussion, it led to better disclosure and expressions of their feelings, opinions and answers to the interviewer's questions. In this research, the interviewees were not compensated in any kind for their participation in the interviews. It was observed that when participants did not enjoy being interviewed, they offered short and concise responses rather than narrative and elaborate ones, which are required for interpretive research approaches to data analysis. For the participants to enjoy the interview, it seems they wanted more of a friendly discussion than a formal interview. So I had to comment on what they were saying and carry forward the discussion at regular intervals. But it is not possible to be familiar with all of the topics of discussion; for example, when a filmmaker was referring to a hotel in Abu Dhabi (while talking about his experience at a festival), I did not know anything about Abu Dhabi or that hotel. However, I was able to research it as the filmmaker was speaking, allowing me to comment on it and develop my rapport with the interviewee. Simple things such as the weather in Abu Dhabi, the location where the hotel was and some of the films that were screened at that festival in that year made a huge difference to encourage the filmmaker's interest in narrating his story.

It felt like that filmmaker saw I was interested in what they were saying, in comparison to when I did not comment (because of my ignorance of those places and venues). The purpose of research is to know about things that we do not know; hence, ignorance should not be a problem in the interview. But it seemed to me that knowing about other things (not related to the research questions on their experiences at film festivals and answer, as evident in the examples of the previous paragraph such as the weather, for instance) help to engage in discussions with the interviewees. The more I commented, based on the knowledge I gained from my real-time research, the better his responses were, and it seemed like he was enjoying the interview and



sharing his experiences. But since I did not know prior to the interview that the interviewee would mention these topics, it was not possible for me to research beforehand. Therefore, during the discussions on research-related topics, the scope of real-time research facilitates a hedonic experience for the interviewees from an engaging discussion. This is something I also tried during face-to-face interviews. But when I browsed the Internet in front of them, the interviewees tended to stop talking; there were awkward silences and lost eye contact as soon as the interviewees saw me browsing. This meant that doing real-time research during face-to-face interviews had a rather negative effect than positive ones. But on Skype, the interviewees did not seem to be very affected or bothered while I was doing real-time research. They continued to talk while I browsed the Internet.

Before starting the interview, it is important for the interviewer to build a good rapport with the interviewee, and the scope of real-time research on discussion topics that interest the interviewee helps to build a good rapport. This is because such discussion offers pleasure to the interviewee, who is offering their time without getting anything tangible in return. It can also act as an icebreaker in cases of introvert interviewees. While I was talking to a very busy and senior commissioner from a reputed television channel, there were awkward moments initially. He was giving brief answers, and it seemed like he was participating in the interview for social obligation since a senior colleague of his requested him to participate in my research. However, we were able to break the ice and become friendlier using real-time research. Being an American, he likes baseball, whereas I do not have any knowledge on baseball. But I was able to quickly check the scores and brief information on the current performance of his favourite team. With that information, I was able to draw comparison to cricket, which is a sport I am familiar with. Being a sports fan, it seemed to me that the commissioner enjoyed our conversation. This consequently resulted in a good relationship with the commissioner, and our consequent discussion on my research resulted in one of the most important interviews of my research. On reflection, I do not think I would have been able to achieve this if I had interviewed him face-to-face. So building a personal connection with the interviewee is very important in creating a positive research setting, and this can be achieved through the possibility of such enhanced interviewing techniques via Skype.

Therefore, Skype gives an opportunity for real-time research and helps interviewers to contribute to the discussion, which interests the interviewees. Such discussion offers hedonic experiences to the participants in comparison to ones which are very formal and are limited to questions and answers. I found that there are better discussions and interactions on perceptions and experiences by interviewees in the open-ended unstructured and semistructured interviews when they enjoy the interview, and the possibility of real-time research on Skype facilitates this enjoyment. As an interviewer, I observed and compared how the power dynamics shifted between the interviewees and me, by not doing and doing real-time research, during Skype interviews. I found that when participants enjoyed the discussions (from the real-time research), I had better control on the duration of the interview and was able to get long and fruitful answers, unlike short and brief answers and interviewees rushing to finish the interview when they did not enjoy it.

#### *Settings and Personal Appearance for VoIP Interviews – Symbolic and Subjective Interpretation*

I did the Skype interviews from my house, and the only table in the house was my dinning table in the kitchen. It was a small kitchen, and there was less room to manoeuvre; this meant that the background did not look like an office. Most of the interviews were done in the afternoon, when the participants had their lunch breaks or in the late evenings. So at that time, I had the cooking vessels on the cooker for our lunch and dinner. Furthermore, I looked young for my age, especially when I wore informal clothes (such as T-shirts), was clean shaved and did not wear glasses while talking on Skype.



**Exhibit 4-1 My kitchen**

When the setting in my background looked like my kitchen and/or I looked very young for my age, it seemed that most of my participants did not take me seriously. Their responses were quite prompt and short, and often they cut short the interviews, stressing that they were busy and had to go back to work. Most common problems that I faced were, instead of narrating to me what they experienced at a festival, they stressed I will not understand without explaining the situation and the fact that they were very busy and would need to cut the interview short. They did not let me ask questions and/or did not offer relevant answers even when the questions were repeated. It seemed although they were not rude by any means, I was struggling to gain control over the interview and they were authoritative in dictating the course of the interview, including when to finish the Skype call.



**Exhibit 4-2 My kitchen after changing the background**

However, when I wore formal clothes, had my glasses on and created a formal office look in the background setting (by simply putting a lot of books on the kitchen work top to make it look like an office), the participants seemed to take me more seriously. I requested a second interview with most of them, and the change in my own look and the background seemed to yield better results. I never faced the same problems when I changed my look and the background appearance. After the changes, the noteworthy difference was that the participants were answering my questions; they were less authoritative but talked to me almost as an equal and with respect; they engaged with me in in-depth discussions, rather than offering just brief answers; and I decided when to end the interviews. Most of the participants, being senior filmmakers and commissioners, participated in Skype discussion from their office where they are used to exercising their authority.

Lill and Wilkinson's (2005) study on inpatients and outpatients' perception of doctors found that they were most comfortable with doctors who wore conservative and formal attire, such as white coats, long sleeves, covered shoes, and dress trousers or skirts in comparison to facial piercing, short tops, and earrings on men. This supports Cox and Glick's (1986) argument that 'physical appearance is an integral component of self-presentation in all social situations' including at interviews.

Similarly, Seiter and Sandry (2003) found in their research that credibility and the prospect of being hired for those job candidates who wore jewellery and had body piercing was relatively less. Ruetzler et al.'s (2012) study also shows 'grooming and professional attire are the most important attributes in shaping favorable perceptions' (p. 937) at interview settings. However, there is relatively less research in understanding how an interviewer's background settings and personal appearance influence Skype interviews and the power dynamics in general. While using this method to collect data in this study, I found that the interviewer's background settings and personal appearance combined with interviewees' office space (where they regularly exercised their authority) influences their symbolic and subjective interpretation of the interviewer's credibility. It also influences their actions to exercises authoritative activities on the interviewer and directing the course of the interview.

#### *Establishing Trustworthiness and Consequent Benefits*

The observations in this research have shown that the two aspects, i.e., interviewees' enjoyment from participating in the interviews and their perception of the interviewer's credibility, are also necessary postinterview, in addition to data collection during the interview. This is the case when the interviewer is dependent on the participants to refer others to participate in the interview. As mentioned above, conducting interviews on Skype offers the opportunity to offer engaging discussions using real-time research and establish credibility by customising the background setting and personal appearance.

It was difficult to access the target population (i.e., filmmakers and commissioners of the documentary film festivals) to participate in my research initially. I have never worked in the film industry or knew anyone in the industry when I started my research. My only connection to the film industry was my love of films. This meant I struggled to recruit participants from the industry to take part in my research. At the film festivals, I struggled to recruit participants when I met them face-to-face, but this changed when I was able to offer engaging discussions and establish credibility on Skype.

The filmmakers and commissioners who participated in this study on Skype interviews referred and recommended more participants than face-to-face interviews.

The relationship developed on Skype interviews ended up some of them being my Facebook friends. This meant I was able to recruit a significantly higher number of interviewees (number mentioned earlier) than initially expected (around 16 to 20 filmmakers and commissioners, to keep the costs down from travelling to the geographical locations of commissioners and filmmakers). It seems that I was able to achieve this because participants enjoyed participating in my interviews and they thought I was credible and reliable and therefore trustworthy. Skype interviews offered a unique opportunity, as explained earlier, to offer enjoyment to interviewees and gain their trust.

### ***Observations***

Observation is a method to collect data, which helps to ‘understand practices, interactions, and events, which occur in a specific context from the inside as a participant or from the outside as a mere observer’ (Flick, 2009, p. 282). In this study, I used the observation method as an observer at the three film festivals mentioned above. This method is useful to construct the processes as they occur; hence, it is a useful way to approach everyday lives and activities and experiences that people have with these (Flick, 2009, p. 282). This method is also beneficial when integrated with other qualitative methods, such as interviews at public places. In this research, the interview method was used along with observation method to complement each other at the festival.

One of the main disadvantages of the observation method is that the researcher has to travel to the observation site and the observation method itself is very time-consuming and resource intensive (Flick, 2009). Especially when there is limitation in time and resources, this method can be challenging to include larger sample size or observation length. In this research, observations were carried out at three film festivals. Secondly, a potential weakness of using observation is that it can be susceptible to observer bias, i.e., subjective bias of the researcher (observer), which can be a problem in relations to reliability of the data (Hackley, 2003). To overcome this problem, this study has also used interviews to collect data from participants. For both interviews and observations, I did not have any prior relationships with the participants in this study. Another disadvantage of using the observation method is

that in the presence of an observer/researcher, those who are being observed can behave differently (Hackley, 2003). In other words, the observer's presence in some way influences the behaviour of those being observed. The issue was also addressed using the triangulation method, i.e., comparing with data collected from the interviews to identify any discrepancies or differences. I did not notice any problem or issues while comparing the data from the interviews and the observations.

Nevertheless, using observational methods in conjunction with the interview method helped me to get rich data; the two methods complemented each other. Observations gave information on the consumption experiences of the filmmakers and the commissioners at the film festivals. This data was useful because it helped to construct preliminary questions for in-depth interviews, and similarly, results from the interviews helped to observe and identify relevant aspects of the festivals that required further investigation. Unlike participant observation and ethnography, in this research I did not participate in the networking activities related to the research (Flick, 2009, p. 282). This helped to not influence the data from observation from direct interference.

Furthermore, the observation method has been used in this study because this technique of data gathering is an integral part of interpretive research, and this research is interpretive in nature (Hackley, 2003, p. 85). This study used the implicit observation approach, which according to Hackley (2003, p. 85) involves observing research objective-related issues without actually participating in activities of the target research population. According to Easterby-Smith (2008, p. 160), observation offers relatively better '*accurate pictures of what takes place and how long they take*'.

For this research, I got permission from three film festival organisers to use observation methods and collect data within their festivals' premises. The observations took place inside the film festivals and included film screenings, the film market, bars and restaurants at the festivals, cultural shows and other events at the film festivals and at the meeting rooms. The observations were carried out as the interviews progressed, in other words, there was no predetermined sequence for the interviews and observations. The observations were done to complement the

interviews and vice versa; therefore, the data were collected using observations and interviews as and when it was necessary.

The information from the observations was recorded in writing as notes/diary. These notes were later transcribed fully every night on a computer after I returned to my hotel. This means that the notes made in the diary were written quickly and briefly. But later, when the notes were transcribed on a computer, I reflected on the notes and, upon careful introspection and reflection, described those notes further on the computer. Although this meant double work for me for the same notes, it was useful to collect notes quickly from the observations as well as the reflections and introspection at the end of every day, as it helped to produce better interpretive and rich data. Therefore, the observation method was very useful in this research and it helped to validate a number of interviewees' comments on the facilitators of experience at the film festival.

### *Observational field sites*

This research is a mix of observations from three existing *international* film festivals (ZFF, GMM and IIYF). GMM was visited first, initially as the site of the pilot study and then because of the success of the pilot study, subsequently as a site for the main fieldwork. Fieldwork was then also undertaken at ZFF and finally at IIYF. It is important to clarify here that in the interviews, participants shared their experiences from a number of other film festivals, but these are the three film festivals where I observed the participants. The festivals ZFF, GMM and IIYF are international film festivals, which meant that they screened international films, and both foreign and local filmmakers participated in these three festivals. Given such a multi-cultural environment, particular attention was paid to the participant observation and in the analysis of the interview data, to noticing the role of culture in shaping the film festival experience. However, there were no observable instances, which could be put down to specific national-cultural practices. Rather, what was observed was the 'culture of the film festival', which is socially and historically constructed by participants and which shapes and is shaped by their experiences. For example, Montal (2004) highlights film festivals bring together participants from



across the world, and Currid's (2007) paper suggests that culture and its consumers at film festivals are constantly in flux because it is constructed by its participants and shapes their experiences. The results in Chapter 7, particularly in section 7.2 'Co-creating experiences: Incidental Encounters and Spontaneous Conversations' also show that participants together shape their experiences, and this experience is developed within a multi-cultural environment, and the environment is constantly in flux as Currid's (2007) paper suggests. These characteristics are important because, as the interview results suggested, a successful festival is expected to attract both national and foreign film submissions, as well as industry delegates. Also, although the primary purpose of these film festivals was to screen and exhibit films, all three had an element of film market attached to it. This is important because the purpose of the research is to explore networking facilitators in a B2B environment, and the primary purpose of these markets was found to facilitate networking.

The market setting at each of these case festivals facilitated networking in a distinctive manner. At GMM, each of the interested filmmakers got approximately 10 minutes to spend time with the industry delegates to explain their projects, and after every 10 minutes, the organisers reshuffled the industry delegates and filmmakers' one-to-one meetings (similar to speed dating). Once both parties (industry delegates and filmmakers) decided to take their discussions further, they could arrange a formal meeting. However, ZFF and IIYF had an informal market environment, as mentioned in the Table 4-5 below, where the filmmakers and industry delegates could meet and interact whenever they wanted. The organisers at these two film festivals did not participate in arranging the meeting between filmmakers and industry delegates; rather, their involvement was passive and was limited to bringing together the filmmakers and industry delegates at one place. All three film festivals had additional elements of group discussions, seminars, conferences, participation of media (newspapers and TV channels) representatives, and organised parties. In all three film festivals, the general audience who attended were mostly local. Multiple data collection methods were used in these festivals, including in-depth interviews and observations. Table 4-5 below shows relevant characteristics of the three film festivals.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>GMM</b>	<b>ZFF</b>	<b>IYY</b>
Has formal market place	Yes	No	No
When was the festival visited	2011 (5 days in July)	2012 (5 days in January)	2012 (6 days in February)
Has informal market environment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Involvement of organisers in arranging meetings between filmmakers and industry delegates	Active	Passive	Passive
Group discussions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seminars	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conferences	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participation of media (newspapers and TV channels) representatives at the festival	Yes	Yes	Yes
Organised parties	Yes	Yes	Yes
Film screenings	Local cinemas	Local cinemas and conference centres with audiovisual facilities	Theatre at local university, although the festival itself was not a part of the university
Management and operations	Very organised, and managed (decision-making responsibility) by paid professionals from the film industry	Fairly organised; managed (decision-making responsibility) by unpaid professionals from the film industry	Relaxed; managed (decision-making responsibility) by mix of film student volunteers, amateurs and professionals
Screening of local and foreign films	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participation of both local and foreign filmmakers and other industry delegates	Yes	Yes	Yes
Attendance from mostly local audience	Yes	Yes	Yes
Duration: ten years	Yes	Yes	Yes
Type of films exhibited: documentary	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observation length	12 hours over 2 days	13 hours over 3 days	6 hours over 1 day
Field work practices	Writing notes and diagrams on paper	Writing notes and diagrams on paper	Writing notes and diagrams on paper
Level of access	Full cooperation and authorisation from the organisers to attend any event, workshop, exhibition and place at the festival to observe and collect data	Full cooperation and authorisation from the organisers to attend any event, workshop, exhibition and place at the festival to observe and collect data	Full cooperation and authorisation from the organisers to attend any event, workshop, exhibition and place at the festival to observe and collect data
Volume of data collected	10 pages approx.	8 pages approx.	4 pages approx.

**Table 4-5 Important characteristics of the three festivals where observation method was used to collect data**

#### **4.7. Preparation and Methods of Data Analysis and Emergence of Themes**

Qualitative data are textual in nature, offering rich and flexible information; however, attention needs to be given to the content and meaning to understand them properly (Sharp & Peters, 2002). However, to understand properly, it is important that the qualitative data are recorded carefully, precisely and diligently. In this study, the qualitative data from face-to-face interviews were recorded on a digital recording device, interviews on Skype were recorded using a software program called Instant Call Recorder, and the observation data were recorded using handwritten notes. This information was then transcribed by dictation on a software program called Dragon Dictate.

Transcription and field notes are an important part of the data analysis. These are important because they help to study the information collected, edit data for accuracy, comment on and make notes, which then consequently helps to code and analyse the data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). In the absence of transcriptions and field notes, it is possible that I might have forgotten or overlooked some information which are relevant. Also, in this research, comments and notes were made on the transcriptions and field notes, which then helped me to understand better the qualitative data. It helped to draw meaning, which also offered productive input to ask relevant questions during the interviews.

Studying in depth and revising the data (transcriptions and field notes, samples attached below in Appendix 2 and 3) is very important to understand it better, as well as identifying relevant information to answer the research question/s (Hackley, 2003). While initial study of the data offered interesting results, studying in depth and revisions helped to understand better the phenomena and identifying the information that was relevant to the research question. Studying in depth and revisions involved categorising and coding of the information collected and cross-checking it to see whether or not I missed out on something, repeated the same category/code twice, and/or made any other mistakes, and go through my analysis several times till I was satisfied with it. Qualitative data results in rich data, but not

all data is relevant, and the researcher need to be careful in identifying what is relevant and what is not (Easterby-Smith, 2008). In this study too, the data produced was very rich, but not all of it was relevant. Initial study of the data led me to include all information collected for the analysis and all emergent themes from analysis to the discussions. However, not all information collected was useful for analysis and emergent themes relevant to the research question. So revisions and careful consideration allowed better understanding and filtration of information that were relevant from those that were not relevant. In other words, in-depth study and revisions of the transcription and field notes helped me in not getting carried away in using all information that was interesting but use those that were relevant to this research.

Coding and recoding method was then applied to analyse the data and relevant themes drawn from studying the transcriptions and field notes. The important thing while analysing interview data is to find themes (which might not be apparent straight away) from extensive reflection on the data, which can form the structure for the analysis or discussions of the study (Hackley, 2003, p. 121). As explained in the previous paragraph, the themes were deduced from in-depth study and revisions and were relevant to the research question of this thesis. However, to give meaning to these themes, it is important to code them using relevant words or phrases. Coding and recoding of different themes in the interview transcripts helps to find different patterns in the data; this further helps in exploring new conceptual models (Easterby-Smith, 2008, p. 189). Particular words or phrases can be used as codes to help in exploring new meanings and patterns in the study (Hackley, 2003, p. 121).

According to Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014), coding is an analysis method, which labels ‘meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study’ (p. 71). Therefore, coding is about deep reflection, in-depth analysis and interpretations of meanings of data. In this research, I deduced meanings from the data by studying and revising and drawing relevant themes from it. The coding method then helped to further reflect, analyse and interpret those meanings. This method helped to condense the data, enabling me to retry the most meaningful

material, assemble chunks of data that go together, and the method of recoding further helped in condensing the bulk to readily analysable units, as argued by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014). This meant the initial set of codes were revised and examined further and recoded based on the revisions.

The process of recoding involved comparative analysis of different themes and codes that emerged during the analysis process. In other words, the data were compared to understand the similarity and the differences to avoid overlap of information and omission of relevant information. The constant comparison process in the analysis of this research also involved comparing the data with relevant existing literature, thereby synthesising and integrating the categories, delimiting or bounding aspects of the emergent theory, and writing the theory (as discussed by Fischer and Otnes (2006)). Another important aspect of analysis in this research is that the analysis started with the first interview and observation, meaning the analysis was done during the data collection instead of after. This helped me with better interview results and field notes from the observations because of the opportunity to investigate further those issues that were not identified before the data collection process but were important and appeared during the interviews and observations.

The method of studying in depth and revising the transcriptions of the interviews and field observations, using coding and recording methods and constant comparisons, simultaneously with the data collection, provided this study with rich and relevant themes. But this also means that the themes emerged and evolved as the research progressed. The initial sets of codes include the ones shown in table 4-6 below

Initial Codes	Description
Drinking and chatting	People networking while drinking and chatting informally
Film shows at film festivals	Film shows timing helping people to network
Surrounding scenery	Participants enjoying the scenery and networking informally
Basic functioning of facilities	For example, working of projectors and audio-visuals
Tables and chairs	People able to sit conformably and talk
Arranging meetings	Organisers arranging the meetings for participants
Equipment and tools	Access to audio-visual devices to display projects
Internet	People using internet to access emails and talking to family and friends whilst at the festival

Service experience	Participants enjoying the services to network
Easy information	Organisers giving clear information to participants
Unplanned meetings	People meeting at the festival and talking
Meetings in busses and cafes	Unexpected causal encounters and talks in buses and cafes
Together co-create experiences	People co-creating their experiences at film festivals
Experiences changing quickly	Experiences of participants change unpredictably
Experiences uncontrollable	Organisers cannot control participants' experiences

Table 4-6 shows the initial set of codes.

After several revisions, these (shown in table 4-6 above) themes 'were' merged, reshuffled and remerged. For example, at one time 'the' internet was put along with enjoyment and fun, but after looking at its function in 'the' respondents' comments it was deemed to be more appropriate with 'infrastructure and facilities' under facilities, resources and hospitality. 'The' Code 'infrastructure and facilities' itself was an outcome of several revisions to group sofas, chairs, tables and easy access to information and projectors 'which were grouped' together finally, which were standalone codes in the first instance.

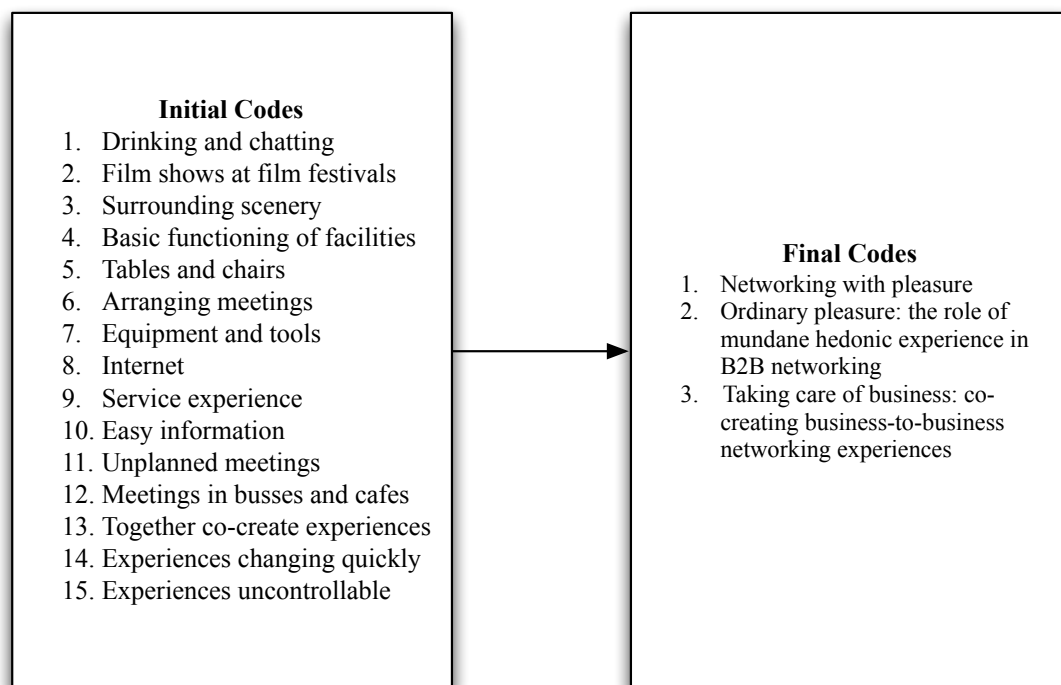


Table 4-7 shows the final codes developed from the list of initial codes

The three broad set of themes (as shown in table 4-7) emerged from the revisions and analysis: (1) networking with pleasure, (2) ordinary pleasure: the role of mundane hedonic experience in B2B networking, and (3) taking care of business: co-creating business-to-business networking experiences. In the first one, relaxed ambience, festivity, alcohol, film exhibitions and surrounding aesthetic landscapes were found to facilitate networking. Under the second code, synchronisation of meetings and exhibitions, availability of equipment, resources and appropriate infrastructure, food and beverages, access to Internet Wi-Fi, and efficient process and mass customisation appeared to facilitate the networking process. Finally, the last code, helped to understand the relevant characteristics and nature of the consumption experiences that facilitate the networking process. The following chapters will discuss these themes that emerged in the analysis in more detail.

## **4.8. Ethical Considerations**

Relevant ethical matters and issues for reflection, as suggested by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014), and those that have been considered in this study are outlined in the sections below.

### **1. Worthiness of the Project**

According to Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014), worthiness of project involves reflection on the worthiness of doing the project whether or not it will contribute in significant way and whether or not it is congruent with values important to the researcher. As discussed earlier, in spite of extensive research in consumption experience and experiential marketing over the years, most of the articles appear to be written in the context to B2C marketing, and very little has been done in the B2B marketing context. In context specific to the film industry, existing studies show the importance of (a) networking in the film industry, (b) socialisation for networking, and (c) pleasure in socialisation, yet relatively few papers have looked at the role and relevance of pleasure to facilitate networking, at the film festivals, in the B2B context. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute not only to improve the organisation of film festivals but also in the literature on B2B marketing and networking. I believe

that a PhD thesis should offer theoretical as well as practical contributions wherever possible, and therefore, this project is congruent with values important to me.

## 2. Competence

The issue of competence refers to the relevant expertise needed to carry out a study of good quality and consider the relevant supervision and training that is needed to complete the project (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Before starting the thesis, I studied postgraduate degrees in marketing and research methods. This means I have an understanding of not only relevant marketing theories but also research methods and philosophies to carry out good quality research. This dissertation was supervised by experienced academics from the field of marketing. While working on this thesis, I also attended a number of training sessions to improve the research and writing skills to complete this thesis. Therefore, I had the relevant skills, experience and also got the support and help needed to complete the study.

## 3. Informed Consent

Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) argue that it is important that participants should have full information about what the study involves, and they should give their consent to participate freely, in other words, voluntarily without any coercion. When I contacted the participants to participate in the research, I gave them full information about the study—what it entailed, the fact that this research was a part of a PhD thesis, as well as a promise to share relevant information from the study with the participants if requested. When they agreed and before starting data collection, I once again explained the information and asked them if they had any questions and whether they would still like to participate in my study, with the assurance that the participants will have the freedom to withdraw from the research at any point of time before, during and up to two weeks after the research has been carried out. None of the participants in the study withdrew from the research nor had there been any issue of uninformed consent and related problems in the study.

## 4. Benefits, Costs and Reciprocity

In this ethical issue, it is important to consider the time, energy and/or financial resources that the participants would need to invest and the relevant parties



would gain from taking part in the study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). To participate in the interview, the interviewees had to spend time. However, wherever it was inconvenient for the interviewees to participate in face-to-face interviews, I gave them the option to participate at their own convenience using Skype. Furthermore, I offered the participants time and location of their choice that was convenient for them as well as for me. This meant that the participants had minimum disruption and inconvenience in their work. There was no financial compensation for the participants' participation, but the filmmakers and commissioners who participated in the study acknowledged the importance of this research to the documentary film industry.

## 5. Harm and Risk

Sharp, Peters and Howard (2002) and Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) argued that research should not hurt the people who are involved or who participate in the study, and it should also identify if there is any harm and how likely it is to occur. Since this study involved understanding the experiences of filmmakers and commissioners at film festivals, it meant participants disclosed both positive and negative experiences. One risk identified was that if participants' negative experiences at the film festival are disclosed and organisers of that festival get to know about it, it may result in negative repercussions for the participants. To ensure that no one was hurt directly or indirectly for being involved in the study while ensuring that participants share their positive and negative experiences without hesitation, I decided to keep the names of the filmmakers and commissioners anonymous. There has been no known issue of any harm caused or likely to be caused to anyone from this research.

## 6. Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity

Keeping the names of the participants anonymous helped in keeping the individuals from being identified in the study. Out of the 50 participants, 29 filmmakers have been identified as FM 1 to FM 29, 13 commissioners have been identified as COM 30 to COM 43 and 7 film festival organisers have been identified as FO 44 to FO 50. The confidentiality, as a result of this anonymous undertaking, also helped in gaining the confidence of the participants; consequently, I got

interesting, relevant and very useful data. Confidentiality and anonymity were promised in the initial agreements with the respondents.

## 7. Honesty and Trust

The issue of honesty and trust is another important aspect in ethical consideration, and it involves reflecting on the relationship between the researcher and the people whom he or she studies (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). I did not know the participants prior to the research; therefore, there was no relationship between me and the participants before they were included in the study. At first, I approached the film festival organisers, and the ones who responded allowed me to observe and approach the filmmakers who participated in the festival. This resulted in snowball sampling and convenient sampling and showed that I had no prior relationship with the participants, and hence, the data collected in this study was not biased. Furthermore, as explained earlier, I informed the participants what the research was about and what I was expecting to achieve from it; therefore, there was no deception. Since the participants were not compensated financially or in any kind, there were no promises to be broken in that respect. Keeping the names anonymous also meant there was no deception that could have resulted from relevant nondisclosures during the writing of this thesis.

## 8. Research Integrity and Quality

In this research, the study was conducted carefully, thoughtfully, and correctly in terms of relevant reasonable set of standards and established practices of King's College London. Before starting the data collection, relevant ethical approval was requested and received. The conclusions in this study were based on data collected rather than sloppy or fraudulent work and false claims. In this study, as evident in the following chapters, the discussions and findings have been supported by quotes from interviews and field notes.

## **5. Networking with Pleasure**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 looked at festivals in general and explored the roles that documentary film festivals play in the industry and in our society in general. Following this, Chapter 3 looked at how networking is important in the film industry for employment, career progression and business opportunities. Since there is little understanding on how networks at the film festivals are established and it was important to understand the experiences of ‘doing networking’ of the participants, Chapter 3 also reviewed the literature on experiences within the marketing field to develop the conceptual framework for this study. The literature reviewed has shown that pleasure influences consumption, but the literature is mostly in a B2C context. Therefore, there is little research on experiential consumption in the B2B context but more so in relation to facilitating networking, particularly in the context of documentary film festivals and the film industry. This chapter will analyse and discuss the data collected using methodologies and methods explained and justified in Chapter 4. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on the data analysed within a common theme of how pleasure facilitates networking. While doing so, this chapter will also contribute not only by identifying the experiential facilitators but also by examining how they work together to facilitate experience, which in turn encourages opportunities for networking. This chapter starts with looking at the importance of networking at the documentary film festivals, followed by the experiential facilitators of networking.

### **5.2. Networking at Film Festivals**

This study found networking is very important in documentary film festivals; it helps the filmmakers and the documentary commissioners to create value for their own interests. Bourdieu (1985) defined the concept of social capital as ‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition’ (p. 248). These networks are not a natural inheritance or possession but

must be gained through membership of a group, and these memberships can be gained by establishing contacts with experts and relevant individuals and/or affiliations with institutions that confer valued credentials. The data in this study shows that filmmakers and commissioners at the documentary film festivals attend the events to establish contacts with each other to secure jobs, improve career opportunities and further business prospects. It was observed that attending film festivals conferred affiliations to the attendees belonging to the film industry, which further helped individuals in their careers and/or business objectives.

Attending film festivals and knowing relevant people from the industry at the festivals help filmmakers and commissioners create social value for themselves and their offerings. This phenomenon observed at the three film festivals is an expansion of the view of social capital, which, according to Bourdieu (1985), one is able to gain depending on individual's upbringing and social class, such as their family background and their education.

While Bourdieu's work brings in background, education and social class to explain that some networks are more valuable than others, this study also indicates that Currid's (2007) notion of social value is important in this context. Linked to ideas of what Bourdieu would term 'symbolic capital', these networks are valuable as they provide access to information, employment and other market opportunities. Thus, this study is bringing a nuanced understanding of networks and values into the field of B2B marketing. The value observed in this study is not about how the value is formed and developed at the festival through networking. In this sense, it is similar to the social value concept put forward by Currid (2007). As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, Currid's (2007) social value is about creating value for people and their cultural offerings by encouraging formation and development of bonds in an environment. Documentary film festivals are ideal venues in the film industry to create value for filmmakers and commissioners and their offerings by encouraging them to form and develop networks with each other in the festival.

The importance of networking at film festivals to create opportunities for career progression and business development was observed in this study. For

example, the commissioners wanted to bond with filmmakers who had good and relevant projects to their respective organisations but also with those who were talented and had potential to collaborate with in future. Similarly, it was observed that filmmakers want to develop relationships with commissioners to advance in their filmmaking careers and/or access funding and/or buyers for their finished or unfinished projects. It was also observed that filmmakers want to develop relationships with fellow filmmakers and commissioners with fellow commissioners at the film festivals. Filmmaker 21 and Commissioner 42 explain this further.

*When I go to a film festival I want to meet the buyers because not only I get opportunity to sell my current project to them but also I'll be in a position to know about any future opportunities by developing a relationship with that person . . . I think is also important for me to meet other filmmakers to know what they are doing and what is the general trend in the film industry. May be I am competing with a filmmaker today to get money from a buyer but in future I might work with him or her, who knows. (FM 21)*

*Film festivals help me to identify filmmakers and projects that I want to commission for my company, but most importantly when I am able to build relationships with these filmmakers it is useful for future projects, even if I do not commission their current projects . . . I also want to meet other commissioners as it helps me to understand what they are doing in their organisations, and often we buy and sell between ourselves (commissioners) . . . Perhaps I can meet a commissioner and ask him or her what is going on in the company, what type of projects they are commissioning, and maybe I will tell them that 'I have favourite film, will you be interested?' or they can ask similar question to me you know . . . Due to these reasons I think film festival is a good place to develop networking and build relationships, and cooperate in current or future projects. (COM 42)*

Participants in the study stressed that it was important to network in the film industry to create opportunities for career progression and business development and that film festivals are important venues for networking. The market value of cultural products and professionals working in the cultural industry is an outcome of social construction instead of just the functional aspects of the product, i.e., its benefits and/or its performance (Currid, 2007). Apart from being an economic act, Currid (2007) states that cultural value is an 'intense social process of valorization and legitimization' (p. 386) where art/culture is consumed and is known *socially*. Therefore, the economic value of art and cultural products is influenced by the short-lived intangible social value. This social value is 'formed from and within specific

contexts by particular people', i.e., the scene (Currid, 2007, p. 386). As acknowledged by my participants in this study, these 'scenes' can be made up of both formal (for example, speed dating and organised meetings) and informal types (for example, social gatherings).

The observations in this study highlight that filmmakers and commissioners attending film festivals talk about their products in a manner which is perhaps not easy for someone outside to understand, for example, Cinema Vérité, Compilation Film, Demonstrative Proof, Interrotron and Voice Over. It was certainly not comprehensible in the first instance for a researcher observing and studying documentary film festivals. During these discussions and interactions, it was observed that the participants attempt to create value of themselves, i.e., creating good impressions of themselves on those they want to network with. This social construction of the creative professionals and their products' market value (and cognitive and cultural meanings associated with the value) is a reason why its value could be difficult to understand for someone who is outside the artistic community (Velthuis, 2003). Hence, 'groups of individuals learn to appreciate art in their own social milieu' (Ooi, 2010, p. 348), which in turn explains the reason why pricing of artistic products involves social activity and cultural interpretation (Velthuis, 2003). This is apparent in the above quotation from Commissioner 42, which represents how film festival participants arrive at value propositions.

Since value in artistic products is a social construction, i.e., constructed from socialising with relevant people, the role of networking and building relationships with relevant people in the industry is very important for the creative producer as well as other stakeholders of the industry. Building personal relationships with important people in the industry helps artists add value and credibility to their product, besides getting opportunities to advance in their career (Currid, 2007). In the arts and cultural industries, 'there is a system of gatekeepers, mediators, intermediaries and institutions that structure the art world and construct consensus on art quality and taste' (Ooi, 2010, p. 348). In other words, as observed in the film festivals, relevant people and institutions in this industry shape what is desirable and what isn't using their actions, through their opinions and the interconnectedness between them. For example, at

GMM, when one of the leading commissioners from a major public broadcasting organisation expressed her opinion on a filmmaker's multimedia project as a benchmark in the festival, it set a precedence of conversations and discussions on multimedia projects at the festival. This means that an artistic product's quality and its value is determined by the ecosystem of social milieu; therefore, artistic products might not necessarily attain value in isolation or in the absence of a positive relationship between the artist and the ecosystem (Currid, 2007; Ooi, 2010). At the film festivals, the value of filmmakers' films and prospective or unfinished projects is created in this kind of ecosystem.

It is not just about the 'market value' of artistic products; personal contacts within the art/cultural industry also significantly help in learning about potential opportunities. Personal networks in the film industry are important to find work and link with the relevant groups for people to work with (Blair et al., 2001). In other words, the importance of networking to seek employment within the film industry is paramount. The results from the observations emphasise that meeting buyers at film markets is of vital importance to the filmmaker. Therefore, if filmmakers attend a marketplace, they would like to see business opportunities. The opportunities do not necessarily have to yield results immediately, but it can be in the form of informal networks and relationships developed at the festival, which can be beneficial in the future. For example, at a future meeting, previously established informal networks and relationships within the industry can help in positive word-of-mouth recommendations. They also provide important suggestions and offer a useful source of information. Another interesting observation was that filmmakers wanted to meet fellow filmmakers and know about their projects to keep up with the trends and competition in the market. In addition to this, many filmmakers see potential future partners in their competitors. The results highlighted that filmmakers also want to meet people at the film markets who can offer resources, such as equipment, people, and logistics for filmmaking and connect with those who are important gatekeepers and influencers in the industry.

Buyers also want to meet other buyers and not just sellers. At a film market, buyers from different countries come together and meet at one place. Meeting and

talking to other buyers helps them to know the trends and preferences for films in other countries, pitch their projects and/or sell them to other buyers, and build relationships for future collaborations. Besides filmmakers and fellow buyers, buyers are also keen to meet suppliers, gatekeepers and other intermediaries from the film industry. This observation is further reinforced by Commissioner 35's opinion.

*I think when festivals offers networking opportunities they give importance to help the filmmakers to network with others and us in the industry. But usually not a lot of attention is given to help us network with the industry (even though they promise networking opportunities), and with those with whom we want to network, for example other broadcasters and commissioners . . . (COM 35)*

This is one of the main reasons for which buyers are often disappointed with film festivals as was evident from the participant data as well as from the observations. From the observations at the film festival, I noticed that those festivals that facilitate the networking opportunities usually focus on helping the filmmakers network with the industry, especially the buyers. The urge among the organisers is to facilitate meetings between the commissioners and filmmakers, and most of the events are organised around this objective. Sufficient attention is not given to help the commissioners/buyers network within the industry. Since buyers are expected to connect only with filmmakers, most of the programmes and events that are offered to them ignore the fact that buyers also want to meet fellow buyers and other relevant parties from the industry.

This section has shown the relevance of networking in creating value for the professionals (filmmakers and commissioners) and their offerings within the social milieu of the documentary film festival and the film industry in general. It helps in employment, career progression and/or creating business opportunities. The observations and interviews showed that there are both formal (for example, speed dating and organised meetings) and informal environments (for example, social gatherings) to network and create value depending on the film festival; for example, GMM has both formal and informal venues while ZFF and IYY had only informal ones. While the next chapter will refer to the formal environment of networking, this chapter will focus on the informal environment, and the following section will analyse and discuss how hedonic facilitators in such environment assist networking.



### **5.3. Experiential Facilitators**

The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 has shown that individual consumers are prone to emotion and pleasure, which is why pleasurable experience affects and influences their overall consumptions. However, this literature is mostly in a B2C context, and the evidence is meagre in B2B marketing. Nevertheless, Cayla et al.'s (2013) empirical study found business parties are relevant for B2B relationships because they are hedonic and festive. Their study has established the relevance of pleasure in fostering B2B relationships but at the same time created scopes for further studies to understand and identify in depth how experiential facilitators facilitate networking and work together to facilitate experience, which in turn encourages opportunities for networking. Similarly, although Currid (2007) explains that the pleasure in the 'informal social parties' stages scenes that help film industry professionals to create and develop bond with each other and generate social value for themselves and their cultural offerings, her paper also creates scopes for further research on what facilitates networking specifically in the context of film industry.

The data analysed and discussed in this chapter will address these gaps to expand on the limited research on identifying relevant experiential facilitators for networking. It will also address gaps by finding out the relevance of and interrelations between experiential facilitators of networking. There is also a contextual difference between Cayla et al.'s (2013) study and this thesis. Cayla et al.'s (2013) study is on parties at tennis tournaments, but this study is on film festivals. The former looks at how companies with no obvious connection to the sport such as Veolia and Bombardier use parties at tennis tournaments to develop business networks. This study contributes to understand what facilitates networking at film festivals; both film festivals and film industry professionals have a direct link to the film industry. The section below is divided into five subsections, namely, relaxed ambience, festivity, alcohol, film exhibitions and surrounding landscape, and these are followed by a summary.

### 5.3.1. Relaxed Ambience

A relaxed ambience is important to facilitate networking because it is pleasurable for participants to network when they are relaxed. As discussed in Chapter 3, the B2C literature shows hedonic experience affects and influences the overall experience of consumption. The primary data in this study has shown that for B2B networking, a very hedonic experience (in the form of comfort and informal environment) is necessary because it influences overall consumption of networking activities at the documentary film festivals. I observed that film industry professionals worked in a hectic environment because, as Blair et al. (2001) suggest, because of the temporal nature of employment in the industry, there is more competition. Festivals that offered solace from this hectic working environment by being comfortable and informal tend to be less competitive and more social in nature, and this relaxed ambience encourages professionals to form and develop their social bonds in the film industry. This study found that competition or formal competitive environment does not necessarily always offer conducive environment for everyone to network; in fact, it may deter some to participate in networking. For example, Filmmaker 21 explains:

*I've never had any confidence, and I never particularly want confidence. Because like in a way I feel it's my lack of confidence in myself that makes me able to make these films. I'm not looking to get personal confidence . . . there are other very famous filmmakers who are like me (for example, names another filmmakers and continues saying) she's the opposite of that (being introvert in talking to people). She's always in the background, looking slightly troubled and harassed . . . what I want to do is to make friends and build friendships and not to be a saleswoman. This is why I like when environment is relaxed, it is informal and there is a small community filling to it (film festival) (FM 21)*

A relaxed and informal ambience is important because it facilitates, as the participants suggest, friendship opportunities, which is an informal social bonding in comparison to more formal relationships. A lot of importance was given to the 'friendship' while referring to their objective to attend film festivals and networking, as this ultimately leads to their career progressions and business development. And this was also observed at the film festivals. Observations showed participants spent more time with whom they were friendlier and they were relaxed and more confident

to interact. On one occasion at ZIFF, the research observed a group of four filmmakers and commissioners who stayed in a group throughout the festival. These people did talk to others at the festival but spent more time together than with others. This group also became friendly with people they met the first time at the festival, and the group became bigger towards that end of the festival. Commissioner 35 explains that

*[t]o be able to know a filmmaker and project it is important to know the person well. This helps to build relationships between them and us who are the buyers and the sellers. But this cannot happen when we meet in a very stressed and limited time environment . . . I'm trying to say is that all types of meetings and networking and collaboration should take place in the environment, which is relaxed and gives the feeling that we are having fun. If we don't enjoy what we do, then although we can have some transactions yet it might not help in building these amazing and more productive networks that can happen in a relaxed, and yet exciting and informal environment (COM 35)*

McIntosh and Siggs's (2005) empirical paper found relaxation affects customer consumption experience positively; similarly, Pullman and Gross (2004) argue that relaxation is important in experiential consumption and they see it as a basic emotion to arouse pleasure. Although participants attend film festivals with an overarching objective to work, i.e., networking, they prefer a relaxed ambience in a formal environment as Commissioner 40 explains:

*We are stuck at office most of the time, and although we are at the festivals to work but still it (film festivals) is kind of the place which is festival and not work, you see what I mean? When it is relaxed like Palm Springs, it is more like I am getting away from work, and still doing work but by being, I guess more relaxed and having fun! (COM 40)*

The observations and interviews in the study shows that, unlike formal environments, a relaxed ambience refers to an informal environment where participants do not have the pressure to perform or compete or are obliged to demonstrate *officially* their credibility. In the absence of a competitive environment and with entertainment and relaxation, it was observed that participants are more relaxed and respond better to participating in social activities. For example, I observed that participants tend to be anxious, uptight and/or stressed in informal pitching sessions, which affects their performance to bond with others. Ambient

conditions can profoundly affect how people ‘feel, think and respond to a particular service establishment’ (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 331). Grayson and McNeill (2009) and Joseph-Mathews et al. (2009) show that ambient conditions have the ability to create positive emotions and behaviours. Williams and Dargel (2004) mentioned that people are encouraged to stay longer at (and also return to) places that are pleasant but avoid places that have unpleasant ambience. This relaxed ambience has the potential to facilitate better and long-lasting networking and social relationship opportunities, as described in vibrant detail by Filmmaker 24:

*[F]ew years back I went to this amazing film festival (Abu Dhabi International Film Festival). It was unusual because it was very relaxed and informal, even the formal meetings were relaxed and fun and cool . . . And we’re all sitting there in this sort of really unusual environment. And they brought us all together. And actually, I have to say, of all the festivals I’ve been to, that film festival is the one where I’ve met and kept in touch with the most people (FM 24)*

A relaxed and informal environment at the festivals helps to develop relationships that are not based on professional hierarchies but instead on informal relationships resulting from socialising. This informality gives filmmakers the confidence to be in touch with people they met at the festival and continue their correspondence. Filmmaker 24’s comment above shows how professionals who are not established and feel less accomplished than others can relax in an environment that is informal and not feel inferior to others present at the festival. Therefore, the informality in a relaxed environment gives professionals the confidence to socialise with others who are more accomplished and established in their careers.

*Even though it was . . . it’s not that we were highly regarded in terms of like awards or, you know, like if you say you won . . . still everyone was having fun together, it did not matter if one won lots of awards and the next person did not win anything. There were fewer barriers and less segregation because it was a relaxed atmosphere there. At other festivals I have seen when a big producer walks in it is like ‘Oh, my god. That’s incredible’ and everyone is there working, working. But at Abu Dhabi it was different, everyone was relaxed . . . I met a film director from Germany there and I’m in touch with regularly who got nominated for the Oscar . . . and then, I met another director (who won lots of awards) there who I love and who I’m going to meet next week when he comes to London. (FM 24)*

Filmmaker 24 continues to explain how the relationships that he developed in a relaxed and informal environment continued into the future:

*When I was in Berlin, I was going up to like . . . I was with my friend and I was going to people like, 'Hey, how are you doing? I haven't seen you for ages'. And then, my friend's like, 'Where did you meet?' 'Abu Dhabi'. The next person, 'Where did you meet?' 'Abu Dhabi'. And everyone was there and it was really strange that the people were there and we all knew each other from Abu Dhabi festival. (FM 24)*

The relationships developed in a relaxed environment are friendlier and relatively more social in nature than official or business relationships. Filmmaker 24 explains the importance of a relaxed environment further in the quote below:

*I don't know if it was because we were all kept so closely together, we all got to know each other, or if it was because that the standard was for people to have fun, relax, and talk in an environment which had less industry pressure to perform but it was all about fun, enjoyment and excitement, that's how you get to know them . . . it seems to be like everyone I have met there is doing well. And it's amazing on Facebook, my Facebook friends, they're all like . . . you see a producer, she's making . . . she's doing features in New York, and Max won the Oscar, and Jill won these awards in his shorts, really good shorts. So the relaxed environment at the festival I think helped us to stay in touch after all these years. The fun we had together helped us to be friends and there is no problem in friendship even if one is winning Oscar and the other is still struggling, we are good friends you know . . . that was amazing. (FM 24)*

The above quotations show the relaxed ambience of the environment for professionals to have fun and entertainment, which in turn encourages them to develop better social bonds that are not temporary in nature but long-lasting. This illustrates how, as discussed in Chapter 3 in reference to Currid's (2007) paper titled 'The Economics of a Good Party', social value is created by forming and developing social bonds in informal and pleasurable environment. Both Blair et al. (2001) and Currid (2007) have shown the importance of informal networks in the film industry for employment and business opportunities. Grugulis and Stoyanova (2012) have shown social networks offer speed and flexibility to gain benefits from the informal networks, which is unlikely to be matched by more formal systems. The quotation below from Filmmaker 19 shows that although a formal environment is important and

has its place in business, the value of an informal relaxed environment is paramount to create networking opportunities:

*I don't mind the, you know, pitching to somebody I don't know if it's . . . if it feels like the right moment. But if it's kind of a moment (at formal nonrelaxed environment) where it's kind of set up to perform and there is too much pressure, somebody came, now you've got one hour to network, and then you know that 50 other people will want to speak to the same commissioning editor, it's that artificiality I don't like. But if I'm, for example, the same day or night, I go to film festival and then I meet that guy there (in a relaxed informal environment) and we happen to sit there at the same table, then I feel like, oh, okay, then it's informal and there is less pressure and more relaxed, we can chat, 'Hey, by the way, I've got this great project. Have you heard about it?' And then you can talk about it without feeling like I'm queuing up, you know, behind everybody else. So I think that makes the difference (to build informal networks and relationships to collaborate). (FM 19)*

The primary research in this thesis shows that a relaxed ambience facilitates networking because, as explained in the above paragraphs, it tends to create a fluid environment to interact with others in a social environment more easily. To create this relaxed ambience, the primary data suggests the importance of servicescape and physical evidence. The idea of the servicescape was introduced by Booms and Bitner (1981) to stress the influence of the environment, in which service delivery and consumption take place. This is an important area in marketing to enhance consumers' service experience (Palmer, 2008). According to Booms and Bitner (2001, p. 36), servicescape is the 'environment in which the service is assembled and in which the seller and the customer interact, combined with tangible commodities that facilitates performance and communication of service'. Physical evidence within the servicescape creates 'the environment in which the service is delivered . . . and (includes) any tangible components that facilitate performance or communication of service' (Zeithaml et al., 2009, p. 25). For example, 'buildings, landscapes, vehicles, interior furnishing, equipment, staff members' uniforms, signs and printed materials, together with the use of colours, smells and sound' in the servicescape (Lovelock et al., 2009, p. 24). Hume and Mort (2010) found in their study on customer retention in the performing arts (public performance) that the servicescape plays a crucial role in facilitating customers' satisfaction, perceived value of the service and decision to return. Therefore, it is important that festival (and experience) designers/organisers give importance to the 'creative aspects of design, and on environmental psychology

for many of the setting and behavioural elements' (Getz et al., 2010, p. 51). Filmmaker 20 explains the relevance of this servicescape in creating the relaxed ambience:

*You know in a informal networking event which is much more relaxed and take it easy type, you can sit in the festivals' pub or in a café or in a bar or in a . . . somewhere, a restaurant that sells food, you know that everyone within that space is there to talk films. So there isn't that chance or need of going away because everyone is relaxed, you can share jokes and take your time to talk about things. Everyone in that room is there for the same purpose, which is to relax and have fun with the industry. To make the most of networking you need to have fun doing it, and if you are relaxed and enjoying there is more collaboration . . . and I think depending on what is around inside and outside the festival, it makes a difference in creating a relaxed environment (FM 20)*

The above quotation explains how the pub, cafe and restaurant within the servicescape offer an environment where professionals can relax and engage in informal social relationships. Physical evidence within the servicescape includes 'the exterior and the interior environment to the service settings and the equipment and technology that customers may encounter in their dealings with the service provider' (Baron et al., 2009, p. 9). This means that physical evidence within the servicescape creates 'the environment in which the service is delivered' (p. 25) and includes any components that facilitate performance or communication of service (Zeithaml et al., 2009). A well-managed servicescape can have an impact on the customer's perception of the service with a lower degree of tangibility, i.e., more positive perceptions of performance (La et al., 2005, referring to Ellis and Watterson, 2001). The observation results show that there is not much tangibility in the networking service provided at film festivals. Networking is an experience rather than a tangible good. If a professional experiences that he or she has developed a relationship, then they are likely to assume that they have networked.

Filmmaker 20 continues, saying:

*I went to some very formal film festivals, it was too formal and there was a lot of pressure to get something out of the networking and in the process what I did was I was trying to force those questions, but I just had no interest in it. It's hard . . . So you see a girl you like, you go up to her and*

*you go, 'Oh, hi. We've probably got some things in common'. And they go, 'No. Go away'. That's the worst that could happen (FM 20)*

If professionals need to approach strangers in a formal environment, it might look intrusive to the one who is approaching. This can demotivate the person to go and talk to strangers as they assume the other person's reaction may not be desirable. However, in a relaxed social environment, the conversation does not have to be about work, and it could be mentioned in the conversation at a later point.

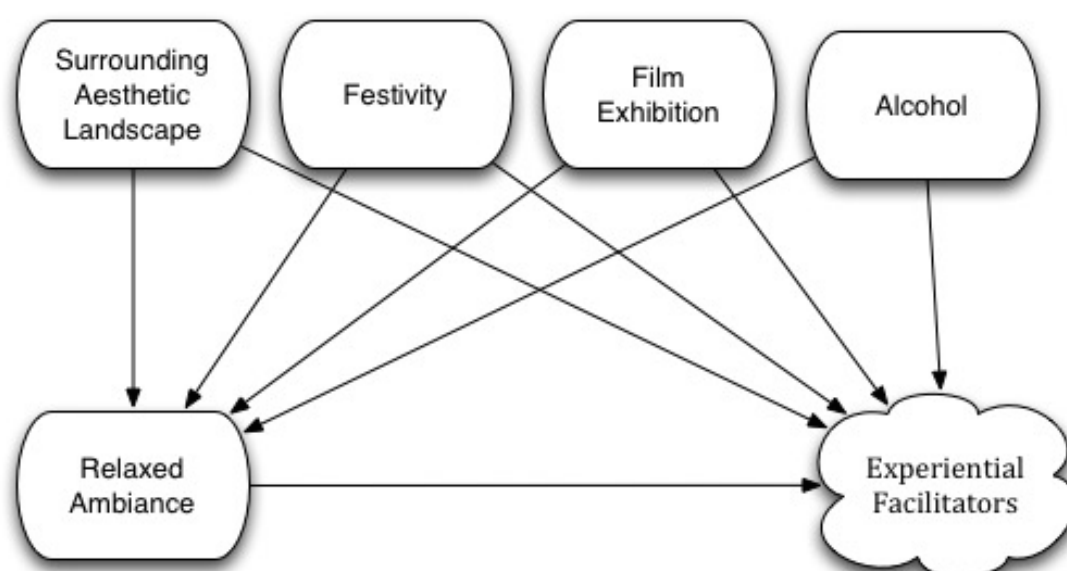
In addition to servicescape and informal environment, the size of the festival also makes a difference in making the ambience relaxed. In other words, smaller film festivals with an informal environment tend to be relatively more relaxed than those that are bigger and/or have a more formal approach. This also explains why smaller film festivals tend to have more informal environment leading to a relaxed ambience, whereas bigger film festivals tend to be more formal with pressure to perform, as Filmmaker 27 explains:

*I like to go to smaller film festivals, like Sheffield Doc/Fest than big ones like IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam) for example because Sheffield Doc/Fest is so friendly and homely, like I know everyone and if I don't know I can be friends with them. But IDFA is a big formal event, which is suffocating for me, but I know it is very useful to do business deals. But I think I gain more from my friendship (in terms of business/professional dealings) than doing business deals, maybe I am not a good sales person but good in making use of friendship (laughs) (FM 27)*

It is relatively easier to take a casual and fun approach in designing the servicescape at smaller film festivals than ones that are much bigger. Cultural events, colourful environment, music and lighting, and product display (film exhibitions and posters), all these add in enhancing the servicescape at film festivals to make it more relaxing. These aspects will be discussed in more detail in the following section of this chapter. This study shows that the servicescape is important in designing a relaxed ambience and it is comparatively easier to do so at smaller events than in big ones that are spread across a big city. I observed that it is because of better control and the smaller budget of such festivals.



So this study shows that the feeling of relaxation helps in facilitating networking and collaboration because it encourages people to interact with relatively less inhibition and more freely, compared to the formal environment of pressure and performance. A filmmaker might be good at making films but not necessarily a good salesman; in other words, the interviewees suggested that not everyone is extroverted and a lot of them are shy too. Introverts, or those who are shy, do not necessarily perform well when they are under pressure to perform networking. Therefore, it is important to produce a relaxed environment to help the industry build informal relationships, which will then in turn encourage better collaboration opportunities. This can be achieved by considering the informality, servicescape and managing the size of the festival. This study also shows that while ambience is an experiential facilitator, at film festivals it is dependent on other experiential facilitators, and these include festivity, alcohol, film exhibitions and the surrounding aesthetic landscape. Each of these facilitators not only helps in networking but also contributes towards creating a relaxed, informal and social environment, which further contributes to efficient networking. These facilitators will be discussed in more detail in the following sections. Figure 5-1 below illustrates this further.



**Figure 5-1 Experiential facilitators for B2B networking at film festivals**

### 5.3.2. Festivity

This study found festivity as an important experiential facilitator for networking. Festivity here refers to exuberant and joyful celebration of the film festival. Festivity not only facilitates networking directly but also enables a relaxed ambience, which (as discussed above) also encourages networking opportunities. In addition, festivity also contributes towards creating a pleasurable informal and social environment to assist in networking efficiently. The informal, social and pleasurable nature of festivity creates ambience, which is symbolic of celebration and of being in festivals as discussed in Section 2.2 in Chapter 2. The reason for this is that it results in sensory stimulation—smells, sights and sounds. Festivity helps to get closer to the fantasy of being in a space to celebrate, have pleasure and fun, away from the mundane working environment. Therefore, just like a relaxed ambience, festivity at film festivals incorporates Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) three experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun.

As discussed in the previous section, a relaxed environment encourages people to interact freely and openly. This study also found that festivity does the same, as explained by Filmmaker 25:

*But just for me, experientially, you know a festival is about creating this environment of kind of openness of celebration, that of ritual in a sense that people can kind of reach out to people and start a conversation causally. (FM 25)*

Filmmaker 4 further adds

*[f]or me film festivals is meeting people and building relationships with them . . . Relaxation is important because you meet these people in the room in a very formal way, then everyone goes out drinking at the bar and then you say hello to them. So I think the feeling of festival gives the festival a relaxed feeling to it, and this helps in building relationships with the right people (FM 4)*

It was observed in the study that in festive environments, professionals tend to be a lot more relaxed than in a relatively more formal environment; for example, ZFF was relatively more festive and the professionals attending that festival were more

relaxed than in IIFY. I observed that at those festivals that were more festive, i.e., had a relatively less formal environment but created a feeling of enjoyment and fun, participants were more relaxed there and were rather freely interacting with each other. Filmmaker 9's quote explains the relevance of festivity in creating a relaxed informal environment and encouraging people to interact:

*When I go to a film festival I expect a lot of excitement, pomp and show. It can be the music, the special effects with lights, the noise, something in the environment you know . . . it adds up you know . . . When I see this, I know that's a film festival, a true festival. . . . The good thing about this at the festival is that we do not need to stick to our work agenda and force us to talk about work and achieving our professional goals, but we can take it easy. We can talk about anything and this feeling of stress-free interaction helps to build friendships at the festivals. (FM 9)*

So festivals being festive in nature can help in encouraging people to interact, which, when seen in the context of film festivals, can help professionals to interact, and, as we have discussed above and in previous chapters, interaction is very important in networking. It was observed that festivity, being informal in nature and encouraging people to interact, could be seen as icebreakers because it gives people something to talk about other than their work. It seems that work tends to take a backseat at festivals in spirit if not in practice; in other words, although people are interacting and consequently developing relationships and networking, they do not interact by compulsion to network-work but to enjoy the festivity socially. Therefore, the festivity at film festivals creates a nonworking ambience, which makes it relaxed and hence facilitates networking. To build good long-lasting and effective relationships, it is important for people to develop friendships, as discussed earlier. And this friendship between professionals can be created not when they are transacting or competing with each other but when they are having fun talking to one another.

We are trying to understand better the phenomenon of 'festivity', and this study found its characteristics which further help to understand how it facilitates a relaxed ambience and, consequently, networking. The relevance of the servicescape was discussed in detail in the earlier section on ambience; the relevance of tangible

and intangible elements in the physical environment of the festival is well pronounced in the testament of Filmmaker 8:

*I like the colours and flowers outside at the entrance, and the different cultural programmes, like the music show and the parties . . . it looks very festive. At film festivals there should be colourful and lively environment; after all it is a festival, isn't it? . . . I think shows and events are necessary besides the decorations with colours and lights etc. (FM 8)*

The above comments made by Filmmaker 8 reflect the general opinion of the participants in this study. While examining the environmental characteristics that makes a festival successful, Lee et al. (2008) refer to the relevance of parties, music and culturally relevant and interesting performances. These tangible and intangible elements in the environment act as props, which give the impression of film festivals being festive in nature. Filmmaker 18 and 22's comments explain this further:

*[T]hey (film festival) team up with musicians like so they have these musicians that come down and they'll come and play . . . that's always nice, just to have live music or some kind of music, DJs . . . this creates a very fun and exciting environment to work (FM 18)*

*Different cultural events, such as music and dance shows, and sometime there are even fashion shows etc. or when there are events where people need to participate, like discos and late night parties, the primary objective than is to have fun and enjoy. This means that people start talking to strangers next to them on anything other than work. (FM 22)*

These props help to network in a relaxed ambience:

*Once two strangers starts talking to each other, it helps to build a non-work-related relationship and this at a later stage can be used to discuss work . . . I think I am more confident to talk with someone about my work, I know very well than someone I don't know . . . it feels like I am not selling than, or disturbing the other person, because I know what that person likes or won't like you know (FM 22)*

So cultural events and music shows/events are important props to create a festive environment, but the props to create such an environment are not limited to these but extend to the surreal and fantasy setting, which excites sensory stimulation. This is evident in the long but important narrative reflection from Filmmaker 24.

*This film festival I went to was truly festival as it had all these additional things that made it festival like . . . we went to one night where it was an Indian gala banquet and they flew in chefs from India. Instead of getting someone who's already in Abu Dhabi, they flew in chefs especially for the event. The food is for a thousand people but they only had 400 guests. So it was like . . . the more . . . people were like, 'Is this all for us? What a waste!' And every different type of curry or side dish you could possibly want, and that was all outdoors in the baking heat. It was like nine o'clock at night but it was very humid and very warm, so we're all sort of in a suit jacket but you're sweating. Anyways, you get this beautiful Indian food and then there were just people coming around with champagne on trays and it's like, you know, like what you always see in a movie, just taking the champagne off. And yeah, you just . . . and that's the situation. It was funny, and there were so many other people there who were from different backgrounds, some were really successful filmmakers. Like, there was this Russian director who . . . he was made . . . there were like seven features or something, and he won the award for best picture there. And he was with all of us going, 'This is incredible'. And he was kind of like in the same situation we're in, we didn't know what was going on, so we all got to know each other because it's such a **surreal environment**. And then, we just . . . well, what we know is that the champagne that was going on was Lauren Perrier and it was just all . . . like we saw the bucket of other bin of empty bottles at the end of the night, and it was . . . you wouldn't believe how many bottles I've gone through. And we're all sitting there in this sort of really unusual environment. And they brought us all together. And actually, I have to say, of all the festivals I've been to, that film festival is the one where I've met and kept in touch with the most people, even though it was . . . it's not that we're highly regarded in terms of like awards (FM 24)*

This grandeur of celebration helps to create a festive environment by stimulating the senses, but Filmmaker 24 did acknowledge that it was not possible for all film festivals to have the budget of the Abu Dhabi International Film Festival. But emphasis here is non-business- or non-work-related props, which create the feeling of enjoyment and fun, have elements of fantasy too and are very much hedonic in nature. This in turn relates to the 'experiential perspective' of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), which emphasises on the relevance of hedonic consumption and fantasy, feelings and fun in B2C consumption. The comments of Commissioner 40 below and Filmmaker 24 above show that framing participants in a B2B context from a consumption perspective, i.e., B2C, allows us to use different conceptual lenses to those available from within a B2B perspective. The hedonic aspect of consumption at film festivals is an important element to consider to 'facilitate' better networking opportunities between the professionals.

*([A]t IDFA) every night, they have this cocktail called like . . . I forgot. This was very festival like environment with people talks informally and very friendly etc. It's like basically, if you're an organisation, you could sponsor a cocktail with everybody from the festival in this one bar. Yeah. It's huge. It's like totally crowded. . . . you can have access to the bar, to all the festival attendees and have a presentation. But it's really a big cocktail party basically. And it's great. And we did it about three times in a row, and it was just great, you know, to say, oh well, this is an opportunity to introduce you all to (the organisation that the commissioner represented) and also to show what's in our pipeline. And people come away with a better understanding of what our organisation is and they have also been to a cocktail party where they've networked and you know, met with their colleagues and their friends. So, you know, that could be really useful. I think these events not just makes it festival but also helps encouraging people who never met before to talk comfortably. (COM 40)*

The interviews and participant observations revealed that the professional-attendees at the film festivals want to experience this feeling of fun and festivity, and such feelings can be experienced in the music and cultural shows and parties at the festival. In other words, these entertaining and colourful experiences are the ingredients to make the film festivals festive. This in turn is relevant for networking because it helps break the ice between two or more strangers and encourages them to interact freely. Besides acting as an icebreaker, festivity also helps the filmmakers (junior filmmakers especially) to experience a feeling that they are a part of the glamorous film industry, which in turn gives them the confidence to interact confidently with senior professionals from the industry. The participants argued that having the confidence to have a friendly conversation is very important to network in the industry, which is not always feasible in a nonrelaxed but chaotic and pressured environment. In another long but important narrative, Filmmaker 29 recalls in vibrant detail his experience from one such festive environment:

*So I just got out the plane and there's a lady with a sign with my name on it . . . They got my bag. And then, they put me in a 7 Series BMW. And I saw another filmmaker who had a similar experience, getting put in a different 7 Series BMW. We both drove to the same location together, but we couldn't share a car because they wanted us to have separate cars. And that it had like leg rooms, you can put your feet out like this. . . . So, when we went to the closing night party . . . all the short filmmakers who'd got to know each other were grouped together by the short film programme. We were held in this waiting area where we were given champagne and food, and we had like quite a lot of that. And then, they said, 'Right, okay, guys, it's your time on the red carpet'. So then, you got out onto the red carpet and it was . . . they'd take you down. This place was just kind of private, and then it opens up into this lit huge sort of stage area right over the red carpet where they had all the sponsors on the*

*background like they always do and then had a barrier with probably about 50 screaming teenage girls, all just going crazy. They're all taking pictures and going absolutely wild. And we're all just standing there going. . . . 'This is really what we'd really want. Hello'. We didn't know what we do with ourselves because we were like 'They don't know who we are'. And they said there were rumours that there'd been paid to be there. There were other rumours that they were the family members of the organisers and they've been told to bring their friends, and I think they all got a bit of a bonus for coming along. And they made them scream but it was so strange. And then, we moved on. And everyone who went on it, even the people like the more well-known people who'd been on red carpets many times, they have never experienced something like that, like a little pocket of just screaming girls. It's so strange. And then, they took us down in the red carpet where it was like a proper red carpet experience where . . . it's actually a bit awkward because they said, 'Stand here, smile for the photographs. Right. Move here. Right. Stand for the photographs'. And then, all the way down. And then, you get to the end and go in and actually I met a couple of friends. . . . So we had like an hour and a half until the film started, until it was . . . people were actually in there. So we went back out and did it again. (Laughter). So we went and did the red carpet a couple of times, so it's quite funny. But that was an amazing . . . surreal . . . I need to go back to that festival definitely, it made me feel like I belong to the film industry, and all famous and short filmmakers like were treated alike. And due to these glamorous events, I think we had a lot of fun and became good friends. It is just nice to be made feel when I always fantasised, the red carpet you know. It makes you feel confident to approach these big filmmakers and buyers and shake their hands and talk to them. You feel like you are being valued here, even though I was much junior, younger and with only one short at that time (FM 29)*

This extract refers to an experience which one feel like he belonged to the industry, which is glamorous and where he was treated equally, i.e., just like reputed filmmakers were treated at the festival. This quote also highlights the relevance of fantasy and fun for networking at the film festivals. The quotation above of Filmmaker 29 shows that the perceived festive environment is also linked to the realisation of fantasies. When this fantasy of being in a glamorous environment, often associated with the film industry, becomes reality, it gives younger filmmakers the much-needed confidence to interact with senior professionals in the industry. This is important for networking and in developing informal and long-lasting social relationships that help in career progression and business development in future. The above quotation also reflects a number of filmmaker participants' opinion that it is important to feel valued and to feel like they belong to the industry.

The ultimate fantasy of some filmmakers it to live the red carpet experience, even though they acknowledge that such an experience is surreal. But what was

interesting that this study noted is that these feelings of fun, entertainment and being able to live in the fantasy world of glamour in a celebratory and festive environment made them confident to network with senior professionals from the industry. However, the participants warned that the scale of such cultural and other entertainment programmes should not overshadow the film festivals' core service, otherwise it will put the film festival at risk. It can put the festival at risk because then it may not focus and facilitate enough and offer sufficient time to filmmakers to network. Therefore, festivity should act as a facilitator to network comfortably and confidently rather than serve as the primary focus of the festival, which should be to offer the industry opportunities to network and collaborate effectively.

### **5.3.3. Alcohol**

It is not just festivity that encourages professionals to be relaxed at documentary film festivals, but the availability of alcohol within the premises and/or at close proximity also helps to relax and facilitate networking. Alcohol not only helps in networking but also contributes towards creating a relaxed, informal and social environment, which further contributes towards networking efficiently. It also contributes towards making an environment celebratory and hence festive. However, there are exceptions in that not everyone likes alcohol, and there are religious and cultural preferences too. Rather, alcohol in this discussion is a part of the servicescape, which contributes towards making the environment informal, relaxed and festive, thereby facilitating informal social networking opportunities.

Previous research such as Hunt and Satterle's (1986) paper has shown the relevance of pubs in socialising and social cohesion, in the social context. The findings in this study showed that drinking alcohol adds to the pleasure of people socialising together, and the pleasure in socialising encourages people to interact for a longer duration, which in turn helps in developing informal relationships. The results also showed the importance of alcohol as an icebreaker between strangers that encourages them to get involved in social interaction. Participants in Niland et al.'s (2013, p. 532) research 'drew on a "friendship fun" discourse to construct their drinking as a pleasurable friendship practice' and justified their drinking for



‘pleasurable socialising’. However, it is important to clarify that the findings highlight that not everyone found alcohol as an important functional determinant in networking, and those who thought it was essential argued for moderate consumption.

A large number of participants in this study stressed the importance of alcohol to enjoy a hedonic experience and to be able to network and collaborate efficiently as it would be pleasant and easier to do so, socially and informally. The alcohol helps people to be relaxed and enjoy the social interactions with each other, which in turn helps them to develop informal relationships with each other.

*I think free alcohol (it is very important because) . . . it's like any kind of party, but in a more less professional sort of setting in a way. So I think it's about . . . again, it's just about creating the right kind of atmosphere which means getting filmmakers there in the first place, making it comfortable, making it somehow a comfortable atmosphere to talk to each other and that starts with the festival organisers themselves. And you know, both of these festivals that I'm referring to, I know the organisers now, you know, and I've met people that worked the festival just because they're really friendly and then you just feel quite at home and then it sort of breaks the ice over the other people around, you know, and it sets a kind of bar of like we can all just mingle. (FM 18)*

The availability of alcohol and the hedonic experience of social interactions associated directly and indirectly with acquiring alcohol make the environment informal or, as participant Filmmaker 18 suggested, ‘less professional’. The observations showed that people tend to see the availability of alcohol, especially within a festive setting (for example at cocktail party or cultural event), helps to create a relaxed environment and trigger social interactions, which encourages social relationships:

*I think actually mostly it is the alcohol which is important, and it's bad (chuckles after saying that). It sounds like . . . I mean, when you go to a film festival and all the bars are free, you just feel like, ‘This is a party. We're going to have a good time’. You don't know the people at the bar but you feel you can talk to them . . . They're just waiting there to grab a few drinks, and there's no like stress . . . (then goes on to give one example how alcohol helped) we had a few drinks there and, you know, we chatted a lot. And then, she said, ‘Actually, can I meet you for a second? Can I meet you again in a week?’ . . . She has already put me forward for quite a few jobs so far. (FM 24)*

Both observations and interviews suggest that a lot of interactions and informal networking takes place while drinking alcohol. At GMM, there was a small pub around the corner to where the networking was, and those who were quite reserved, shy and/or reticent during formal meetings were confidently talking with their colleagues, including those who were very senior to them.

*[A] lot of the socialising and bonding that happens from drinking that is, actually, I would argue is a key component to networking and building reputation in this whole industry. (FM 25)*

The observation showed that alcohol helps to relax and get confidence to talk to strangers. Hence, although it may not be conducive for formal business meetings, it is certainly effective in informal settings:

*If alcohol isn't involved, I wouldn't get through it, absolutely. I think it really is . . . it's kind of what our culture is, right? You gather around a table with your colleagues, with people that you care about, with people that you love. And at the end of a really hard day, you know it's . . . we drink. (Laughter) And it's kind of like the only thing to do. It's like, you're far away from home, again oftentimes not comfortable, but you're with people that you really enjoy, and you do . . . you know, our industry lives are really funny, it's . . . you know, I kind of say this all the time, it's . . . you go to these amazing places and you stay up all night with your friends, that you get to see a few times a year, and then you wake up, too hung over and you're exhausted all day, but then you go out and do it again. And then you wake up again, and you complain about it all day in meetings, but then you do it again. And it's just part of the culture. At these festivals, I've seen . . . we work really hard but we play really hard, too. (COM 34)*

So besides creating a relaxed environment, alcohol helps the professionals to relax too, which further helps in networking as both Commissioners 30 and 40 stressed. As Commissioner 40 argued, alcohol facilitates an informal environment, which in turn facilitates the information selection process:

*You know, you're really working so closely with someone especially if you're commissioning a film. And it takes a lot of time, it takes a lot of, you know, intellectual energy, it takes a lot of emotional energy. And also, it can be just a lot of fun, you know. It's like, can you have fun with this person? Could you just have a laugh? Could you go have a drink, could you have a beer with this person and just have fun, you know. Or do you enjoy each other's company? And then, you can enjoy the spoils of*

*the film when it's successful. And you know, you did this great job working together. I think that's really the key. (COM 40)*

This study has shown the importance of alcohol in offering a hedonic experience in networking, and pleasurable experience facilitates better networking opportunities. The quotations above echo the opinion of the interviewees in this study as well as the results from observations. This study highlighted the importance of alcoholic beverages as it helps in losing their inhibitions and talking more freely. The participants suggested that alcohol not only encourages them to talk freely but also it creates an environment which is friendlier and more relaxed. The participants in this study gave examples of those film festivals where everyone was able to access alcohol easily. This had a positive effect on their ability to develop networks with important people in the industry, which otherwise, according to them, would not have been possible as these people are very busy and revered. The participants argued that alcohol helps them to overcome the hesitation to approach those professionals who are revered in the industry. However, the participants acknowledged that some people could abuse the free alcohol, but at the same time, since they are at the film festival to work, the onus is on them to drink responsibly. Furthermore, this study also shows that it is not enough to have access to alcohol, but it has to be free and the environment should not be too noisy to help in networking and most importantly offer people pleasure in networking.

*I think actually mostly it is the alcohol which is important (for networking, more mentioned in the previous quote above) . . . (but) a lot of filmmakers don't have any money which obviously probably comes up in your other interviews as well. If you don't have any money, like when I first started out going to film festivals after I graduated, you know, after I graduated, I spent all my money, got living at university, and spending on fees and rent and everything like that and we're not working. So to go there and if you go there, you're going to spend another 300 or 400 quid on food and drink. It's just a bit of a down because you'll be budgeting yourselves. You'll be like, 'Well, tonight, I'll take it easy because I can't afford it'. Whereas, the only thing stopping you is that you don't want to sort of ruin the rest of your festival by going too crazy. (FM 24)*

Filmmaker participants in this study said that they do not have a lot of money, and they are on a tight budget. This is especially the case at documentary film festivals and particularly with filmmakers who are at the early stages of their careers.

But too much alcohol and the lack of a conducive environment to interact while consuming it do not help in networking either:

*We had to buy our own drinks and we left after about half an hour . . . it was completely useless, you know, and if you're (referring to festival organisers and their networking platform at film festival) going by useful, then yeah, give us free alcohol. So free booze and a comfortable space to enjoy is very important . . . I went to the Rushes' closing party and it was just useless because it was so noisy . . . There was so much booze, but you couldn't hear anyone and there was no effort for anyone to talk to one another and you just treated it like you were out with your mates without an opportunity to interact with filmmakers. (FM 23)*

This study has shown that it is important to offer free alcohol at festivals as much as possible, or at the least it should be subsidised. The reason behind this is that a number of filmmakers, especially those who are starting their careers and in need of networking with the industry, cannot afford to spend much on alcohol. It is also important that the space within which networking is to take place and has alcohol available should not be too noisy. If the environment is too noisy, the primary objective will be lost simply because without interaction, networking will not take place. The participants argued that it is difficult to interact in an environment that is too noisy.

#### **5.3.4. Film Exhibitions**

Film exhibitions are screenings of films from participating filmmakers at the film festivals. These films are usually submitted by filmmakers or other professionals on their behalf (such as film agents) and selected by a panel or jury at the festival.

Film exhibitions are also experiential facilitators. The quality and nature of these exhibitions not only helps in networking but also contributes towards creating a relaxed, informal and social environment, which further contributes towards networking efficiently. Films are also an important part of the festivals' experiential servicescape. Film is a highly experiential product—it not only stimulates the senses but also arouses emotions and feelings in the viewer. It transports its viewers to another reality or fantasy. Therefore, being able to watch films at film festivals is a

hedonic experience for the professionals. But this is the case when one enjoys the film, as Filmmaker 5 explains:

*After all we are at a film festival, where else we can have access to so many films, especially how many documentary films are screened in the local cinema? Not many. So it is important to take advantage of it, I really enjoy watching films when I go to these places (film festivals) (FM 4)*

Filmmaker 4 continues to explain why watching films is a hedonic experience:

*When you watch a film, if it is a good film of course, you go to another place you know. In the story, doesn't matter if it is a fiction or reality, but you are into it, completely immersed and for some time you are far from your work at the festival, I get to forget my work (laughs). I think film festival is about celebrating films, and it helps to relax in a busy hectic networking and working schedule here (film festivals). (FM 4)*

Filmmaker 4 links watching film to relaxation and taking a break from work at the festival, by immersing temporarily in watching the film. It is therefore hedonic for industry professionals to watch films at the film festivals. Pine and Gilmore (1998) links immersion to experiential products. Hackley and Tiwsakul (2006) shows watching films could be a social activity besides being an entertaining activity, which evokes various emotions in its audience. The fact that films (also referred to as movies and cinema in the literature and by my participants) are experiential products is also evident in Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), Cooper-Martin (1991), Pine and Gilmore (1998), Pine and Gilmore (1999), Holbrook (2000), Holbrook and Schindler (2003) and Carù and Cova (2006). This study shows that films are also experiential for professionals who visit business-centric networking events at film festivals.

While film exhibition is experiential for B2B event attendees and offers enjoyment to them at the festival, how does it facilitate networking? To answer this question, it is important to look at two aspects found from this study, which makes film exhibition a facilitator for networking. These two aspects are (a) attendees'

ability to understand the film (decipherability) and (b) the quality of screenings that can contribute towards professional development of the attendee-professionals.

This study found that the audience's ability to understand the film has direct influence on their perception about the servicescape of the film festival but most importantly on professionals' ability to network.

*Some films are very good but most of the films were not good enough to be screened in a festival. I expected better quality films, films which are easy to understand for the audience, you know some films screened in this festival were difficult to understand . . . if we can understand the film then it will be useful for us and the filmmaker to discuss the film and their project for distribution . . . this also shows is a film festival is good or is not able to attract good filmmakers (COM 31)*

Commissioner 31's comment shows filmmakers' ability to network is linked to the industry's ability to understand their film. Therefore, organisers should be able to target the right segment in the industry, to ensure that they have interest in the type of films screened. It is not just the buyers but also the senior filmmakers and fellow colleagues' ability to understand the film and their interest in it that has an effect on the filmmaker's (whose films are being screened) prospects to being able to network with the industry:

*I didn't understand what some of the filmmakers (whose films were screened) wanted to say through their films. I have been involved in many Bollywood films and few international projects, and in my experience I think these films are classroom assignments of some film students who wanted to do something out of their league. These films don't make any sense. I thought they (film festival organisers) will show good feature films or some short films or documentary films that make sense but I am disappointed . . . I think it is not useful to show these films as it will do more damage for the filmmaker's (whose film was screened) relationship with the industry (FM 9)*

Ability to understand and enjoy the film is intrinsically linked to the overall hedonic consumption at the film festival:

*[W]hen I watch a film I engage my senses, my eyes and ears are focused to understand the film, and then I link my imagination to that film . . . In this process if I cannot understand the film, then I am not able to transfer myself to that world, I mean the story that the film is trying to say. That is why if I*

*cannot understand a film I cannot simply enjoy the film, there is obviously no fun, no excitement, no enjoyment in watching it . . . (FM 2)*

Decipherability of the films screened at the film festivals appeared in the research to play an important role in helping the filmmakers to network with the industry. The observations at the film festivals show that if filmmakers who are in the audience besides the commissioners are not able to understand the film, they do not take its filmmaker seriously during formal meetings and even in informal social meetings. During one occasion, a filmmaker just walked out of the room in the middle of the film, and he commented to someone who was passing by to not watch that film. Watching a film is experiential, as the audience needs to engage their senses and imagination and expect arousal, fun and enjoyment by understanding the film. If the industry is able to have a satisfactory experience from watching the film, they are likely to give their attention and due importance to the filmmaker. The results show that the industry prefers to engage in discussions with those who show credibility, and the interviews suggest that one of the ways credibility is established at the festivals is through film exhibition. One of the reasons why the industry can find difficulty to understand a film is due to the lack of suitable subtitles:

*[C]oming to watch a film at the festival is not like purchasing a washing machine and get your clothes washed, or buying a car to go from one place to another. Watching a film is an experience, which you can enjoy by watching and seeing and hearing and by being in the theatre with others . . . there are many things that effect this experience and being able to understand the film clearly to enjoy it is one of them . . . subtitles, good introduction of the film, clarity in what this film is about etc. everything adds to how you are going to experience it, feel it and enjoy it. Like I said, it is not like the ice dispenser in my kitchen where you will get your ice cubes and you can touch and feel it to know how nice the cubes are, you gotta experience it (watching films) man . . . (FM8)*

And this enjoyment and feeling of fun is not possible when one cannot understand a foreign-language film:

*[S]ometimes there are no subtitles in a film and I cannot understand the language, but it looks like a good film but I cannot understand the film because I cannot understand the language. So I am still in the theatre instead of being transferred into that film because I do not know what the film is trying to say . . . (FM 13)*

Subtitles help to understand a film and enjoy it, and this eventually facilitates a pleasurable networking experience:

*[T]his (lack of subtitles) normally happens at small film festivals or the ones which has just started and has limited budget or gets less film submissions. The organisers try to make the most of the few submissions they had at the film festival, this of course means showing films without any subtitles . . . After the film's screening they (filmmakers whose film was shown and do not have any subtitles) come to us (buyers) but we cannot say much to them, because we simply did not understand the film (COM 32)*

Suitable subtitles in a foreign-language film are very important to understand and enjoy the films, which in turn help the filmmakers to network with the industry. Here, 'foreign-language film' does not necessarily mean non-English language films, but it refers to any films whose language is foreign to the audience. For example, a film made in English can be foreign to a native French speaker, or a Hindi (Bollywood) film can be foreign to an English speaker. The observations in this study have shown that having subtitles makes a remarkable difference for the audience to understand the film and put such understanding in context, which then helps the audience to enjoy the experience of watching the film. The interview materials show that there is a link between the subtitles of the film to the pleasure that audiences experience from watching it, which then in turn helps the industry to appreciate the filmmakers' work and engage in conversation about their film with them. Besides suitable subtitles, the industry's (i.e., fellow filmmakers and buyers) experience of enjoying films is influenced by its playability, i.e., the name and other cues communicated through the marketing campaign as well as the story, acting, directing, cinematography and so on (Kerrigan, 2010):

*Before going to watch a film at the film festivals it is a normal for us to read about the film and all other informations that are available at and from the festival. For example, what is the casting like, amm . . . script, directors and others who are involved in the film. Based on that we develop an impression about the film, like what it will be like and what to expect. But after we watch the film if it do not meet our expectations it is difficult to link our expectations to the viewing experience. This can be a problem because it means that I did not understand the film, or simply I am not interested in the film but I have been lured into it with false promises etc. This obviously can have a negative effect on my intention and desire to talk to that filmmaker . . . (COM 32)*



Playability in turn influences their ability to enjoy their networking opportunities:

*Well if they (film festival, film and its marketing materials) promise something before the film from the film and if I see something different, when I'm watching the film, than I think I will find it difficult to enjoy the film. Particularly if I expected more or better quality or something that I enjoy more. If I'm not able to enjoy and understand the film, then I'm not sure if I would like to participate in a conversation about the film with the filmmaker of that film. (FM 3)*

Playability of a film was found in the observations and the interviews to have significant influence over the industry's enjoyment and satisfaction from watching it and its filmmaker's ability to network in the industry. The communication and marketing literature about the films that the festivals screen has significant potential to influence viewers' expectations from the film, which in turn has an effect on their enjoyment from the film and their intention to interact with them at the informal and formal meeting places. This 'literature on the film' is either given to the festival by the filmmakers or the festival writes it for them, and this varies from one festival to another and/or differs from one film to another. If the expectations of the viewers do not match their experience, then it is possible that some viewers might find it difficult to understand, the reason being, as suggested by some of the participants, it is possible that viewers try to connect their viewing experience (as they watch the film) to what they were expecting before they came to watch it. During this process, if the viewers are not able to establish the clear connection, then their impression on their own understanding of the film becomes obscure. Such obscurity can go a long way in developing negative feelings about the film and their intention to talk to its filmmaker about it. Therefore, playability has an important role to play in audiences' ability to understand the film at film festivals and to ensure that they enjoy their viewing experience. The results in this study highlight that it is important, not just for the filmmaker but also for the film festivals' own success, to offer a pleasurable experience to the viewers by carefully designing the playability of the film. Pleasure from watching a film, and in turn the industry's intention to network with the filmmaker, is also affected by the absence of a distinctive categorisation between amateur and professional films.

*I think those shorts, that are made by amateurs or younger filmmakers but screened alongside professional films, lose their value. Being classroom assignments these films do not have professional standards and the message of film is not clear, especially when you watch them after watching some very good films made by veterans . . . Although we are professionals, at the end of the day we are humans too and we cannot switch off and on (referring to watching professional and amateur films) or separate ourselves and our judgement of the film from the other experience from viewing other films and other things you know . . . (COM 33)*

Distinctive categorisation not just helps to understand the films and enjoy them but also supports pleasurable informal networking opportunities.

*You go to a film to watch the film and enjoy the film and have a very good experience. It helps you to go out of the current reality where you are in, which is the theatre and to be in their screen world, which is a different world. But it is difficult to be in this different fantasy world because . . . it is difficult to switch off and switch on the level of attention and interest between a professional and amateur film. Amateur filmmakers suffer, their films might not look as good then (when screened with professional's films) and people might not be interested to talk to them . . . I definitely think they (film festivals) should divide the two categories to make it easier for the audience to be prepared what to expect you see (FM 3)*

Distinctive categorisation between amateur and professional films is very important at film festivals. The results show that the industry-audience (specially the senior filmmakers and the buyers) is likely to get confused and dissatisfied in the absence of distinctive categorisation. Therefore, distinctive categorisation is especially important for the benefit of amateur filmmakers to network formally and informally with the film industry at film festivals. Short films are often screened one after another with few or no breaks between screenings. Viewers are likely to find a film made by an amateur confusing or of poor quality if it is screened straight after the screening of a film that is made by a professional. The interview results show that confusion arises when the film is not as good as those of professionals, yet viewers perceive the amateur work as a deliberate artistic creation in the beginning (as it was screened after a professional, well-made film). But when the expectations of viewers are not met, finally they are disappointed, according to the participants. It seems from the interviews that the industry-audience experiences difficulty to change their expectations when they switch from a professional film to one that is made by an amateur. They tend to expect similar quality when one is screened after another. This

shows that it is difficult for the industry to separate their objectivity in judging the respective films based on their own individual merit from their subjective holistic experience at the festival. Finally, this research has shown that screening benchmarking films also has an effect on the consumption experience of the industry and their filmmakers' opportunity to network within the industry.

*Films arouse emotions, and not everyone will experience the same emotion. . . . We have different needs and expectations, and when we go to festivals we want to meet filmmakers whose film stimulates emotions in me but also sets new precedence in the industry . . . (COM 31)*

#### Screening benchmarking films encourages networking:

*I want to see some good quality films, good quality subjects, and films that are using the latest technologies. I want to know where our cinema is going so that I can be up-to-date with the latest benchmarks in the film industry . . . it helps me know with whom I want to talk to in the lounge or bar in the evening or with whom I should priorities scheduling my meetings (FM 21)*

Hedonic experience of the attendee-professionals is influenced by the quality of screenings that can contribute towards their professional development.

*Films with unusual and unconventional story lines, those that sets examples and inspirations in the film industry should be shown in film festivals . . . it helps us (buyers) to find the next big project or talent to have in our books . . . I would like to link and connect with them definitely. (COM 32)*

Benchmarking is an important topic mentioned by the interviewees at the film festivals. It was popular not only among filmmakers but also among the buyers who attend film screenings. Collecting and benchmarking the latest and best ideas in the market and incorporating these ideas in product and strategy development help to gain competitive advantage in the market. The interviews in this research has shown that filmmakers and buyers, just like any other business organisations, aspire to know new ideas, new trends and the latest technology used in films. This helps them to benchmark themselves in making or commissioning their own projects. Therefore, benchmark quality in this context is about new ideas, new trends and the latest technology used in the films. The results show that filmmakers and the buyers would

like to interact and link with those who make these benchmarking films. Showing such films improves the opportunity to network for benchmarking films' filmmakers, because the industry enjoys watching those films.

This discussion has shown that the five areas related to the quality of product exhibitions at the film festivals, i.e., decipherability, suitable subtitles, playability, distinctive categorisation, and benchmarking films in film screenings have significant influence over the festival participants' satisfaction and pleasure from the exhibition. The analysis also shows that it is difficult for the industry to separate their objectivity in judging the respective films based on their own individual merit from their subjective holistic experience at the festival. The results from this study reveal that films give the opportunity to the industry-audience to get transported into the world or the situation of the film screened; therefore, fantasy, feelings and fun are important elements in their audience's experience of the film. The audience's fun, fantasy and feelings from watching the films can be influenced by the playability of the film and whether they are able to understand it. The research also shows that people from the industry who come to watch films of the filmmakers are extremely busy and time is an important resource for them, which they expect to spend gaining useful experience besides the hedonic one. These experiences are closely linked in the context of this discussion. The next important facilitator for networking at film festivals is the physical space of the festival as well as the place where the festival is located.

### **5.3.5. Surrounding Landscape**

The surrounding aesthetic, which refers to the scenic beauty here, is an experiential facilitator and it facilitates networking opportunities at B2B events. The relevance of *aesthetics* in experiential consumption has been noted in existing marketing literature (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Holbrook, 2000; Addis & Holbrook, 2001; Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2002; Carù & Cova, 2003; Ed Jr., 2004; Carù & Cova, 2006; Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Atwal & Williams, 2009). While looking at business-attendees' experiences at trade shows, Rinallo et al.'s (2010) study found that aesthetics have 'minor impact on visitor satisfaction when compared to the innovativeness of products and the quality of interaction with stand personnel and

other visitors' (p. 255). The results in this study show that the aesthetic not only helps in networking but also contributes towards creating a relaxed, informal and social environment, which further contributes towards networking efficiently. It also stresses the importance of the servicescape discussed earlier in this chapter. The surrounding aesthetic landscape is a very important experiential facilitator for B2B networking when seen from the consumption perspective, as this study found. Filmmaker 25 explains this further:

*[Y]ou know a festival is about creating this environment of kind of openness of celebration, that of ritual in a sense that people can kind of reach out to people and start a conversation and you feel like you are in a community. You know, just being much more open than they might be in a normal, than urban environment. And to do that, it requires a kind of space that supports it and makes you feel relaxed. (FM 25)*

The filmmaker then continues to explain how this facilitates in networking:

*And I think like the best festivals in terms of creating that community environment, you know, my experience like true/false, it is this. The physical landscape was this very small area, I'd say about a four-block radius in a very small town arguably in the middle of nowhere in Missouri. And the simple reality is almost everyone that's in that space has to do with the festival in some ways. So, there's kind of a very group mentality around it. You know, everyone is participating, so, everyone is kind of a part of this group of open people who you can just talk to and have fun with or whatever, like celebrate with. And there's really not anywhere else to go in a place like that. So, it just creates more of like a small town atmosphere where you can just talk to people in a way that, you know that's just not as common in urban life. (FM 25)*

When the surrounding landscape and its aesthetic quality creates a relaxed environment for people to talk to one another while having fun, they go beyond formal discussions to develop informal social relationships and friendships. Often the attendees travel long distances and from different geographical regions; therefore, an interesting regional landscape and cultural aesthetics help them to have fun. While talking about the landscape and cultural discussions, which is of course not related to their core business objective, they relax, and this helps to develop the crucial informal social relationships. Commissioner 40 explains how the surrounding landscape's

aesthetics of *Visions du Reel* in Switzerland facilitated in relaxing and social networking:

*Like, for instance, there's a really great festival in Switzerland called the Visions du Reel REEL, you know . . . It takes place in Nyon which is you know, in the French speaking part of Switzerland, it's across the lake from . . . where Charlie Chaplin used to have his mansion. And it's . . . you can just picture it, right? And it's Switzerland, so, you know, like every day you're eating fondue and you know . . . (Laughter). And you're having this little fish that come out of the lake. These little tiny . . . they look like anchovies but they . . . I wasn't a big fan of them, but it's the specialty of this region. But do you know what I mean? It's like you're able to really get to know the culture, the cuisine and the people, you know. I speak French but in Switzerland they speak a very slow French and it's kind of you know, it's like speaking to somebody from the Southern United States, you know. (Laughter) It's very interesting, you know. So, I love that part of the festivals. And especially where they can bring that regional whatever they have, you know, special regional ambience to the festival, whether it's what you have for dinner or you know, the excursions that you have . . . this helps to enjoy and relax and it is all about the pleasure which then reenergises people to talk to each other and build relationships in a very friendly and most effective way. I think the focus is on friendship based relationship which is more useful for the industry. (COM 40)*

Exterior landscape and the surrounding environment are important in the servicescape (Wels-Lips et al., 1998). As discussed above, a relaxed ambience is very important for networking, and this study shows if the landscape is beautiful and relaxing, it translates into the ambience of the festival. The findings show that while enjoying the aesthetic beauty of the surrounding scenery of the venue, people can build relationships and friendship as they relax. On the other hand, people find difficulty to network effectively in a chaotic environment, as it is easy to get distracted. Location decisions are very important and service providers should be constantly aware of environmental trends so that they can make the most of new opportunities and gain competitive advantage in the market (Kotler et al., 1996). Although there have been a number of studies looking at the importance of location decisions for service delivery, the findings in this study contribute in understanding the relevance of aesthetic landscape-servicescape surrounding the venue for B2B networking. In fact, some professionals decide to go to certain business events, especially when it involves a lot of travelling, depending on aesthetics of the surrounding landscape, as Filmmaker 3 explains:

*Having visited a number of international film festivals, such as, Cannes, this (ZFF) is relatively a smaller film festival. Therefore my main motivation to come to this film festival is to see India, especially, because this film festival is located in such a popular tourist destination of India. When you go to such places, the aim is to really enjoy and build relationships that way rather than doing just business relationships (FM 3)*

Networking does not have to look and feel like monotonous work but it can be fun too, depending on how and where the networking is being done. Filmmaker 7 explains the relevance of the external servicescape's aesthetic quality in the festive (relevance of festivity in networking and relaxed ambience discussed above) character of a festival, making it fun yet offering a better opportunity to develop social relationships:

*I definitely think that being located at such a beautiful and popular tourist place, gave it (Jaipur International Film Festival) a character, a pleasing and festive character. It is exciting and fun to be here. I think they should do more to use this as an advantage for the festival. . . . They can definitely bring all of us together by taking advantage of its beautiful surrounding, it will be a natural networking process. (FM 7)*

Similarly, Filmmaker 4 explains his experience at GMM:

*This location (city where GMM was organised in Republic of Ireland) of this place is very relaxing. . . . this reflects in the film festival too . . . networking with financiers and distributors has been very relaxing and friendly . . . I like this place and I was attracted to come to this festival because it is located at this beautiful place . . . I do not like to go to London because as you can imagine it is a very busy city, so the festivals there are too chaotic for me. (FM 4)*

The aesthetic environment of the landscape is a hedonic consumption aspect and highly experiential in nature. According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), the 'experiential perspective is phenomenological in spirit and regards consumption as a primarily subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and esthetic criteria' (p. 132). The results in the study showed that the aesthetic environment of the surrounding landscape has symbolic meaning of whether the festival is going to be relaxed or chaotic, which in turn has an effect on their enjoyment and hedonic response. Also, an affinity with the type of scenery or

landscape is a subjective taste and varies from one person to another. Pine and Gilmore's (1998) paper shows the relevance of passive participation and customers immersion in the aesthetic environment to pursue pleasure. The observations show that filmmakers and commissioners do not necessarily actively participate, in other words, come to and/or solely enjoy the aesthetic environment but gradually appreciate the pleasure of being in an aesthetic environment while being at the festival. As discussed earlier, this relaxes them. Carù and Cova's (2006) research results establish that 'rather than being an immediate process, immersion in a consumption experience is more progressive'. The results show that there is a general consensus among the filmmakers and commissioners on the relevance of a relaxed environment outside the festival, such that it helps them to develop informal and social relationships. However, the networking resulting from enjoying the aesthetic environment is progressive as filmmakers and commissioners gradually immerse themselves in the experience of being in such an environment. In other words, the findings show that the external aesthetic landscape facilitates immersion into the consumption experience of festival more progressively. This in turn means the attendees are relaxed and at the same time are naturally involved in developing social relationships.

#### **5.4. Summary**

The literature review in this thesis has shown that networking is very important in finding jobs, improving career prospects and creating business opportunities in the film industry. However, there is little research in understanding what facilitates networking, especially in how pleasure can facilitate better networking opportunities. But in B2C literature, there is ample evidence to suggest that pleasure plays an important role in overall consumption. Looking at professionals in the film industry as consumers of networking has helped in understanding the relevance of pleasure for them to network better at documentary film festivals.

In this chapter, the data shows that film festivals help people from the film industry to create social value for themselves. As mentioned in the literature review (Chapter 3), the term 'social value' used by Currid (2007) takes our understanding of



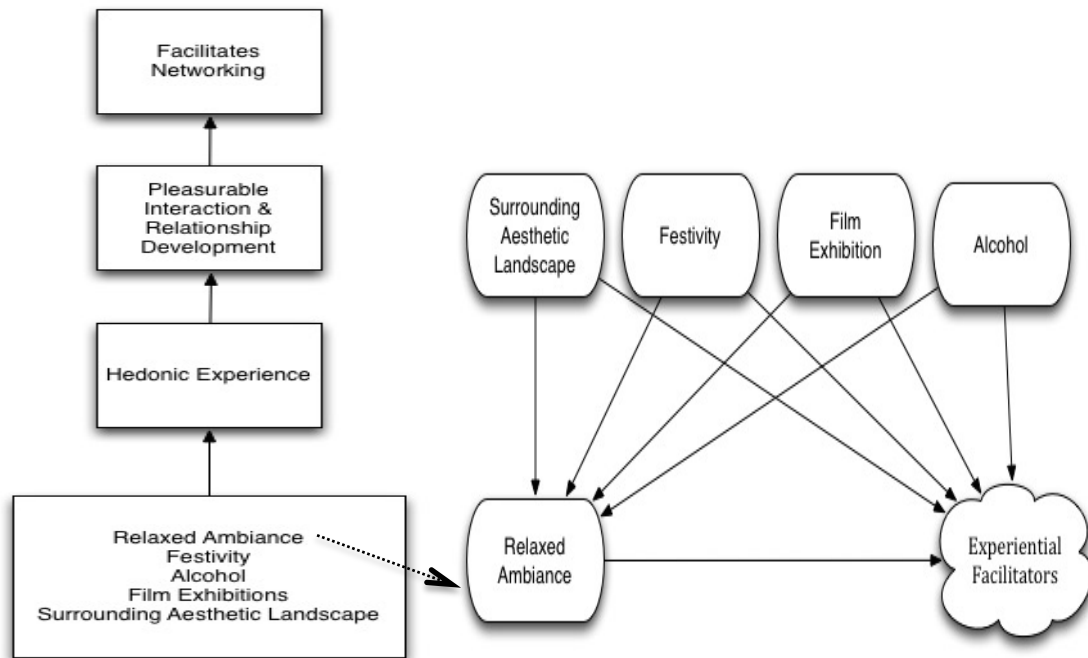
Bourdieu's (1985) social capital further in acknowledging and highlighting the nature of social and socialisation at scenes, such as film festivals, to create value in that scene and beyond because of one's family and education. As explained in that chapter, pleasure in the 'informal social parties' stages scenes that help artists and other professionals to know each other and their artistic/cultural skills and offerings, which then helps to create value of themselves and/or for their cultural offerings. Although Currid's (2007) study introduces the notion of pleasure-setting scenes for creating value, while focusing on how art/culture attains market value from an economist's perspective, it also opens up scopes for discourse and research on the relevance of pleasure in such networking scenes. In this aspect, this thesis has been able to take our understanding further by showing when filmmakers and documentary commissioners consume and experience pleasure, they are able to develop better relationships and network with each other.

Recent studies by Cayla et al. (2013), as mentioned earlier, have shown the importance of pleasure in B2B networking and how companies with no obvious connection to the sport such as Veolia and Bombardier use parties at tennis tournaments to develop business networks. But as identified in the literature review, the research in this area is meagre. Nevertheless, Cayla et al.'s (2013) study sufficiently contributes in expanding our understanding on the importance of pleasure in networking. However, being focused on non-sport-centric businesses' networking at parties in sports events, their study does not embrace aspects of festivals, particularly film festivals, which this thesis has done. While doing so, this thesis expands our understanding of the role of pleasure in facilitating business relationships further.

The thesis contributes in investigating in depth and showing the underlying reasons why pleasure is important to facilitate networking at documentary film festivals. Not everyone is extroverted or good at performing or selling their ideas, skills and projects when they are under pressure, even though they are good artistically. So networking within a formal environment is not everyone's cup of tea. Rinallo et al. (2010) and Gopalakrishna et al. (2010) argue that there is not much influence of fun, fantasies and hedonic feelings on business customers, but this thesis

shows the influence on business customers. At the end of day, because customers and professionals are humans, it makes sense for them to be influenced by pleasure-centric experiences. This thesis further highlights that pleasure is in fact necessary for business professionals to network and develop business relations, because hedonic consumption experiences are not always easy to access in a formal environment. Professionals can get stressed, nervous or be shy to interact freely in a formal work environment, which is why a formal environment is not everyone's cup of tea when it comes to developing and building relationships.

Professionals tend to network effectively in an informal relaxed environment, because it is pleasurable for them. It is pleasurable because there is less pressure for them to perform and they can be 'who they are' and do what they enjoy without needing to compete or talk about work. This is important because it allows them to go beyond transactional relationships to develop what, in this study, may be called 'friendship'. Friendships developed at one festival seem to have gone beyond that temporal event and entered into professionals' social and social-media circle. The consequent social value gained by the filmmakers tends to go a long way to find and secure opportunities in the arts and cultural industries (Currid, 2007). Pubs, cafes and restaurants within the servicescape are unlike the typical formal environment, yet this informal relaxed ambience is crucial to make professionals feel comfortable and develop strong long-lasting relationships. Figure 5-2 below shows the framework of the hedonic facilitators of networking.



**Figure 5-2 Framework of the hedonic facilitators of networking**

As seen in the figure 5-2, surrounding aesthetic landscape, festivity, film exhibition and alcohol are experiential facilitators of networking but also facilitate relaxed ambiance, which in turn also facilitates networking. Incorporating festivity, the ability to drink alcohol, the enjoyment of watching films and the experience of an aesthetic landscape can also make film festivals relaxing, but they can also facilitate networking directly. These do not induce typical formal settings but, on the contrary, make the ambience informal. They open opportunities for people to talk about things other than work and, as a result, act as icebreakers. It can be very intimidating and stressful (particularly for younger filmmakers) to act normally while introducing themselves and trying to network with someone very successful in the industry. However, a pleasure-centric environment tends to give them an equal footing in non-work-related matters, which gives off kinetic energy to discuss work-related matters more freely.

There are clear advantages to a system with an emphasis on informality and socialisation in the film industry as evident in Grugulis and Stoyanova's (2012) paper, and the servicescape aspects discussed in this study facilitate such informality and encourage socialisation among people. Socialising is an important part of hedonic meaning creation, and 'fantasising . . . anticipating and entertaining' (p. 250) are part

of socialising in a nonprofessional environment (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009b). The results of this study show fantasies, entertainment, hedonic, symbolic and aesthetic values and anticipation of relevant experiences at the festival are important facilitators for socialising and developing informal relationships in professional or business-centric events/environment. It also shows that informal networking is an important hedonic experience; at the same time, hedonic experience is very important to develop effective informal networks for fruitful collaborations in future. However, this does not mean that the ordinary and mundane nature of experiences does not facilitate pleasure and other experiences, which the next chapter will discuss in detail.

## **6. Ordinary Pleasure: The Role of Mundane Hedonic Experience in B2B Networking**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The previous chapters show the importance of pleasure, including the fulfilment of extraordinary feelings, fun and fantasies, in facilitating networking and how these facilitators link with each other. In line with the existing B2C literature, the previous chapters' results on the facilitators of B2B networking show the conceptualisation of hedonic experience as emerging from the extraordinary. However, there is little understanding on the relevance of mundane pleasure in B2B networking. The literature review in Chapter 3 shows that although in B2C context the relevance of mundane pleasure has not been explored much in detail, scholars such as Holbrook and Schindler (2003) looked at how nostalgia, which affects pleasure, is rooted in ordinary activities. Similarly, as the chapter further shows, Kleine III and Kernan (1991); Kleine III, et al. (1993); and Laverie et al. (2002) show how the ordinary and the mundane are rooted in our everyday life. Carù and Cova (2003) argue that to understand hedonic experience, it is relevant to take into account ordinary consumption experiences such as those which occur with family, friends and the wider community. Also, Holt (1995) and McKechnie and Tynan (2006) show how ordinary situations influence the overall hedonic experience. However, the B2C literature is scant on 'hedonic consumption experience' studies, which specifically focus on and pronounce clearly the relevance of the ordinary or the mundane on hedonic consumption.

Literature in the B2B context is even meagre. This chapter addresses this gap by analysing and discussing the results from primary research in this thesis to understand the role of ordinary hedonic experience in B2B networking. This chapter identifies the facilitators of this experience in a B2B context and explains how such facilitators function and contribute to successful networking. While doing so, this chapter contributes in showing that ordinary hedonic experiences are not just attached to everyday objects but can also be gained from unusual and uncommon products, and unique/luxury products can also be experienced in an ordinary way. This interpretive

study draws upon qualitative data from observations and semistructured interviews with filmmakers and commissioners, as explained and justified in Chapter 4.

## **6.2. Ordinary Pleasures**

In accordance with existing literature, the results of this study have shown that the extraordinary—experiencing the red carpet, parties, festivities, cultural shows and sharing drinks—is an important part of the hedonic experience in B2B networking. But, as discussed above, participants emphasised the importance of ordinary hedonic experience, and this is discussed in detail in the following sections.

### **6.2.1. The Organisation and Scheduling of Meetings**

Cayla et al. (2013) found hedonic and festive business parties were important in developing relationships between professionals. However, we found that shy and introverted participants found networking in such environments stressful. The problem of *communication*, specifically *initiating a conversation* with people one has never met before, has been discussed in anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory (Gudykunst, 1998; Duronto et al., 2005; Samochowiec & Florack, 2010). Filmmaker 21's opinion reflects views expressed during interviews and observations:

*I don't think all filmmakers have confidence that you need to just go and start talking to a stranger about your projects. Because a lot of filmmakers, especially the new ones, don't even know where to start talking and how to talk to the people about their films. The dilemma is whether I am trying to show off, push my product to someone who is not interested and annoying them, or if that person is really enjoying listening to my film or is he just being polite but is completely not interested and possibly bored. Going to festivals means a lot of money, and we go there to show our work and network . . . but if we cannot do that just because we are not good at selling or we are shy, it is a lot of money that we are talking about is in risk. So when the meetings are organised it is a big, big help, it makes the discussions and networking much easier. Once we know the person and we click, it is easier to meet and discuss*

*later informally in bar or at a party in the festival. I find it easier to approach these people at the bar after we have met once before in some sort of organised meetings. I think both Sheffield Meet Market and Galway Film Fleadh does it brilliantly, the organisers take a lot of weight from our shoulders and I found the relationship I make they are much productive than anywhere else I go to . . . I know I do not have the confidence to network with strangers but it is what makes me who I am and all the awards I have won. Because like in a way I feel it's my lack of confidence in myself that makes me able to make these films. I'm not looking to get personal confidence.*

(FM 21)

This study found that although most film festivals provide the opportunity to freely network, fewer festivals facilitate introductions between strangers, which help professionals identify relevant contacts. Observations revealed a social and industrial hierarchy among the participants based on achievement, experience and professional positions. Observations at GMM showed that a filmmaker who had won two prestigious international awards the previous year enjoyed preferential treatment from commissioners and organisers. Similarly, successful and senior commissioners and those representing bigger broadcasters were given preferential treatment at the festivals, in comparison to junior commissioners and those representing smaller organisations. Filmmaker 10 noted the anxiety (shared by other young professionals) of approaching relevant 'big people' is in itself discouraging; moreover, this is amidst competition from others to network.

*I don't know how they (delegates) will see my work and I am not confident if I will make the right impression if I approach them directly . . . I don't want to disturb them and give a negative impression about me . . . I don't want to put them off . . . yes I am shy usually to approach the big people* (FM 10)

Duronto et al.'s (2005) study on Japanese college students found that anxiety and uncertainty may result in difficulty in communicating with strangers from different and even the same culture, and consequently, they may choose to avoid talking to strangers. They noted that attempts to manage uncertainty and anxiety affect communication with strangers. Film festivals attract international participants,

so in addition to professionals at different stages in their career, there can be linguistic and cultural differences adding to the anxiety and uncertainty to network. The anxiety could be due to ‘anticipation of negative consequences’ while uncertainty could be about ‘predicting others’ attitudes, feelings, beliefs, values, and behaviours’ (Duronto et al., 2005, p. 551).

Organised one-on-one meetings (like speed dating) are convenient and comfortable not only for shy and introverted professionals but also for the more socially confident. Finkel and Eastwick (2008) note the ability of such events to create value within networks. Muurlink and Matasb’s (2011) higher education research found speed dating helpful in rapidly building informal relationships between academics and students. Participants found organised one-on-one meetings very useful in developing their informal relationships and supporting creativity and innovation. Such events were seen as helping the networking to develop organically. The participants in the interviews acknowledged that although meeting people in organised meetings was not as fun as parties, it is an essential ordinary activity that is hedonic by its very nature of being convenient to meet and comfortably approach people.

*It is (organised one-to-one meetings) most important in my case, nothing exciting about it in relation to glamour and fun of a festival yet it brings so much pleasure in visiting a film festival. It is something ordinary and yet very important.*

(FM 21)

*Organised meetings are very useful although I guess it is something very basic and we often forget about its importance. Festivals that have these meetings, it makes networking more fun, simply because it is easy and convenient to do that, especially for those filmmakers who are sometimes shy or overwhelmed to approach us. So I guess, it helps us to identify and understand the talents but at the same time it helps to informally talk later over a drink, and carry on our conversation. So one-one-one meetings and then, there will be a reception where there’s again networking and people wanting to grab five minutes with you talk about their project . . . I enjoy this kind of set up, it helps to get involved more with the filmmakers. (COM 33)*



The ‘formal meetings’ are not necessarily directed towards the pursuit of extraordinary feelings, fantasies and fun, and do not focus on the symbolic, hedonic, and aesthetic nature of consumption, yet they offer important pleasure from convenience and comfort. When meetings are organised for participants, much of their burden and stress is alleviated, and this experience of convenience-pleasure encourages them to focus on the networking process. Such organised meetings can act as catalysts for networking later on during a festival, such as parties and other informal events.

Organised one-on-one meetings are ordinary yet important facilitators of networking to help break the ice between strangers. Organised meetings help less confident participants to ‘network’ at B2B events and assist them and others to identify those who are interesting and/or useful for them. As Blair (2003) noted, whom you know plays a significant part in progressing in the film industry, and business is transacted through complex relational networks. Organised meetings were seen as useful in maximising use of limited time and resources. According to Miller and Woodward (2012), ‘understanding how routines come to be and how they fade away, the role of internalised expectations, and the externalised powers of material culture all help us in our appreciation of how the ordinary works as often taken-for-granted aspect of everyday life and practice’ (pp. 151–152). The results show that the importance of organised one-to-one meetings is often taken for granted. Festivals make way for hedonic and festive parties, and yet ordinary meetings are pleasurable too because of the convenience and comfort in making networking opportunities productive at the film festivals.

The ordinary yet hedonic one-on-one meetings are important facilitators for networking and are organised during the day and hosted simultaneously along with film screenings. Parties and other informal networking events are generally hosted during the evenings when screenings finish. When organised networking coincides with screenings, the participants struggle to balance them. Therefore, participants in this study suggested the need to schedule meetings and screenings. The schedule is a seemingly unremarkable aspect of a film festival, but it is essential to get it right. Commissioners have lots to do at film festivals:

*I rarely have time at festivals to go to film screenings. The schedule is just far too booked up with meetings. Occasionally, if we have a film that we're involved in that's premiering in a festival, I'll try and get to that screening. But sometimes, I just can't. It's just the schedule is far too busy. So I prioritise the market and industry side of things over the screenings. I would love to go to more screenings as it helped to enjoy the film, get to know the filmmaker better and make the networking process more interesting and enjoyable, but it's just the factor of time. (COM 33)*

The appropriate scheduling of meetings and screenings is important. After screenings, participants can discuss films during meetings and networking activities. Therefore, it acts as a conversational icebreaker and fuels discussion. So for hedonic and ordinary reasons, filmmakers and buyers prefer organisers to synchronise film market appointments and film screenings to allow them to watch the films they like:

*At film festivals what you end up doing, because you're so busy having meetings, that you don't actually end up being able to see much apart from the films that are being introduced, you're introducing, that you're filming . . . you know, the films you've been involved with. So it's a shame in a way because the festival is about the films . . . what I tend to do is . . . because we do quite a lot of film meetings, try and book a day in the viewing room the last day of the festival, and just sit there. If I watch films, I know what is going on and it becomes easier to talk to people I don't know. You can not only start a conversation but carry on a conversation by talking about the film you have seen at the festival. But I fail to watch often a lot of films that I want to see . . .*

*I'd love to be able to see more films. It's just part of, like, the flexibility for screenings on, you know, you've got . . . it's just not always feasible . . . if meetings and screenings are organised in a way that we can make the most of both world . . . if somehow our preferred films are screened at a time which is convenient to attend, it will help us to network better with the filmmaker and also other people to know what they think about the film. I will definitely enjoy that . . . (COM 38)*

McNicholas and Collis (2000) found such catalysts are important icebreakers for social interaction and that the catalysts should be of common interest. Hunt et al., (1992, p. 255) highlighted the importance of 'a clear focus of attention that extends

beyond the two people involved'. At film festivals, films are the focus of attention, and watching films at the festival helps strangers to interact. However, filmmakers and buyers understand the complexity of arranging festival schedules and programmes. Participants suggested filmmakers access a list of films to be screened in advance so that they can indicate preferences, which would assist in the appropriate scheduling of the meetings and screenings.

## **6.2.2. Facilities, Resources and Hospitality**

### *6.2.2.1. Infrastructure and Facilities*

Academics in various fields and disciplines have noted the demanding characteristic (in terms of their expectations from the provider) of customers, for example, Ezziane (2000), Mohammed et al., (2008), Lee et al. (2009), Levy and Weitz (2008), Collins and Winrow (2010) and Kuo et al. (2010). To ensure that customers have satisfactory experience, it is important to meet their demands. Piercy and Rich (2009) mentioned that providers are being increasingly required to offer better service because of the demanding customer marketplace. B2B professionals at film festivals are increasingly finding themselves in need of equipment and resources and appropriate infrastructure. Satisfying these needs offers an experience to the participants which helps them to develop social and business relationships conveniently. This pleasure of convenience is an important B2B networking facilitator.

Availability of appropriate infrastructure and resources plays an important role in how B2B professionals are able to make the most of their limited time and resources at the networking events. This, however, does not involve extraordinary fantasies and feelings but mundane things such as making sure things are done on time and that basic resources and equipment are available. In the absence of appropriate infrastructure and resources, professionals struggle to perform their networking activities effectively:

*Oh, god, always. I mean, the shuttles not showing up, screenings not starting on time, panellists not showing up, equipment not there, not available, you know? At pitching forums, not having a proper clock, selecting the film . . . you know, these forums, filmmakers can only present, for example seven minutes. It is not nice to take out your mobile phone or look at your wrist, to see the time. And not having a proper clock to stop a filmmaker when it should be stopped, you know? I think that there are . . . these things often pop up more often than we'd like them to . . . if one thing goes wrong, it's a landslide, the rest of your day is screwed up. (COM 34)*

This causes inconvenience, which spoils the experience of enjoying the process of networking:

*And it is really spoiling when you go to see how it's not done correctly. And then, on the sub-side, you could go from one great festival and then, two weeks later, be at a horrible . . . horribly run festival and just . . . it becomes very frustrating. Because it's not rocket science, you know? This is actually . . . these are actually really simple, fixable things and you know, that need to be taken care of . . . because, it's funny because, our lives . . . you know, we get these schedules beforehand and they're timed out to, at 10:20, you'll step into this meeting and then it will end at 10:30, and it's kind of very, very specific. And so, it's . . . our time is everything at these types of events. And then so, you know, for our . . . for (name of the company that the commissioner works for), kind of like looking in front of me right now at our events and calendar for the festival, if one thing goes wrong, it's a landslide, the rest of your day is screwed up. So, it's really . . . it's very important that you kind of stay on time to be able to make the most of our meetings and interactions at the festivals. (COM 34)*

This is not only about the struggle to network; such a struggle also challenges the enjoyment of networking. Ichniowski et al. (1996) and Larsson et al. (2007) established enjoyment as essential for productive and successful work. The availability of appropriate equipment, resources and infrastructure is not just important for its utility but also offers the pleasure of convenience and comfort in networking.

Ordinary goods and services such as sofas, chairs, tables and easy access to information and projectors can go a long way to make ‘social networking activities’ convenient for professionals. Emmerik’s (2008) study on teachers found *support resources* important for achieving career success. In this study, the participants gave importance to ordinary tangible equipment and resources as support resources. Appropriate infrastructure and resources are ordinary in nature and ensure things are done on time, and basic resources and equipment are available. In the absence of these, frustration is evident:

*But often these things (networking) are spoiled when, say for example . . . there are not many of them (sofas or chairs to sit and talk) for everyone, there are no announcement when the next event is about to start, if you need a projector or meeting room there are none available. So having small and basic things such as these can simply add pleasure in doing business and networking, or just ruin it completely if not there (COM 33)*

Ensuring these resources and infrastructures are available would mean that professionals could get together and spend time explaining and understanding their ideas in a comfortable environment and with the help of assistive technology if needed. Commissioner 40 explains this in detail below:

*[T]o have a certain kind of . . . whether it’s an instinct or it’s a kind of a knowledge with how you could . . . or how I could help this producer or filmmaker to make a really good film and really to take advantage of the resources that are around to make a good film and to help. Because sometimes, the idea is strong but the filmmaker doesn’t have quite a lot of experience and needs a producer, let us say.*

*Or the film is . . . the producer is very strong but has a certain kind of stubbornness about the approach. And if that’s something that I don’t feel is quite right, then we can . . . we talk about that, and how do we resolve that. Because I think, ultimately, although the projects and the product is really important, for me the most important thing is the relationship because we’re going to have to spend so much time together working on this film. It’s like you know, it’s like dating kind of, you know. Do you really want to spend potentially three years working with this person? And if you get along and you kind of see this thing in the same way, then, it’s great. But if you don’t, it could be problematic. And all these mentoring, relationship building, learning can happen at a festival when small little things are well taken care of, for example, the infrastructure to sit, relax and talk, available of appropriate resources and equipment, such as a meeting room with audio visual facility, Internet, and a clock*

(COM 40)

While the festival's infrastructure was a common concern among all attendees, early career professionals want support resources, i.e., assistive technologies at film festivals, to explain their projects and convince the buyers.

*If there is no facility to show my film to the distributors, it is big disadvantage to the film festival market and for the filmmakers. It's not always words that work in this industry but visual inspiration and inspection is necessary . . . (FM 1)*

*We cannot carry equipment long distance; they (organisers) should have facilities which will help us demonstrate our project with full potential. This will help us make the most of the meetings that we will have with the buyers, distributors and even people from the media you know. These are not necessarily the exciting things of the festivals but necessary to be able to do our work at the festival easily and conveniently (FM 11)*

New entrants in the industry have the pressure to make a mark and/or impress buyers. The convenience of having access to equipment on-site and showing them work was essential. For established filmmakers, such support equipment is not as important as reputation, credentials and previous success.

#### 6.2.2.2. *Technological Resources*

Participants noted the importance of Internet access to assist networking. It helps professionals to research festival delegates to identify whether or not they are relevant to them and identify common interests. This is echoed Filmmaker 17 and Commissioner 33's comments:

*Internet is useful . . . to quickly do a little bit of research on that person (other professionals at the film festival) and that we can have something to talk about, and this helps tremendously to build those useful informal relationships (FM 17)*

*Internet access is very important to do my work and to be able to know people, their work or anything that is important to be able to know others and maybe advise them if they should get in touch with us, Internet is very important (COM 33)*

The observations showed that where Wi-Fi was present, professionals researched festival participants and popular discussion topics at the festival to facilitate participation in discussions and maximise networking opportunities. Professionals also relied on the Internet to balance their personal life with networking activities at the event:

*I mean you know, you know especially travelling abroad, you know, I rely on Wi-Fi to check my e-mails during short breaks or whatever so. I need to stay in touch with my family when I am away for work, perhaps just to make sure if everything is okay or maybe for emergency. If I don't have Wi-Fi for my phone I kind of like, you know, I'm lost. (COM 34)*

Wi-Fi access to Internet makes it easier and convenient for them to work, when the professionals are attending film festivals. Normally, a festival is organised for few days, and the B2B professionals attend it for the same duration. This means that professionals stay away from their family and office during this time. The importance of balancing work and personal life is well documented in a number of research papers (for example, see Håkansson et al., 2006; Fleetwood, 2007; Hsieh et al., 2008; Heywood et al., 2010; Jang & Appelbaum, 2010; Sánchez-Vidal et al., 2012; Schultz et al., 2012). It is important for professionals to keep a balance between their personal life and work. This study shows that Wi-Fi access to Internet plays an important role in keeping this balance while professionals are away for few days at the festival.

It is not just about balancing work and life but balancing their work too. Commissioners are in senior positions, and they need to make sure their offices are running smoothly while they are away at the festival:

*You know, what people have need to realise is we are away working but we're also . . . our offices don't close when we're gone . . . you know, if I'm at one place usually two other people are at two different places at the same time. So we need to be able to communicate and send updates and you know we all have bosses as well so if our bosses can't get in touch with us, it's not very good . . . And we all know the importance of communicating by e-mail than using mobile phone in the middle of meetings (COM 34)*

Our findings show that Wi-Fi is an ordinary facilitator, facilitating hedonic consumption of networking and networking opportunities by making the networking activities comfortable and convenient. By allowing participants to maximise their networking during the festival while keeping in touch with work and home, this ordinary experience supported better and more relaxed networking.

#### 6.2.2.3. *Hospitality*

B2B professionals' networking activities can be not only tiring but also time-consuming; this means often people do not have the time to go out for lunch or dinner. Therefore, availability of food and drinks gives the sustenance needed for long days, and this in turn offers hedonic experience of comfortable and convenient networking. Filmmaker 20 explains this in detail about his experience at South by Southwest Documentary Film Festival (SXSW).

*They (South by Southwest Documentary Film Festival) had a space called the filmmakers lounge because South by Southwest is a big conference floor and a big conference centre, thousands upon thousands of people there every day, it's packed. Just normal people who've paid to see the films or go to the event or go to talks because there are talks as well. As a filmmaker, you can go to all the stuff for free . . . for everything from food to drink and it's a hot day . . . and you might have been running around all day, I think this (availability of food and drinks) is their appreciation. (FM 20)*

Food and drinks are primary physical needs (Herbig & Genestre, 1997). At festivals, professionals can end up working long hours, so easily accessible food and beverages make networking convenient and comfortable. Filmmaker 20 and



Commissioner 33 explain this further, which echoes other participants' comments and observations in this study:

*Those days I described to you where you get up at 8:00 and you don't go to bed until 2:00, 3:00, 4:00 in the morning and you're running around and to make one screening to a meeting to a thing, you are literally running, so they developed this thing called the filmmakers' lounge at the festival and it's on the top floor (of the building, which was the venue of the South by Southwest Documentary Film festival) and you go in and it's quiet and there're computers for you to use so you can get your e-mails. There are like free massages all day. It was amazing. And there's a fridge full of drinks and snacks and there are bagels to do, you know, do your own bagels in a toaster. There's literally a moment where you've got 10 minutes and have some peace and quiet, grab some food, have a drink, and sit down and that was just a brilliant idea. (FM 20)*

*I think it's important that the festivals have a kind of central place for people just to hang out and mingle without any formal agenda, where there's a coffee bar or a lunch or some kind . . . where you get a cup of coffee and something to eat and just sit down for 10 minutes, is a greater place to . . . for those kinds of impromptu serendipitous conversations with filmmakers and also for people to just see where you are. So, I think that's really important. And I get frustrated with festivals when they don't have it. For example, Tribeca here in New York never has this kind of cool place where people just hang out and eat and drink. So, I don't know where to go. So, if I'm not going to screening, I'm going to a specific meeting and just come back to my office and that's an option if you're lost for all those people who are in New York for the first time or at the festival for the first time to kind of chat with us. So I actually think that kind of place is really important. (COM 33)*

Filmmaker 20 goes on to explain later how, when professionals can easily get food and drinks at the festival to eat quickly and go back to their networking activities, it makes networking easy enjoyable, and they are able to concentrate on it. Food and beverages are important in facilitating the festive atmosphere and extraordinary hedonic experience at such events (see Cayla et al., 2013). But food

and beverages can also be viewed as ordinary, and this ordinary hedonic experience, facilitates networking. Delegates might not get sufficient time to eat and drink, and they may not be familiar with the local area and eating options there. One cannot work effectively when hungry or thirsty (Roos & Wndel, 2005). Kotler et al. (2002, p. 6) characterised human needs as '*states of self deprivation*' including the need for food. Food is a fundamental need, and Kotler et al. (2002, p. 207) further argue that hunger and thirst diminish concentration.

*Oh, yeah. That's a good question (on importance of food and beverages). I would say that both (food and beverages)) to me and to people in general, it's quite important. It's a part of in the sense that food is a part of a really basic human need. And you know, forms the huge part of. . . forms like a space where people gather around food. And if it's good food or it's food that people have, you know enjoy eating or is healthy or whatever. That can certainly, very possibly contribute to the atmosphere of celebration in festival. (FM 25)*

Easy access to refreshments can make networking enjoyable. Karl and Peluchette (2006) found that companies providing food and refreshment were seen as fun work environments. Our findings show that availability of food and ability to quench thirst easily facilitates comfortable and convenient networking as time is not lost in trying to meet these needs. As ordinary experiences, they are more notable in absence than in presence.

Unlike alcohol, which was discussed in the previous chapter, nonalcoholic beverages at work are an important catalyst to enjoy networking activities, which could be at times quite demanding and exhausting. This is the reason why Filmmaker 22 was also very pleased with the experience at South by Southwest:

*It (South by Southwest Documentary Film Festival) was also sponsored by Monster Energy which is a drink that I was drinking a lot of to get through the day, but they were free because it was sponsored Monster Energy. One thing a filmmaker needs when it gets to 3:00 in the morning, they all need coffee or they need an energy drink and the fridges are full because it was sponsored by them. So I think aligning*

*your sponsors with cool brands, but also fulfil the needs was a really smart idea, a really smart idea. (FM 22)*

Therefore, food and beverages are important not only because B2B professionals might not get sufficient time to eat and drink before they come to the festival and after they finish their work there, but they also keep them going at the festival. One cannot work effectively when hungry or thirsty (Roos & Wndel, 2005). Hence, food and beverages act as important fuel to give professionals the energy they need to carry out their tasks and work during their participation at various events. Commissioner 34 expresses the need for refreshments and easy access to them:

*I think, you know, Sheffield is a perfect example of it (where one can enjoy work because refreshment is easily available) as you know, they give you breaks during you know, the schedule, you have a break during the day, they feed you lunch, if you need water you raise your hand and there's somebody that will take you from one table to the next between meetings. (COM 34)*

This comment continues to show how this commissioner views availability of refreshments at Sheffield Doc/Fest as an appreciation of their value:

*You know, I think that there is . . . there are human beings behind, you know, the programming of it so you feel like you're taken care of and they're listening to your needs as well. Because you know really it's . . . at the end of the day, I couldn't do what I do without filmmakers but Sheffield or any organisation could not do what they do for filmmakers without us so I think that you know, its . . . you need to make everyone feel comfortable, I think Sheffield is really a shining star, gold star, of what they are doing and I think, you know, in fact in Amsterdam is another great example (COM 34)*

Food is not invented by marketers, but it is a basic part of human makeup; hence, it is a basic and important human necessity. Kotler et al. (2002, p. 207) further argue that a hungry man will not be able to concentrate on his other needs till his

hunger is satisfied, because according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, hunger and thirst are the most important needs of human beings.

Professionals value not just the availability of the refreshments but *free* refreshments too. As mentioned previously, filmmakers, especially those who are in the early stage of their careers, often have budget limitations. Therefore, if food and beverages have a cost attached to it, they might avoid spending on refreshment. This means that they might not be able to work effectively, as they are going to be thirsty and hungry, which might in turn result in the negative image of the festival. Filmmaker 23 explains this in more detail:

*Canapés are treats, but they don't make or break it, but knowing there's a bucket of drinks and plates of bites behind somewhere and a volunteer handing them out earns a lot of goodwill. And it says something about the festival since we've got enough money to at least give you all some beverages and food. You know, if it (the money that filmmakers budget to attend the festival) runs out quickly, it doesn't matter, but yeah, definitely goodwill. We need fuel to run you know, it is something very ordinary but very important in my opinion to enjoy our work at festivals. Yeah.*

(FM 23)

Even though refreshments, in general, are important but ordinary sustenance aspects, they have the ability to create a servicescape which gives the impression of extraordinary feelings and fun; in fact, it might help in the realisation of 'red carpet party' fantasies, as evident in Filmmaker 24's comment:

*[W]here the festival (Abu Dhabi Film Festival) is happening . . . There's a lunch every day from 11 until 2. And then, when you've got that lunch, it's like really lovely buffet and it's like a beautiful . . . it wasn't like buffet but it was really nice sort of gourmet food and then soft drinks. But that's really . . . I mean, the festival venue in the seven-star Emirates Palace Hotel. So there were chefs cooking food. It's an amazing food. And then, they said, 'Okay. So here are the films'. I did go and see some films at that festival and I got to know some people there. These amazing food and everything make the experience very enjoyable and you are motivated and*

*energised to go and talk to people. And then . . . so between going on the beach and sort of getting to know some fellow filmmakers with bare in the sun and the sea, between that and sort of going over to the Emirates Palace, I went . . .* (FM 24)

The above comment of Filmmaker 24 shows how food and drinks could add to the servicescape in creating an extraordinary experience. However, the important thing to remember is that it has an ordinary function, which is to facilitate sustenance, and this in turn helps people work effectively. This convenience and comfort to work effectively is the mundane experience necessary to participate in networking activities.

Food and drinks are basic human needs (Maslow, 1943, 1954), and are also seen as mundane by the participants, in contrast to those elements discussed in Chapter 4, such as red carpet, film screenings and meetings. However, this ordinary aspect of human life goes a long way to make a huge difference in how the B2B professionals find their social networking activities easy or difficult, or convenient or inconvenient.

### **6.2.3. Service Design and Delivery**

Process—‘the procedures, mechanism and flow of activities by which a service is acquired’—plays a very important role in services (Palmer, 2008, p. 41) and ‘process decisions radically affect how service is delivered’ (Jobber, 2007, p. 919). Therefore, process, which is intangible, is not necessarily about fantasies, extraordinary feelings and fun, and it is contextualised to the core service. This concurs with the definition of ‘ordinary’ adopted for this study. Badly designed processes can have a dissatisfying impact on customers (Loveloock et al., 1991) because process involves service delivery and operating systems giving consumers evidence to judge services (Zeithaml et al., 2009). However, processes in service settings may not be identical for all consumers as there is an opportunity to customise a service according to the customers’ needs (Baron et al., 2009, p. 7).

There are processes involved in preparing lists of participants, arranging meetings for speed dating, scheduling of meetings and screenings, and availability of equipment and resources. Appropriate infrastructure, procedures, mechanisms and flow of activities affect how networking facilitators such as food and beverages and access to Wi-Fi are delivered. Therefore, the ordinary process is an important factor to consider at film festivals to improve networking opportunities.

Experiential marketing literature has not focused on the importance of 'process', and there is a lack of empirical evidence in this area. This study highlights the importance of process as an ordinary facilitator for the enjoyment of networking activities between B2B professionals, thereby facilitating better networking opportunities. The role of process in the basic operation of the film festivals is crucial for networking events. Film market participants tend to be busy meeting other professionals, networking and doing deals. Therefore, smooth processes lead to hedonic experiences and facilitate better networking opportunities. People are able to enjoy the networking process, and as mentioned earlier, when one enjoys their work, they tend to be more productive. In this way, we connect the functional performance experience (Lanier & Rader, 2015) to ordinary but yet hedonic experiences.

In addition to process, the facilitators discussed above also show the relevance of mass customisation as another important facilitator for networking opportunities. Organised speed dating and scheduling of meetings and screenings involve understanding professionals' preferences and organising meetings with their preferred industry delegates. Availability of equipment and resources, food and beverages and appropriate infrastructure are also ordinary resources required for networking to be fruitful and to run smoothly. Tastes are subjective and needs vary; therefore, these ordinary facilitators cannot be completely standardised to offer the relevant hedonic experience. Essentially, organisation and scheduling of meetings and availability of appropriate infrastructure and facilities, technological resources and hospitality are value-added services that improve networking services.

Customisation is important in service delivery, involving adapting, tailoring and developing services to meet each consumer's individual needs (Zeithaml et al.,

2009). Satisfying customers' needs has direct positive consequences for the pleasure they get from consuming the product. For service products, customisation is important because they are produced and consumed simultaneously with high customer involvement (Mitra & Capella, 1997). This is indeed the case at film festivals for its networking service product. However, limited time and resources are a challenge to complete customisation. But as evidenced by the discussions of each of these facilitators earlier, mass customisation should be considered if possible.

Mass customisation involves offering products that are customised to all the customers (Haug et al., 2009) to allow large numbers of customers to be reached while tailoring the offering to the needs of individual consumers (Bardakci & Whitelock, 2003). At the same time, mass customisation can improve customer experiences so that they are pleasurable and satisfactory for the customers (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Mass customisation has been seen as a process that focuses on satisfying almost all of the needs of its customers unlike mass production (Bardakci & Whitelock, 2003). Addis and Holbrook (2001) established the conceptual link between mass customisation and experiential consumption 'since it (mass customisation) increasingly allows customers to ask for new personalised products at a level of individualised tailoring that was never before possible' (p. 51).

Mass customisation is a possible solution to overcome challenges (e.g., festival organisers' limited time and resources to customise networking service) and improve the hedonic experience of B2B professionals. Mass customisation helps to satisfy the personal and subjective needs of modern and informed consumers and ultimately improve their experiences. According to Hooley et al. (2006), mass customisation of offerings can help firms get the benefits of cost and efficiency while tailoring the offerings to individual customers' needs. Mass customisation is useful when customers differ in needs or expectations to avoid wasteful efforts (Fiore et al., 2001). As mentioned above, the needs and expectations of filmmakers and buyers differ significantly from one to the other, and not everyone has the same taste; therefore, their preferences to watch films may differ from one to the other.

Participants' needs, backgrounds, objectives and expectations influence their preferences to meet people in the film market. Hence, mass customisation of services offered in film festivals not only enhances the quality of services delivered but also achieves better customer satisfaction. However, apart from a few studies such as that of Bettencourt and Gwinner (1996), little research has explored mass customisation of services, and even fewer have linked mass customisation with mass customisation and experiential customisation (see Addis & Holbrook, 2001). Most recent literature (see Bardakci & Whitelock 2005; Sigala, 2006; Haug et al., 2009) has explored mass customisation of goods. This study identifies a similar need to mass-customise ordinary hedonic service offerings, such as those at film festivals and in relation to facilitating professional networking.

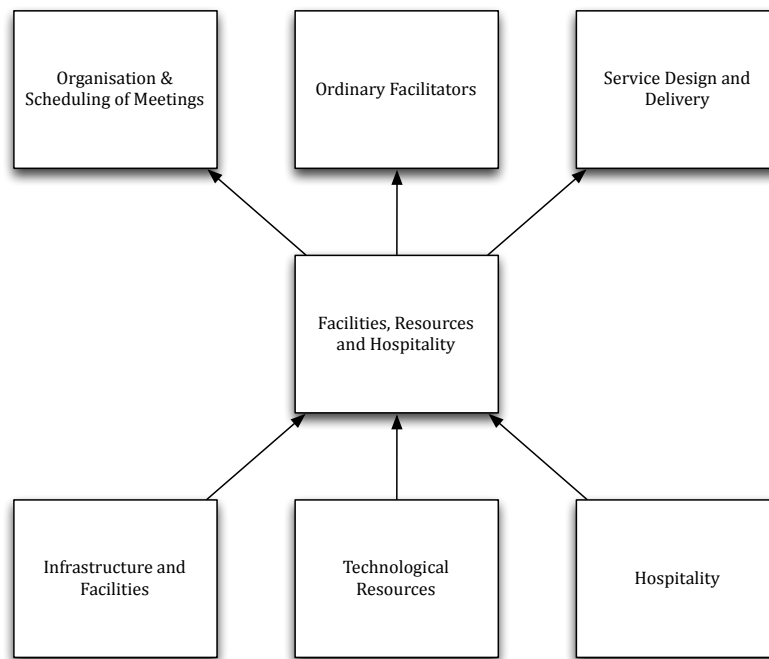
### **6.3. Summary**

This chapter illustrates the importance of the ordinary hedonic experience. Such experience is important not only to facilitate B2B networking but also to gain extraordinary hedonic experiences. Previous research has shown the relevance of hedonic experience at festive business parties for B2B networking (Cayla et al., 2013). Ordinary experiences were mainly studied in B2C contexts (Carù & Cova, 2003). Consumer research has established the importance of symbolic, hedonic and aesthetic experiences relating to fantasies, feelings and fun (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Arnould & Price, 1993; Addis & Holbrook, 2001; Carù & Cova 2003; McKechnie & Tynan (2008); Tynan & McKechnie, 2009a, 2009b). However, this thesis establishes the relevance of the ordinary consumption experience in facilitating hedonic experiences and its importance in facilitating networking among B2B professionals. Busy B2B professionals must use time at festivals efficiently to achieve their business and career objectives. Subjective use of time has been linked previously to experiential marketing in B2C marketing literature (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Babin et al., 1994). This thesis shows how ordinary facilitators help professionals effectively and efficiently use time and experience comfort and convenience. This creates hedonic experiences, which facilitate networking activities.



Convenience and comfort are important hedonic aspects in B2B as time is a precious commodity. Jacoby et al. (1976) found that consumers use time and money to acquire products and services while also substituting time for money in such transactions. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) linked this subjective use of *time* (viewed as a resource) to experiential aspects in consumption. The overall experience of the product is affected by the manner in which consumers use (and allocate) time to experience a product. Babin et al. (1994) found that ‘as time pressure increases, diminished feelings of freedom and spontaneity experienced by the consumer will lead to lower hedonic value’ (p. 652).

From a B2B perspective, Rinallo et al. (2010) hint that industrial buyers’ (at trade fairs) decision to allocate time at different stands depends on the visitors’ motivation to attend the fair. This thesis has shown that time allocation is a subjective and crucial experiential aspect in consumption, and this is evident from the importance of comfort and convenience in networking, found in this study. Ordinary facilitators significantly affect the efficient use of time by professionals at B2B events. These facilitators directly link to hedonic experience because of the provision of comfort and convenience and also contribute to hedonic experiences such as watching films, the red carpet experience and parties. Thus, ordinary experiences cannot be overlooked in understanding extraordinary experiences, which evoke fantasies, feelings and fun.



**Figure 6-1 Ordinary hedonic facilitators for B2B networking at film festivals**

Figure 6-1 above shows the ordinary hedonic facilitators for B2B networking at film festivals, which are not only ordinary but also hedonic in nature. Although this might not be an exhaustive list of all ordinary hedonic facilitators, the interpretive research undertaken for this study has not only identified the importance of these facilitators but also developed the notion of the hedonic beyond extraordinary experiences using these facilitators. This chapter also contributes in showing that ordinary hedonic experiences are not just attached to everyday objects but can also be gained from unusual and uncommon products and that unique/luxury products can also be experienced in an ordinary way.

## **7. Taking Care of Business: Co-Creating Business-to-Business Networking Experiences**

### **7.1. Introduction**

So far, Chapters 5 and 6 show us the relevance of extraordinary and ordinary pleasures for networking. While Chapter 5 shows the importance of pleasure in networking, the last chapter showed the relevance of mundane pleasures in networking and how such pleasure can also be gained from unusual and uncommon products and that unique/luxury products can also be experienced in an ordinary way to facilitate better networking opportunities. However, because of limited research in understanding how these experiences come into being in the B2B context, we looked at the relevant literature in the B2C context. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the literature offers a number of possible answers to the question of how experiences come into being: (1) staged, (2) facilitated or (3) co-created.

In Section 3.6.2, the literature review shows that experiences can be staged. Pine and Gilmore (1998) argue the importance of staging experiences and selling them as products. In other words, experiences are staged for customers, as at such places as the Disney Theme Park, Hard Rock Cafe, Planet Hollywood and Niketown. Penaloza (1998) and Diamond et al. (2009) find that staged experiences at retail outlets such as Niketown and American Girl, respectively, facilitate unique consumer motivations to interact with and relate to the brand. Experience comes into being when businesses stage their engagement with customers in a personal, memorable way (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Similarly, Schmitt's (1999) paper offers a checklist for businesses in producing experiences, explaining that strategic experiential modules (SEM, as explained in the table below) can be used or implemented to produce

holistic experiences that help in integrating individual experiences into what he calls a ‘holistic Gestalt’.

The discussion in Section 3.6.4 under the heading ‘*Plasticity and the temporal nature of the Consumption Experience*’ in Chapter 3 shows an alternative to staging experiences is to facilitate them. This emerges from an understanding of experiences as *plastic* (Barthes, 2009) rather than ‘fixed’ in nature. Therefore, we can view experiences as temporal and changeable. With regards to consumption, Addis and Holbrook (2001) argue that ‘since the consumption outcomes entail constantly evolving aspects of subjective responses’ (p. 59), experiences are variable. Experiences can lead to extraordinary and emotionally intense responses (cf. Arnould & Price, 1993), which the service provider facilitates, but these experiences are not entirely staged as suggested by the work of Pine and Gilmore (1998) and others. Turning to the context of this thesis, within the field of cultural industries, consumers and gatekeepers are constantly in flux because of the constantly evolving but influencing social dynamics (Currid, 2007). Therefore, the networking context is prone to change from time to time and/or situation to situation, resulting in an experience that is plastic in nature, which can be facilitated but not necessarily staged.

Finally, the discussion in Section 3.6.4 under the heading ‘*Co-creation of experience*’ in Chapter 3 shows experience comes into being by being co-created. The plasticity of experience is in part because of the socially constructed or ‘co-created’ nature of experience, meaning and value. There has been growing interest in the co-creation of experiences, stemming from Tynan and McKechnie’s (2009a) work in establishing the role of service-dominant (S-D) logic in bridging the gap between theory and practice of experience marketing (e.g., Chen et al. 2012; Seo, 2013; Minkiewicz et al., 2014). The experience can come into being by being co-created between all combinations of customers, businesses and others in the network. Additionally, experience has been conceptualised as staged and facilitated according to the consumer research literature. While most of the literature on experience comes from the consumer behaviour literature, Cayla et al. (2013) identified that experiences, particularly hedonic experiences, are important facilitators of networking and relationships. However, the B2B literature is limited in terms of offering

appropriate theories to help us understand how those experiences come into being. This has motivated the thesis to turn to consumer behaviour literature and the need to conceptualise film festival industry participants as consumers, as explained in Chapter 1.

## **7.2. Co-Creating Experience: Incidental Encounters and Spontaneous Conversations**

Incidental encounters and spontaneous conversation refer to those rendezvous between people that are not planned or prearranged. They occur by chance in connection with something else, for example, while two professionals are sharing the same transportation to the event or simply while they are sharing a table for lunch/dinner. Incidental encounters happen as a result of participation in an activity that was not planned or anticipated. Spontaneous conversations refer to those happenstances which occur as a result of sudden impulse or inclination but without premeditation or external stimuli. This means the engagement grows naturally, without being tended or cultivated. For example, a dinner discussion between strangers leads to a sudden impulsive and passionate dialogue on a certain topic, which fuels the discussion in the form of a chain reaction. This can happen with any activity that interests filmmakers and commissioners during the engagement process.

These encounters are common at film festivals, especially at informal social gatherings at the event. At film festivals, filmmakers and commissioners meet people they did not expect to meet, in situations that were not anticipated. These social happenstances lead to the development of social relationships, which are effective in achieving professionals' business and career objectives. The data from this study revealed a number of such instances. For example, Commissioner 40 explains how travelling in crowded buses at Sundance facilitates incidental and spontaneous encounters:

*[Y]ou have to take these little buses to get everywhere (at Sundance). And they're often crowded. But that's actually where you meet some of the most interesting people, you know. It's like you can . . . suddenly, it's like, oh my, God, you*

*know. There's Martin Scorsese on the shuttle. Or you can . . . you know, the person that you're sitting next to, you have a conversation with. And you discover that you have some kind of film in common or something. It's a very interesting way to network on the Sundance shuttle. So, a lot of the time is spent doing that as well.*

(COM 40)

The above quotation reflects broader observational results and interviewees' experiences, which shows spontaneous and incidental encounters result in networking and developing new relationships when two individuals share similar interests. For example, referring to the London Comedy Film Festival, Filmmaker 17 shares his experience on meeting random people with whom he shared similar interests, and as a result, they developed a relationship from there:

*Most of the filmmakers were there in person. I meet these people first time, and that too either in parties or just by coincidence, because they were there. It's that it's always nice to kind of have those really geeky conversations that you can't have with your friends and family about, you know, specific details of the writing or shooting or whatever . . . editing process and really getting into that kind of nitty-gritty that no one else would ever give a shit to talk about, frankly. And so I like that aspect of it and have made some very good friends this way. And yeah, there are people that are worth meeting, would not only sound too Machiavellian about it . . .*

(FM 17)

Filmmaker 17's experience shows how such encounters are crucial in allowing relationships to develop organically, without imposing any pressure to develop such networks. In other words, while networking is an important part of attending industry events such as festivals, the participants seem to feel better when they co-create the experience and relationships develop organically rather than within staged contexts. But because there is a work objective to fulfil, there are still expectations about whom they want to meet and which structures behaviour and engagement in the networking activity.

Spontaneous talk between strangers who share similar interest at social gatherings during incidental encounters is engaging simply because it is pleasant and intriguing. ‘Spontaneous talk is supposed to be extemporaneous, nonthreatening, and salubrious’ (Rich, 1998, p. 320). These talks are done without preparation, and they are friendlier and pleasant but not necessarily intimidating. Therefore, they have the ability to produce knowledge relevant to career objectives (Rich, 1998). The results from this research show that incidental encounters play an important role in encouraging and facilitating spontaneous hedonic conversation. However, there are relatively few studies that have looked into this aspect of networking, developing B2B relationships and collaboration. This study sheds new light in this area and addresses this gap in the literature.

The experience of networking and new collaboration from these encounters is an important value created at film festivals. In other words, the experiential value in this context is crucial. Commissioners and filmmakers seek to experience incidental and spontaneous encounters at film festivals to improve their opportunity to build social relationships but also for their own enjoyment at the event. This enjoyment is important to sustain their interest and involvement at the festival. Filmmakers and commissioners find it more difficult to participate in any work, particularly building networking activities for their professional goals, if they are bored with their job. The comments here show that when it’s no longer enjoyable, then the networking feels instrumental and more like ‘work’, rather than ‘play’, ‘fun’, and ‘enjoyable consumption’. And when it feels instrumental and like work, their performance in the networking activities is not as productive as it is when they have fun and enjoy doing it. For example, while referring to the importance of incidental and spontaneous encounters, Commissioner 34 explains:

*[H]aving filmmakers kind of treat you like a human being. You know, if you just kind of sit and talk to most of the people that you’ll kind of, well, realize that there . . . it’s not just about pitching their film it’s about making a connection with somebody. (COM 34)*

Similarly, Filmmaker 6 argues that

*[o]h I hate so much when it is all about work and no play. It is important for me to enjoy meeting people randomly and chat about this and that, chit-chat basically you see. If it is work-work-work, I just get bored and my head gets f\*\*\*ed up, especially then these festivals can go on from morning till late evening and for few days (FM 6)*

These views resonate with the monotonous feeling that commissioners and filmmakers feel when their attendance at film festivals involves only formal meetings and when they do not get a chance to socialise in an informal and relatively less stressful manner. The participants in this study agreed that incidental and spontaneous encounters make things interesting and intriguing while mitigating the boredom from monotony. Prior research has found that while boredom has negative effects on productivity, interesting and intriguing activities have a positive effect on it (Starbuck, 1991; Fisherl, 1993; Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003). In fact, boredom could lead to counterproductive work behaviour at the workplace (Bruursema et al., 2011). We found that although festival attendees intend to engage in networking activities at festivals, incidental encounters and spontaneous conversations enhance this participation. These further fuels their experiential value, in turn facilitating better networking, B2B relationships and collaboration opportunities, as discussed above.

The experiential value from spontaneous conversations and incidental encounters is mainly co-created among consumers of the networking activities, i.e., the filmmakers and commissioners. This links to Yoon's (2013) findings that impulse buying is more likely to occur when such experiential consumption occurs, highlighting the importance of the co-creation of such experiences between participants. The experiential value in these types of conversations and encounters are to a larger extent controlled, shaped and decided by the consumers (i.e., filmmakers and commissioners) themselves. The results of this research is in line with Baron and Harris's (2008) argument that consumers integrate their resources to



co-consume experiences, wherein value ‘relates to, and stems from being part of the collective, i.e. it emerges as a result of co-consuming’ (p. 125). During those encounters and conversations at festivals, filmmakers and commissioners use their physical, social and cultural resources to co-consume and co-create their experiences.

For example, in one of the observations, a filmmaker was using her emotions, imaginations and interest on child labour to vividly describe an incident to a commissioner while waiting to be served at a bar. Both professionals met while waiting for the bartender to serve them, and this started from news on a TV channel above the bar. While both were sharing their views on the same in a causal conversation, it quickly became clear that both parties were interested to work on this topic in future. This encounter and the conversation, which was neither premeditated nor controlled deliberately with a business objective in mind, ended with the filmmaker and the commissioner exchanging their cards and agreeing to meet at a later time to discuss in detail on any future possibilities. This example illustrates how two people co-consumed networking by co-creating the experience and the associated values as a result of their own personal resources.

A key likely outcome of incidental encounters and spontaneous talk is the ‘sparking of new ideas’, which either party involved in the engagement did not think of prior to their meeting. The above observational example illustrates how new ideas spark from these types of encounters and talks. During the interviews and the observation, it was clear that filmmakers and commissioners come up with new ideas during their causal interactions. For example, according to Filmmaker 26,

*the whole thing about the GFF was, ‘Cut the crap, you know, let’s have a party, let’s try and build dreams’. You just meet people randomly, have a wonderful time and during this fun and chatting, people come up with brilliant ideas to work together. This has happened to me, and I know a lot of friends have experienced the same thing there. We Irish people love to talk, love our booze and have fun, and the best ideas pop in our head then. Snobbery and meetings with suit and tie is good to meet people, but ideas . . . genius ideas comes with the play and not while working (FM 26)*

The above quotation is interesting. It echoes the opinions shared by the filmmaker interviewed in this study, as well as the observations. It was clear that the incidental encounters and spontaneous talk led to an unanticipated ‘sparking of new ideas’. Although it does not happen all the time, and not all ideas sparked during such situation are translated to workable projects, it was evident that such encounters and conversation provided a conducive environment for such sparks to happen. The underlying reason is pleasure. When people are enjoying themselves, their hedonic experience encourages them to immerse themselves in the flow of conversation. The spontaneous social talk means that professionals cannot anticipate how coproduced conversation evolves. Achieving people’s interest and collective acknowledgement is a challenge they overcome using their skills and resources, and this success keeps inducing pleasure in their participation. For example, as observed at the festivals, people (i.e., filmmakers and commissioners in this case) who were able to engage successfully with others in conversation were more satisfied than those who did not know enough to contribute on the subject of discussion.

So when a person does not have sufficient resources, such as an interest in the topic or necessary knowledge to contribute, his or her participation is passive, and this lack of participation does not encourage the sparking of new ideas. According to Carù and Cova (2006), ‘the consumption experience is made up of a succession of intense moments of immersion, frequently interrupted by moments of much lesser intensity’ (Carù & Cova, 2006, p. 10). This study shows that the consumer lives these intense moments of immersion through a complex combination of nesting, investigating and stamping operations in which one conjures up all of one’s competencies and knowledge. It is interesting that participants involved in engaging, spontaneous social conversation find comfort from having control over it in their own respective ways. This comfort encourages them to investigate further and later, on successful investigation, they attribute specific meanings to their conversation experience (stamping). This positive holistic experience (stamping) not only sparks new ideas but also encourages them to participate in further dialogue, thereby encouraging relationship building and exploration of collaboration opportunities.

Spontaneous conversations, incidental encounters and spark in these situations occur within experiential moments that involve fun, feelings and fantasy (cf. Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), which in turn immerse participants in extreme hedonic interactions. The fun comes from discussing and immersing themselves within a topic they are passionate about, which in turn gives them enjoyment. This also leads them to turn their fantasy of having immersed in fun at film festivals into reality. Furthermore, such conversations and encounters not only result in hedonic experiences but are also facilitated by hedonic facilitators, for example, strangers initiating conversation at a bar, during social events, at a dinner table or even travelling in a crowded bus together. The interview extracts discussed above show that the opportunity at festivals to talk to strangers itself is hedonic in nature when undertaken with those who share similar resources (i.e., tastes, ideas and opinions). While arguments and altercations during those talks can have negative results, a healthy debate or discussion can be very pleasurable in nature.

### **7.3. Temporality and Multifarious – Challenges in Co-Creation of Experience**

#### **7.3.1. Temporal Nature of the Social Value in Film Industry**

In the previous section, it was evident that the value, in relation to this chapter, is derived from planned meetings as well as incidental encounters and spontaneous conversations. This value is embedded in the experience of these planned meetings, encounters and conversations as well as manifested in the results from these rendezvous and talks. Closer examination of the above discussion also shows not only that ultimate value is derived from building relationships and eventually negotiating collaboration possibilities but also that the sparking of new ideas (which is neither premeditated nor anticipated) often leads to collaboration. However, the empirical results have shown that experiential value comes with its own challenges, i.e., the multifarious contexts of consumption experiences. But before discussing these challenges, it will be relevant to understand the temporal nature of social value.

Because the film industry is part of the art and culture domain, resulting value from the social milieu is relevant. The relationships between social networks and cinematic achievements in the Hollywood film industry have been noted by Cattani and Ferriani (2008). The social relationships are important not only for the value of the film products but also for that of its professionals (Blair, Culkin & Randle, 2003; Currid-Halkett & Ravid, 2012). In other words, while social milieu influences the success of films, it also influences the value of its professionals, which in turn determines the accomplishments of the professionals' output/offerings (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008).

As discussed in the literature review, the market value of products in the art and culture industry is linked to the subjective influence of other people (Preece & Kerrigan, forthcoming, 2015). When discussing aesthetics, in the context of art appreciation, pricing is usually not the main dimension but aesthetic experience, which could be subjective and emotional in nature (Ooi, 2010). Since art and cultural products are socially consumed, their economic value is 'determined by intangible (and ephemeral) social value formed from and within specific context by particular people' in society (Currid, 2007, p. 386). Not only the context can be subjective in nature but also people's interpretation, and this is abundantly evident in the literature (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Shankar & Goulding, 2001; Hackley, 2003; Hopkinson & Hogg, 2006; Lee & Lings, 2008; Lincoln et al., 2011) as discussed earlier in the methodology chapter. Nevertheless, subjective opinion of relevant people (such as gatekeepers, professional friends, intermediaries, hobbyist community etc.) matters within the social milieu of the artists (Currid, 2007).

There is a link between social value and the experiential value (that is co-created by co-consumption between consumers). The discussions above have shown that experiential value is co-created during the planned meetings, incidental encounters and spontaneous conversations. These meetings, encounters and conversations at film festivals result in networking and building informal relationships within the social milieu. The consequent result is interactions between the professionals in the industry, which in turn influences the value of professionals, (such as filmmakers and commissioners), offerings (for example, films and

production deals) and their own value in the industry. However, social value is not necessarily static or permanent in nature, but temporary.

Social value is temporary in nature because it is dependent on evolving social factors. The value of art and culture, and its consumers and gatekeepers are constantly in flux because of the constantly evolving but influential social dynamics (Currid, 2007). Currid (2007) gives the example of ‘graffiti or hip-hop music face constant challenges to their street credibility with each new mainstream sneaker or beer commercial that uses them as props’ (p. 393). The trends in the creative industries (CI) involve evolving complex system, and they shift as new technologies and ideas emerge (Potts et al., 2008). Since creative industries overlap and are incorporated with the arts and culture industries (Potts et al., 2008), the evolving nature of CI also influences the social value of art and cultural products to evolve. Furthermore, the temporary nature of job contracts and evolving demand for skills (Blair, 2001, 2003; Blair, Culkin & Randle, 2003; Christopherson, 2008) besides technology, production and financing of media products also changes over time (Christopherson & Righthor, 2010), particularly in the film industry. This further results in social value needing to evolve. This explains that social value evolves over time, and this evolving nature of the value in the social milieu means that it is temporal in nature.

The temporal nature of social value in the film industry has an effect on the experiential value that is co-created by co-consumption between consumers. As explained earlier, the experiential value from the aforementioned meetings, encounters and conversation influences the value of the professionals and their offerings. However, since the value from the social milieu itself evolves and is hence temporal in nature, experiential value is also evolving and temporary. There are, however, relatively few studies that have looked into this gap in the existing literature. The section below explains further the empirical results, which shows the consequent multifarious context in consumption experience.

### 7.3.2. Multifarious Nature of the Consumption Experience

The findings above show value in networking at B2B events is achieved by encountering relevant people and experiencing spontaneous conversation with them. This value is embedded in the experience of these encounters and conversations, as well as manifested in the results from these situations. Closer examination of the above discussion also shows that ultimate value is not only derived from building relationships and eventually negotiating collaboration possibilities but also from the sparking of new ideas (which is neither premeditated nor anticipated) often leading to collaboration and pleasure. However, the empirical results show that experiential value comes with its own challenges, i.e., the multifarious nature of consumption experiences.

As discussed above, social value evolves, is varied and is not static, so we must understand networking opportunities as multifarious. The evolution of social value directly affects consumption experience. People's expectations and perceptions of networking opportunities are influenced by the social value they want to achieve. For example, in her market, Commissioner 41 sees the demand for documentary films on antisocial groups influenced by Maoist ideology in South Asia. Therefore, at the time of this research she sees social value in meeting professionals with relevant knowledge and interest. However, this was not her interest previously. But the social value for her has evolved, which in turn will influence her current hedonic pleasure in conveniently and comfortably meeting relevant people. 'Evaluation of the experience evolves within the context of the overall story' (Arnould & Price, 1993, p. 26); therefore, social value, as an important part of the overall networking context, influences the evaluation of the experience to evolve at the B2B networking events. Commissioner 36's interview, in the same year, is another example:

*[F]rom my point of view, they (film festivals) are places where you can learn and share experiences in many ways and I think because of that, they are very, very important. If one wants to understand what's going on in media business because all things they are changing very quickly at the moment. The media is changing very quickly at the moment. The audience ways how they use medias, user behaviour is*

*changing really, really quickly and also, they have strong impact on what we want and expect from media side. I mean, what media can offer and how the media can offer the contents, people and audiences want to use them. (COM 36)*

Commissioner 36 then goes on to explain that in the current environment, social value can be created only when multimedia is kept in mind. As a result, this commissioner is likely to enjoy networking and developing B2B relationships at festivals where she can conveniently and comfortably meet people who share an interest in multimedia platforms. This shows that with the evolution in digital platforms/technology, multimedia has started influencing the social value in the film industry, which is now shaping networking expectations and pleasure from achieving business objectives in the industry. In reference to experiential consumption, Addis and Holbrook (2001) argue that ‘since the consumption outcomes entail constantly evolving aspects of subjective responses’ (p. 59), the experiences are variable. Commissioner 36’s and Commissioner 41’s comments highlight that people’s experience at a festival could be completely different depending on the people they are able to meet and their personal perception on social value. Therefore, experience is moulded according to evolving social value, which is subjective, making the experience multifarious.

The experience itself is easily moulded and shaped, and it is constantly varying without giving way. The reason could be from the influence of external factors such as atmospherics and physical evidence to that of internal factors such as our emotions, feelings, thoughts and personalities. Minkiewicz et al. (2014) found in their research that the emotional state of customers and the design of the experience space, among other factors, influenced the manner in which people personalise and engage in their experience. The results of this study shows this in the context of B2B networking experiences. For example, Filmmaker 28 explains how she started in a very bad mood, which affected her experience at the festival, but eventually she was happier after spending the day relaxing at the lounge with a drink, and this had an effect on how she later enjoyed socialising at the party.

*Sometimes you just wake up with a grumpy mood, I was not feeling well that day (at the film festival) I was just a grumpy sod. This did effect what I managed to do that day at the festival; it was completely unproductive. I did not enjoy being at the festival you know. So I decided to just stop working, and chilled out with a drink in the lounge. The lounge was great, I enjoyed reading my book there, it was so relaxing, the sofa was so comfortable. I had a bit of nap too (laughs). Anyways, I was much better after, much better mood and the party was great later . . . I made some friends and currently working on a project with someone I met there (FM 22)*

The results indicate that it is not always possible to control the experience of individuals and that the experience gets moulded and shaped and constantly varies without giving way. The temporal aspect of consumption experiences makes them complex to orchestrate. This is because ‘interaction with the customer can be extended over time, (consumption experience) involve large numbers of touch-points and (consumption experience) require substantial amounts of interaction with many parties in the network and brand community’ (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009a). However, the provision of spaces to relax in can facilitate positive experiences. The observations at the festivals illustrate that filmmakers’ and commissioners’ hedonic pleasure from networking comfortably and conveniently is a result of their interactions with festival organisers before, during and after the festival. The filmmakers’ and commissioners’ experience of comfortable and convenient networking is also influenced by their interaction with other people relating to hygiene. Similar to Herzberg et al.’s (1959) line of reasoning, when hygiene factors are absent, filmmakers and commissioners are bothered and dissatisfied. Examples of this are hygienic conditions of bartenders serving alcohol and in suppliers such as local transportations, hotels and caterers. Filmmaker 5’s comments illustrate this further:

*If the bartender or the waiter at the restaurant of the festival is taking a lot of time, than it effects your networking time. Similarly the hotels where you are accommodated, the taxis and even help at the local stations and airports make a difference to how quickly and timely you can be there for your appointments and*



*meetings. These are not related but is linked to the festival and how much we enjoy there. (FM 5)*

Experiential expectations and perceptions may vary among individuals, and this variance may even be contradictory in nature. In other words, expectations and perceptions of two people can be different and even contradictory. So far, the results discussed above show that in the B2B context, the hedonic consumption of networking activities is influenced by the filmmakers' and commissioners' perception of social value, their interactions at various stages with the provider and others at the event, their emotional state and the design of the experience space. This in turn creates individual differences between the consumers, i.e., the filmmakers and commissioners, and variance in their preferences for leisure activities and hedonic consumption. Consequently, their experiential value is likely to differ from one to the other.

In the previous section, the argument was made that consumers co-create their experiences during incidental and spontaneous encounters and conversation during these moments. But from the discussion in this section, it is clear that since people have different and/or contradictory experiential expectations and perception, the experiential value and preferences for hedonic consumption experience may differ from one person to the other. Therefore, during the process of co-creation of experience during conversations and encounters, the experience, conversations and encounters cannot be staged or even fully facilitated. These findings challenge the more managerially focused perspectives on experiential marketing, as expounded by Pine and Gilmore (1998 and 1999) and Schmitt (1999), which do not account for the divergent and multifarious nature of social value in such experiences.

While in B2C marketing literature scholars have argued for and against the possibility of staging experience, there are relatively few studies that investigate experience in the B2B context. This study addresses this gap in the existing literature by exploring how hedonic experiences are co-created, as well as the challenges in staging a hedonic networking experience. Spontaneous conversations and incidental encounters at B2B networking events are central to the co-creation of valuable

experience. Therefore, it is not possible to fully stage or create the experience or achieve predetermined experience value. Nevertheless, incidental and spontaneous encounters, and the sparking of new ideas these moments enable, are important to facilitate better networking opportunities, but it is up to the filmmakers and commissioners to co-create their own networking experiences and opportunities.

#### **7.4. Summary**

At film festivals, it is common to see planned networking and collaborations, as this is effective in achieving relevant business objectives for the professionals as well as for the industry. The experience of networking and new collaboration in planned meetings is an important value co-created at film festivals. The co-creation of this experience is not just limited to between business and customers but also extends among consumers too, in the B2B context. In the co-creation of the experiential value, all parties, i.e., business consumers, bring relevant aspects (such as their personality, tastes, projects and preferences) and resources to the table, which eventually shapes their 'networking experience' with each other.

Similarly incidental encounters and spontaneous conversations are common at film festivals, especially at the informal social gatherings at the event. Spontaneous talks between strangers who share similar interests at social gatherings during incidental encounters are engaging simply because they are pleasant and intriguing. The experience of networking and new collaboration from these encounters is an important experiential value co-created at film festivals. This study shows counterproductive results if the professionals are bored, and incidental encounters and spontaneous conversations make their participation at the festival interesting and intriguing. It further fuels their experiential value, which in turn facilitates better networking and collaboration opportunities, as discussed above.

Unlike in planned meetings, the experiential value from spontaneous conversations and incidental encounters is co-created mainly in consumption settings. While organisers play an important role in organising and staging their meetings in planned encounters, the experiential value in these (spontaneous and incidental)

types of conversations and encounters are to a larger extent controlled, shaped and decided by the professionals themselves. A key likely outcome of incidental encounters and spontaneous talks is the ‘spark of new ideas’, which either party involved in the engagement did not think of prior to their meeting. Although it does not happen all the time, and not all ideas sparked during such situation is translated to workable projects, it was evident that such encounters and conversations provided a conducive environment for such a spark to happen.

However, the temporal nature of social value in the film industry has an effect on the experiential value that is co-created by co-consumption between consumers. Since the value from social milieu itself evolves and is hence temporal in nature, the experiential value also evolves and is temporary. Consumption experience is multifarious because the social value evolves and is not static.

Therefore, there will always be an experience, but the same person’s experience can differ from time to time because of the internal (feeling, mood etc.) and external environment of that person and evolving social value. This is also the reason why two people can experience the same thing differently depending on their nature. So experience is easily moulded and shaped, and it is constantly changing without giving way, making it plastic in nature. This makes the consumption experience, in the context of facilitating networking opportunities, multifarious and as a result, it might not be possible to ‘stage an experience’ which will always facilitate better networking opportunities. This is particularly the case in relation to spontaneous conversations and incidental encounters, which spark new ideas and offer better opportunities to develop informal but useful social relationships and future collaboration opportunities. To a great extent, this affects even organised meetings. Nevertheless, experiential factors (discussed in the previous two chapters) facilitate better networking opportunities, and then it is up to the professionals how they co-create their own experiences by taking advantage of those facilitators.

## 8. Conclusion

### 8.1. Introduction

The aim of this PhD thesis is to explore the role of experience in facilitating networking in a B2B context. This thesis has achieved its aim by answering the three objectives outlined in the first chapter, i.e., what are the facilitators of networking at film festivals, how do these operate and contribute to filmmakers and commissioners' experience at documentary festivals, and what are the nature and characteristics of stakeholders' experience there.

The literature review in Chapter 3 shows networking is very important not only in the film industry but also in other industries. Networking helps businesses as well, in the career progression of professionals. In particular contexts to the film industry, networking is very important for professionals to find a job, for filmmakers to find buyers and finances, and for organisations to find the right professionals. This is the reason why networking in the film industry is recognised as vital to the industry by academics, practitioners and relevant public organisations alike. However, there is no research to show what facilitates networking between these professionals in the film industry. In the literature review in Chapter 3, a recent study by Cayla et al. (2013) found that hedonic experience facilitates B2B networking. In B2C literature, the importance of hedonic aspects in consumption experience is abundantly clear, as the literature review has shown in Chapter 3.

Although the relevance of pleasure has been recently recognised to facilitate B2B networking, most of the existing literature shows (in Chapter 3) that professionals in general and professional attendees from the industry in particular are not very affected by hedonic aspects of consumption. Furthermore, Cayla et al.'s (2013) study was set in a different research context (tennis tournaments), and therefore, their conceptualisation does not embrace aspects of festivals, particularly film festivals. Also, Cayla et al.'s (2013) paper does not explore in depth how experiential facilitators operate and contribute to professionals' experiences and the

nature and characteristics of their experiences at the festivals. So there are research gaps in understanding what facilitates B2B networking at the festivals from an experiential perspective, how experiential facilitators operate and contribute to professionals' experiences, and the nature and characteristics of their experiences at the festivals. The results found in the study addresses these gaps.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study achieves its aim and addresses these gaps by framing B2B professionals (filmmakers and commissioners) as consumers of documentary film festivals. While the focus of this research has been narrowed down to networking experiences of professionals at documentary film festivals, the advantage of doing so was facilitating an in-depth understanding of filmmakers and commissioners' experiences of networking activities, what facilitates their networking opportunities and what impediments they may have. This was done using qualitative data collected using observations at three film festivals and in-depth interviews of 43 filmmakers and commissioners, as outlined in Chapter 4.

The following sections will summarise the results and highlight the contribution on the relevance of hedonic consumption to facilitate networking, followed by a discussion of the relevance of mundane facilitators for hedonic consumption of networking and finally the characteristics of the pleasurable experiences that are co-created by the stakeholders, in line with the aim and objectives of the study. Finally, it will discuss the limitations of this study, while recommending future research. The next section will briefly explain what this study found on why networking at documentary film festivals is important for filmmakers and commissioners.

## **8.2. Networking and Value Creation at Film Festivals**

The value for filmmakers and commissioners who attend documentary film festivals is attained through interactions with each other in social settings. Professionals need to interact to evaluate, appreciate and appraise their artistic products. For example, it is difficult for someone outside the documentary film

industry to evaluate the value of a project that is at a planning stage as precisely as documentary commissioners can. It is also the commissioners who have necessary funds to finance and often broadcast and help to distribute a film, but they are often difficult to reach in person, but at film festivals, it is possible to do so. Similarly, it is not easy for commissioners to find a pool of filmmakers readily available to evaluate and to choose from, other than at film festivals. Similarly, networking at film festivals helps to establish contact for future known and unknown opportunities. But to attain this value from networking, just attending the festival is not sufficient; it is important that they interact with each other to identify with whom they would like to forge relationships.

The social settings in which filmmakers and commissioners interact at film festivals can be both formal and informal. Examples of formal meetings include speed dating between filmmakers and commissioners and pitching sessions, and the informal meetings include cocktail parties and social events. Both types of settings are important in facilitating networking opportunities at film festivals. The reason is that some people are shy and do not have the confidence to approach strangers in public and hence need formal settings, while others tend to perform best in a casual environment where there is less pressure to perform. Also, both settings complement each other in helping professionals to network. For example, while introductions at formal meetings can help in breaking the ice, discussions can continue at informal social settings at a later point in time at the festival.

While filmmakers and commissioners find value in networking with each other, these professionals want to network among each other too. In other words, filmmakers find value in networking with other filmmakers, and commissioners find value in networking with other commissioners. Networking with fellow filmmakers is valuable for filmmakers because it helps them understand what others are doing in the market, keep up with the current trends and competitive requirements, and explore possibilities of sharing expertise and resources in current or future projects. Similarly, commissioners find it useful to meet fellow professionals as well as other professionals besides filmmakers to explore possibilities for current or future collaborations. However, the results indicate that while festival organisers often

allocate resources and programmes to cater to filmmakers' needs to network, commissioners' expectations are often not given adequate attention. The reason appears to be the fact that filmmakers are the primary customers who pay to attend film festivals, but commissioners tend to be guests.

Nevertheless, film festivals offer the opportunity to both filmmakers and commissioners to network. However, as identified in Chapter 3, there is a gap in the existing literature to understand what facilitates networking and the role of experiential consumption in this facilitation. The results in this study contribute towards this gap, as seen in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The next section will summarise the findings and highlight relevant contributions.

### **8.3. Facilitators of Networking**

As mentioned above, to explore the role of experience in facilitating networking in a B2B context, the first two of the three research questions/objectives are what the facilitators of networking at film festivals are and how these operate and contribute to filmmakers and commissioners' experience at documentary festivals. The facilitators can be broadly divided into two categories: hedonic experience and mundane facilitators.

#### **8.3.1. Hedonic Experiences**

This study found that hedonic experience helps professionals to network at documentary film festivals. Figure 5-2 in Chapter 5 shows the pleasure-centric facilitators, which are relaxed ambience, festivity, alcohol, film exhibitions and the surrounding aesthetic landscape. Relaxed ambience is an experiential facilitator, and so are festivity, alcohol, film exhibitions and surrounding aesthetic landscape, but these experiential facilitators also facilitate relaxed ambience.

A relaxed ambience offers the pleasure of comfort and an informal environment, which in turn helps filmmakers and commissioners to interact casually and develop relationships, in which people do not look like they are working. This is

the case even though networking is the work-related motivation for professionals to attend the festival. The informality in the relaxed ambience reduces hierarchy and separation between accomplished and successful professionals from those who are not. Informality and reducing competitiveness (which focuses on transactions, meeting targets and deadlines, and the pressure to perform) are important in creating a relaxed ambience, and the servicescape of pubs, cafés and restaurants are effective in creating that environment. This in turn has shown to help in encouraging not just business relationships but also friendships. Developing personal friendships is important especially for filmmakers who are not good at selling. It is also seen as a better tool for career progression than formal business relationships, and a relaxed ambience helps to develop friendships because people can interact without being shy and having inhibitions. Research in the B2C domain has shown the relevance of a relaxed ambience in consumption experiences, for example, McIntosh and Siggs (2005) and Pullman and Gross (2004). This study has revealed that a relaxed ambience offers professionals pleasure and makes the networking experience hedonic in nature, which in turn facilitates their networking opportunities.

Festivity also offers pleasure to business professionals when networking at documentary film festivals, which in turn facilitates further networking opportunities. Cayla et al.'s (2013) research found business parties are relevant for B2B relationships because they are hedonic and festive. According to them, these parties are not mere recreation but 'important opportunities for executives to develop and manage their relationships' (p. 1,394). Although lunches, dinners, and cocktail parties are part of festivity, in my study festivity involves exuberant and joyful celebrations in the form of grandeur (splendour in a grand scale) manifestations like cultural and music shows at the festival. This affects business professionals' sensory stimulations like smell, sights and sounds, which creates a space of fantasy (for example, red carpet treatment), pleasure and fun for them. It encourages people to be friendly, gives them confidence and acts as a catalyst to be in a cheerful mood and to engage in discussions that are not restricted to work. This in turn helps to develop friendships and not just formal business relationships between the professionals. While the study of Cayla et al. (2013) contributes to understanding the relevance of parties for business networks, this study takes a step further in highlighting the



relevance of festivity in the form of grandeur manifestation by way of exuberant and joyful celebrations. This study shows the importance of experiencing the fantasy of the red carpet treatment, the pleasure and fun of not talking about work, and the enjoyment of the festivity and the development of friendships that are of strategic networking and business importance. However, such offerings at the festival must not overshadow the main purpose, which is the opportunity to network comfortably and confidently. My contributions also go beyond parties to reveal other hedonic facilitators, such as a relaxed ambience, exhibitions, alcohol, an aesthetic landscape and cultural and music shows to make the events festive in nature.

Just like festivity, alcohol creates a hedonic experience, but its consumption should be moderated. In addition to this, not everyone likes alcohol; there are religious and cultural reservations, and too much alcohol consumption can have negative repercussions on professionals' networking objectives. However, for those who do not have any problems with alcohol, it helps to create an informal environment and encourages people to interact casually and develop social relationships. It also acts as an icebreaker between strangers; professionals experience pleasurable socialising, and they enjoy the hedonic networking experience, thereby making networking an interesting and fun activity rather than mere work. However, not all documentary filmmakers are wealthy, especially those who are starting their careers. This means free or affordable alcohol will reduce any segregation and feelings of awkwardness or being discouraged to participate and encourage professionals to participate in networking. This study has contributed to understand the relevance of alcohol to B2B professionals not only in their networking but also in their hedonic experience.

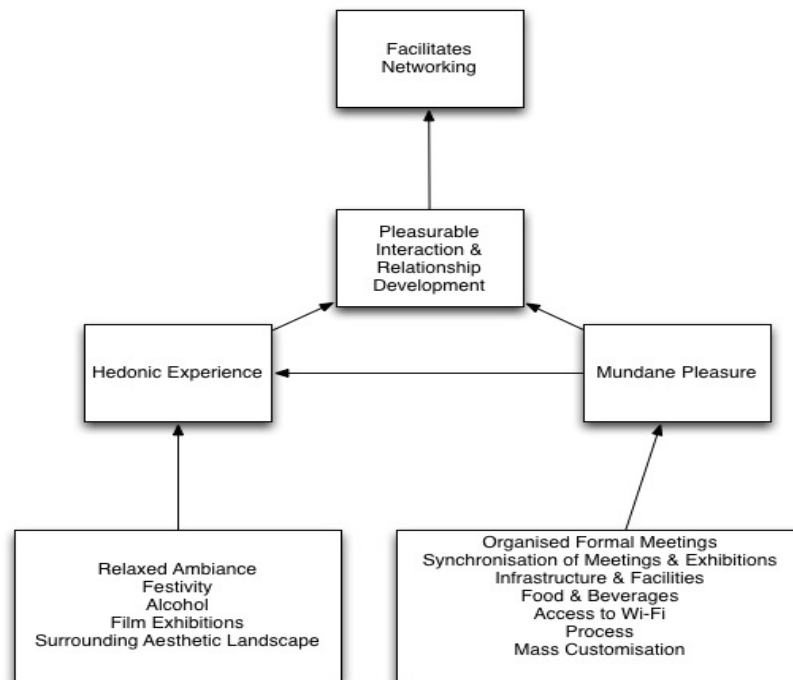
The next two pleasure-centric facilitators are film exhibitions and the surrounding aesthetic landscape, which stimulate the viewers' (business professionals attending the festival here) senses and arouse their emotions, offering the filmmakers and commissioners a break from their monotonous work. This experiential offering helps in creating an informal and social environment, which encourages interaction and networking opportunities. However, decipherability, suitable subtitles, playability, distinctive categorisation, and benchmarking films in film screenings

influence professionals' satisfaction and pleasure from experiencing the exhibition. When the landscape is beautiful (which is subjective, of course), it gives the opportunity for business professionals to take a break from their work and indulge in the aesthetics with fellow professionals, which then creates opportunities to develop relationships and friendships between them. In the B2C literature, the relevance of aesthetics in experiential consumption is well noted (for example, Pine & Gilmore 1999; Holbrook, 2000; Addis & Holbrook, 2001; Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2002; Carù & Cova, 2003; Ed Jr., 2004; Carù & Cova, 2006; Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Atwal & Williams, 2009). In the B2B literature, there is not much written about it, but Rinallo et al.'s (2010) study on business-attendees' experiences at trade shows found that aesthetics have 'minor impact on visitor satisfaction when compared to the innovativeness of products and the quality of interaction with stand personnel and other visitors' (p. 255). However, the results in this study show that aesthetics contribute towards creating a hedonic experience that the business professionals at documentary film festivals need to network better and develop relationships. As a result, it has an important influence over their satisfaction from networking achievements at the festival.

Therefore, this study has shown that a relaxed ambience, festivity, alcohol, film exhibitions and the surrounding aesthetic landscape are important in offering hedonic experiences, which business professionals such as filmmakers and commissioners need to network better and develop important and strong social relationships. These facilitators are also linked to each other because festivity, alcohol (which makes the environment festive too), film exhibitions and the surrounding aesthetic landscape are not only hedonic facilitators of networking but also facilitate in making the ambience relaxed. This study has shown that hedonic experience is important for networking; business professionals need it to develop social relationships such as friendships. Research on B2B experiential marketing by Rinallo et al. (2010) argues that there is not much influence of fun, fantasies and hedonic feelings on the business customers' behaviour at business-centric events. Rinallo et al. (2010) suggest that 'some of the tactics that work in the context of consumer markets, where consumers may be motivated by autotelic activities (e.g., fantasies, feelings and fun), may be ineffective or even counter-productive' in B2B

markets, i.e., market-centric events (p. 256). Similarly, Gopalakrishna, Roster and Sridhar (2010) also argue that ‘industrial shoppers may be less inclined to indulge in hedonic aspects of consumption’ (p. 247). This thesis challenges this by showing that business professionals need to experience fantasies, feelings, fun and enjoyment for better networking opportunities at festivals to devolve and nurture social relationships there. When business professionals get the opportunity to indulge in hedonic aspects of consumption at networking events, they are likely to develop friendships, which are crucial for their career and business objectives. The main contribution of Cayla et al.’s (2013) study is to show that ‘parties work economically because they are hedonic and festive’ (p. 1,416). They argue that having fun is important to maintain business relationships. The results of this study takes this contribution further by going beyond parties to find out other essential hedonic experiential facilitators, such as relaxed ambience, exuberant and joyful celebrations in the form of grandeur manifestations like cultural and music shows, alcohol, experiential product exhibition and the aesthetic landscape. These are pleasure-centric experiential facilitators for networking, which offer fantasies, enjoyment and fun to business professionals, and they need this to network better at business-centric events. Thus, this thesis expands our understanding about the role of hedonic experience in facilitating business and/or professional networking and relationships further and how the experiential facilitators relate to each other.

### 8.3.2. Mundane Facilitators



**Figure 8-1 Framework of the hedonic (mundane) facilitators of networking and their link to the hedonic facilitators identified in the previous chapter**

This study found that hedonic experiences that are mundane in nature also help professionals to network at documentary film festivals. Figure 8-2 above shows the pleasure-centric facilitators, which are organised formal meetings, synchronisation of meetings and exhibitions, availability of equipment and resources and appropriate infrastructure, food and beverages, access to wireless Internet, process and mass customisation. Mundane hedonic experience not only facilitates better networking opportunities but also helps to gain larger and ultimate hedonic experiences. In comparison to the facilitators in the previous section, which are symbolic, hedonic and aesthetic in nature, relating to fantasies, feelings and fun, the mundane facilitators relate to simple, ordinary and basic occurrences. These mundane facilitators are not limited to tangible products but extend to processes and intangibles and refer to those aspects that do not involve fantasies and extraordinary feelings and fun.

Organised one-on-one meetings, which are formal in nature, offer the pleasure of convenience. Although this networking activity is unlike experiencing fantasies

and extraordinary feelings or fun, it makes the networking experience pleasurable. For example, it can be daunting and stressful for a shy and introverted young filmmaker to approach a reputed award-winning commissioner from a top broadcasting organisation in a busy room while he/she is talking to other people. The problem of communication, initiating a conversation and talking with people one has never met before is known in the literature, for example, Gudykunst (1998), Duronto et al. (2005) and Samochowiec and Florack (2010). When organisers arrange one-on-one meetings for filmmakers, it takes the anxiety and pressure to approach someone he/she never met before. The anxiety involved in communicating with people we do not know also appears in the literature, for example, Duronto et al. (2005). This study has shown that the convenience of meeting people easily in organised meetings takes this anxiety away but also helps shy and extroverted business professionals to make the most of their limited time at the film festival and resources that they have. This in turn makes the ordinary experience of convenience a pleasurable one, which in turn facilitates better networking opportunities.

While one-on-one organised meetings in the form of speed dating are an important facilitator for networking, as discussed in the previous section and Chapter 5, film exhibitions are also important in facilitating better networking opportunities. However, film festivals are temporary events with a time span, and professionals have limited time and resources within which they need to do both. Therefore, where possible, when meetings and exhibitions are synchronised in a manner, which makes experiencing both activities easier for the professionals, this also gives them the pleasure of convenience and comfort. This too is not pleasure in the realm of fantasy, extraordinary feelings or fun nor does it focus on the symbolic and aesthetic nature of consumption, but it is a simple and basic occurrence in the context of the film festivals' programmes. It also helps professionals enjoy their discussions during the meetings, and this pleasurable interaction helps to network better. Chapter 6 shows the importance of scheduling meetings and exhibitions, but professionals do understand that it is not an easy task for organisers and would be an achievement for the festival if it succeeded.

The availability of appropriate infrastructure, facilities and resources is also an important aspect which gives pleasure to professionals and facilitates networking. Ordinary goods and services such as sofas, chairs, tables, pen, paper and easy access to information, meeting rooms and projectors are not about extraordinary feelings and enjoyment but help to make ‘social networking activities’ convenient for professionals. Some of these goods and resources are more essential for young professionals as explained in Chapter 6. Similarly, available food and beverages facilitate the pleasure needed for networking. Professionals spend a number of days and long hours networking at festivals, and they need food and beverages for their sustenance. Therefore, they are basic necessities, and the nourishment provided helps filmmakers and commissioners to carry on with their networking activities comfortably. This comfort is not extraordinary and does not involve fantasy; it is ordinary in nature. Professionals in their early career stages need additional support in the form of free food and beverages to network better, because those struggling with financial resources may resort to not spending on food and beverages. Not only can this affect their own networking opportunity, but it could also hamper co-creation of the networking experiences. The results have also shown the importance of professionals’ access to Wi-Fi (Internet) at the festival and their hotels arranged by the festival. It helps professionals in balancing their work and personal life, as well as attending to other work-related commitments which otherwise would not be possible. It also facilitates real-time research opportunities, which improves quality of discussions. All these help them to enjoy their visit at the festival and the networking activities and to work comfortably and conveniently.

So far, the facilitators discussed in this section also show the importance of process and mass customisation as facilitators of networking. These facilitators (organised formal meetings, synchronisation of meetings and exhibitions, availability of equipment and resources and appropriate infrastructure, food and beverages and access to Wi-Fi Internet) are the procedures, mechanism and flow of activities, which make it easier for business professionals to consume networking services, activities and events of the festivals conveniently and comfortably. As a result, these facilitators radically affect how the networking services and events are delivered at film festivals. Process affects the pleasure of convenience and ease to network; in the

context of the above facilitators, it does not provide the experience that is directed towards the pursuit of fantasies, extraordinary feelings and fun, nor does it focus on the symbolic and aesthetic nature of consumption. Rather, it facilitates simple and basic occurrences for networking, which in turn helps to enjoy the abovementioned facilitators. Therefore, the mundane process is an important factor to consider at film festivals to improve networking opportunities. Similarly, mass customisation of these facilitators is in itself another facilitator of networking, so professionals have some degree of control on how they experience these facilitators to use them in relation to their needs. It is also ordinary and mundane in nature and yet has the ability to offer pleasure to business professionals by making their networking activities convenient and comfortable.

This thesis also contributes in showing the importance of the mundane nature of consumption in experiencing pleasure and its consequent benefit in facilitating networking opportunities. Existing literature in B2C marketing has shown the importance of experiences that are symbolic, hedonic and aesthetic in nature, relating to fantasies, feelings and fun, for example, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), Arnould and Price (1993), Pine and Gilmore (1998), Schmitt (1999), Addis and Holbrook (2001), Carù and Cova (2003), McKechnie and Tynan (2006), McKechnie and Tynan (2008), Tynan and McKechnie (2009a) and Tynan and McKechnie (2009b). In B2B marketing, as discussed in the previous section, literature shows the relevance of experiential hedonic aspects in B2B networking, for example, Cayla et al. (2013). The contribution of this study takes our understanding of pleasure to acknowledge the relevance of the mundane nature of consumption in experiencing pleasure and why B2B professionals need these pleasures to network effectively. B2B professionals are busy and they have to make the most of their time at the film festivals to achieve their business- and career-centric objectives. Subjective use of time has been linked previously to experiential marketing in B2C marketing literature, for example, Holbrook and Hirschman, (1982) and Babin et al. (1994). This study shows how the abovementioned mundane facilitators help professionals to effectively and efficiently use time, experience comfort and convenience as a result of it, which gives them the pleasure to network more effectively and to gain a larger hedonic experience at film festivals. Finally, in

relation to mundane experiential facilitators, this thesis has contributed in understanding that mundane pleasures are not only linked to everyday objects but they can also be achieved from unusual and uncommon products. It also highlights the relevance of the usage of and experience with unique/luxury products in mundane ways to facilitate better business and/or professional relationships.

#### 8.4. Nature and Characteristics of Stakeholders' Experience

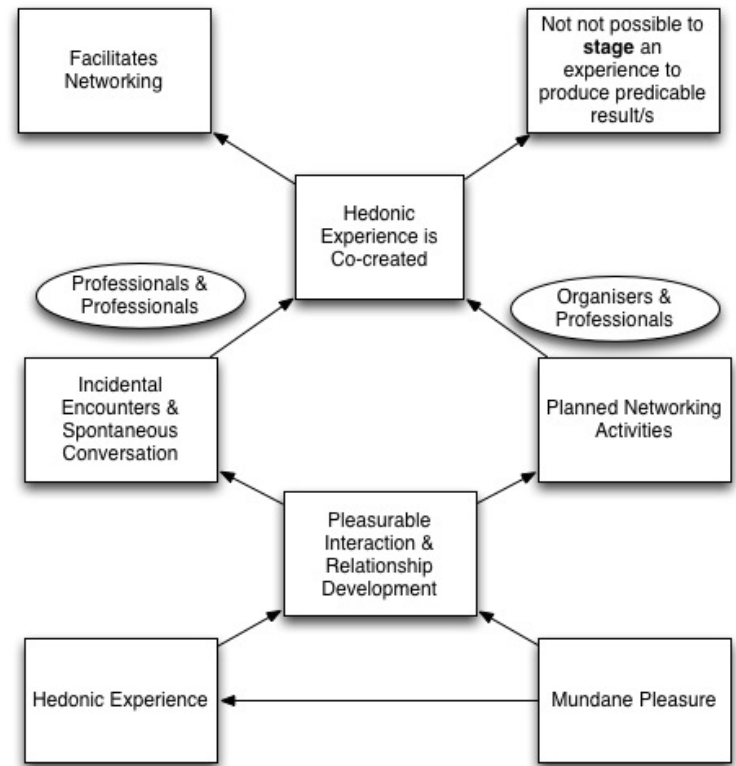


Figure 8-2 The nature and characteristics of the stakeholders' experience

The final research question/objective is: what are the nature and characteristics of stakeholders' experience, in relation to their experiential (hedonic) consumption of networking? In other words, how do these experiences come into being? As mentioned above, the previous two sections show the contribution of this thesis in understanding the relevance and role of hedonic experience and mundane pleasure to facilitate networking. Existing studies, such as Cayla et al. (2013), have also established the importance of hedonic and festive parties in creating opportunities for professionals to develop and manage their business relationships. While the existing literature and Chapters 5 and 6 have shown and developed further the importance and role of hedonic experiences in B2B relationships, this thesis, in Chapter 7, also



contributes further in showing that the hedonic experiences that facilitate B2B networking and relationships at B2B events are co-created. This thesis has shown that incidental and spontaneous encounters are hedonic experiential facilitators for B2B networking and relationships. My findings also illustrate how new ideas spark during such incidental and spontaneous encounters, with the hedonic experience leading to further collaborations, better networking opportunities and strengthened relationships.

Incidental encounters and spontaneous conversations are hedonic in nature because these can happen when there is compatibility of their intentions and personalities; they have a common area of interest, and therefore, it is interesting and intriguing for them, which mitigates networking monotony. Existing studies have shown the negative effect of boredom on productivity (Starbuck, 1991; Fisherl, 1993; Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003; and Bruursema, Kessler, & Spector, 2011). Incidental encounters and spontaneous conversations are interesting, enticing, entertaining and fun. They further the engagement process through their participation in the co-creation of this engagement experience the more pleasure is induced during such engagement. Another important characteristic of this experience is that it results in the spark of new ideas, which is not just a hedonic experience for the filmmakers and commissioners who are passionate about their work but is also extremely useful in developing and nurturing their relationships

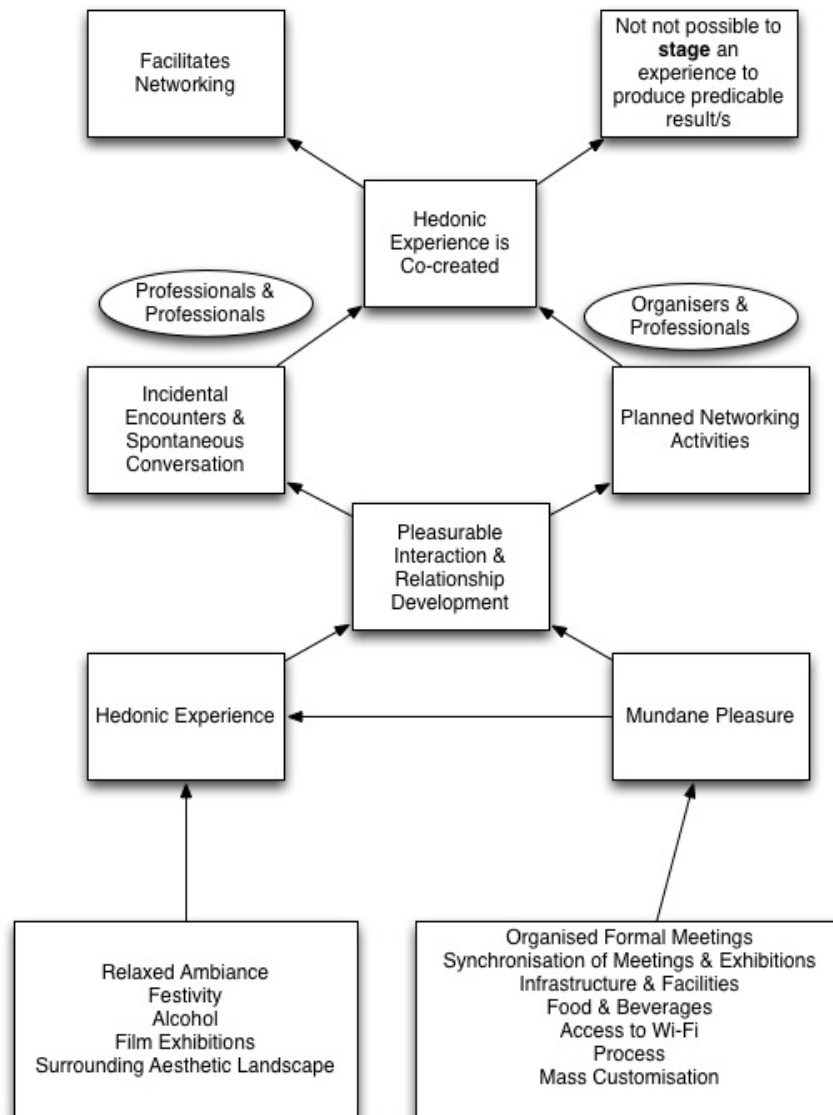
This research shows that it is not just organisers with whom professionals co-create pleasurable experiences, which facilitates their networking, but also with their fellow professionals. After all, networking is about building relationships between two people, and how they do this depends on their actions. While organisers can create opportunities to facilitate the networking, ultimately it is the professionals' active and ongoing actions and interactions that decide the outcome of the networking.

In relation to co-creation of experience, Tynan and McKechnie (2009a) argue that it is important to acknowledge the relevance of active participation from customers and others in the network, to co-create the experience rather than merely

taking the approach of staging experience for customers. Similarly, Minkiewicz, et al. (2014) shows that in the heritage sector, heritage customers co-create their consumption experience. Lunardo and Roux (2015) cautioned against the overt staging of such events as it could lead to the disengagement of the consumer. The research in B2C domains has shown that hedonic experiences are co-created between customers and others in the network. This thesis expands this to indicate the relevance of consumer co-creation in B2B relationships and networking, as it (this research) sees participants in these business events as consuming the experiences as well as contributing to their co-creation. This study also takes this contribution further by showing that the hedonic experience (which facilitates the B2B networking and relationships) is mainly co-created by the consumers among themselves. This does not mean that producers never participate in the co-creation of experience, but the emphasis here is on the fact that consumers of the networking experience are mostly involved in the co-creation of their own hedonic experience, while the producers/organisers' main role is to facilitate a conducive environment allowing them to create that experience. Within this environment, the consumers draw on their own resources (such as knowledge and interests) in developing their networks and, as such, spark new ideas.

Furthermore, this thesis contributes in showing that it is primarily the consumers (in our case, filmmakers and commissioners) who co-create the hedonic experience because the incidental and spontaneous encounters between them facilitates the co-creation of these hedonic experiences, and this can occur anytime and at any place, and it is not possible to predict its occurrence and how it will occur. Finally, this study has addressed the gap and contributed further in showing that the consumption experience is easily moulded and shaped and constantly changes without giving way. This makes the co-created pleasurable experience multifarious in nature, which means an experiential outcome cannot be staged but facilitated; rather, organisers should work to create an environment which allows for spontaneous experiences to take place. In doing so, this thesis questions the value of managerially focused work on experience such as that of Schmitt (1999) and Pine and Gilmore (1998, 1999) in facilitating the co-creation and recognition of value within the B2B context.

## 8.5. Summary of Contributions



**Figure 8-3 The framework of the facilitators of networking, their links to one another, and how they serve to underpin recommendations to improve networking**

This study contributes in showing pleasure is important in B2B networking. B2B professionals' behaviours are influenced by their fantasies, extraordinary feelings and fun at festivals and networking events, which in turn facilitates their networking opportunities there. Hedonic experience is a crucial facilitator for networking, and this experience is facilitated by a number of hedonic elements, namely, a relaxed ambience, festivity, film exhibitions, alcohol and the surrounding aesthetic landscape. In addition to fantasies, extraordinary feelings and fun, this study also contributes in showing the importance of mundane and ordinary objects and experiences in facilitating overall pleasurable experience in networking besides

facilitating networking opportunities. It has also shown the relevance of process and mass customisation theories in facilitating hedonic experience, in addition to organising and scheduling meetings, availability of appropriate infrastructure, facilities and resources, and food and beverages, in making networking activities easy and convenient for B2B professionals. Even though the consequent ease and convenience from these facilitators are mundane in nature, they are important in enjoying and experiencing pleasure while networking. Mundane elements facilitate pleasurable experiences, which in turn facilitates better networking opportunities. Finally, this thesis shows that the hedonic experience necessary to make better networking opportunities come into being by being co-created. It is co-created by organisers and business professionals, as well as between professionals themselves. This pleasurable co-created experience is extremely useful in generating new ideas, which then helps to develop B2B relationships and to secure opportunities for future collaborations. However, the contribution also shows that the co-created experience is extremely multifarious and is constantly evolving in nature, and therefore, it is not possible to predict the outcome or to stage an experience.

## **8.6. Managerial Implications**

Given that key stakeholders of film festivals (i.e., participants who are professionals and who have attended industry festivals for networking) were interviewed in this study, the advice goes beyond film festival organisers to include organisers of festivals and similar trade events (for example, organisers of academic conferences and technology fairs) that aim to offer networking platforms for professionals. Organisers can improve networking opportunities for professionals who attend to network by acknowledging that just like customers, professionals too are humans, and they are equally susceptible to experiential aspects of consumption. Networking is not just work and an instrumental process, but it is an activity that professionals consume. The platform where professionals can do this activity is a service that organisers offer to professionals. Organisers should consider delivering the service, which makes the consumption of networking pleasurable for the participants.

Organisers can make networking pleasurable by incorporating experience of relevant fantasies, and extraordinary feelings and fun that are relevant in the profession and industry and for professionals. Festivity, alcohol, exhibiting products in a hedonic manner and with a surrounding aesthetic landscape will make networking experience not only hedonic but will also make networking a relaxing experience, which will in turn enhance further the pleasurable networking experience. This will help organisers to facilitate better networking opportunities. At the same time, organisers should also give due importance to ordinary pleasure from mundane consumption; doing so will help them to facilitate better networking opportunities as well as offer hedonic experiences that are extraordinary in nature, which is relevant for networking, as we have seen above. Providing adequate, appropriate and, up to a reasonable extent, organised formal meetings, synchronisation of meetings and exhibitions, availability of equipment and resources and appropriate infrastructure, food and beverages, access to wireless Internet, process and mass customisation will help organisers to facilitate better networking opportunities.

However, this study also shows that organisers should not predict or promise a predetermined outcome but ensure the facilitators are in place to produce a conducive environment and facilitate better networking opportunities. Instead of producing pleasure, organisers of the festivals should ensure that the facilitators shown in this study help business professionals to co-create their own hedonic experiences, which in turn will assist in their networking. Doing so will also facilitate the spark of ideas and encourage collaborations, which will further enhance opportunities for professionals to network better.

## **8.7. Methodological Contribution and Implication**

This study collected primary data, taking an interpretive research approach to collect qualitative data using in-depth interviews and observations of filmmakers and commissioners. The interviews were done face-to-face as well as on VoIP (Skype). While observations and face-to-face methods were carried out as planned, I, as an interviewer, faced challenges in the context of power relations with the interviewee. While referring to the literature on using VoIP and Skype, to address the challenges, I

learned that there is not a lot of studies on power relations. During the practice, I learned ways to address these challenges, which contribute to the development of an understanding of the power relations between the interviewer and interviewees on Skype as well as ways to mitigate those challenges.

The interviewer's credibility, which determines his or her authority and power in the interview, is determined by the interviewee's perception of the interviewer's background setting. The background setting does matter when the interviewer uses videocall in the research. A setting reflecting a student's working environment, i.e., office, library or a working space, is likely to establish better credibility than a space like a kitchen with dirty dishes and utensils in the background. Similarly, the credibility of the interviewer in the eyes of the interviewee is influenced by how the interviewer looks. A formal physical look is better while interviewing participants who are at senior positions in their company. Skype allows customising both background settings and physical look at a relatively low cost, in less time and conveniently, without completely changing the physical look on one's body and the background settings.

It is not just the background setting and personal appearance but also the access to real-time information that influences the credibility of the interviewer in the eyes of the interviewee. Skype offers the opportunity for real-time research, and knowledge is power; this in turn gives the interviewer the knowledge to engage in discussions on topics that interest the interviewees. This discussion is not necessarily on the research topic but off-topics, which can be necessary to build a trusting relationship with the interviewee. The consequent trust from establishing credibility not only helps in in-depth discussions and prompting the interviewees to give elaborate answers to open-ended questions but also helps in getting further contacts and references for interviewing more people. This is especially useful when it is difficult to get a hold of participants. Existing studies on Skype focus on the benefits, disadvantages and challenges of using it and other VoIP software, for example, Hay-Gibson (2009), Hanna (2012), Sullivan (2012), Deakin and Wakefield (2013) and Janghorban, Roudsari and Taghipour (2014). Additionally, research on power relations between interviewers and interviewees mostly focused on face-to-face

interviews, for example, Corbin and Morse (2003), Kvale, (2006), and Vähäsantanen and Saarinen (2012).

My experience from collecting data using Skype contributes to understanding power relations in Skype interviews and how it can be used to moderate related eventualities. This thesis highlights why it is necessary to customise background settings and personal appearance while interviewing on Skype and how it offers better opportunity access to real-time information, to moderate the power relations between the interviewer and the interviewee during an interview. This in turn influences the credibility of the interviewer in the eyes of the interviewee, thus helping in collecting better-quality data from the interviews and recruiting new respondents.

## **8.8. Limitations**

The limitation of this study is that it has a narrow focus, i.e., researching the experiences of filmmakers and commissioners at film festivals. While focusing on film festivals has helped in achieving the aforementioned contributions, it has also meant that the results cannot necessarily be generalised for other festivals and events and for other industries. However, the coming together of professionals happens in a number of knowledge-based industries, such as higher education, technology, the arts and so on, and so, future research may examine this study's relevance more broadly. Time and resources necessitated that boundaries were drawn around the study, and the aim was for deeper analysis into a specified phenomenon rather than a broad-brush approach; therefore, the focus was necessarily narrow. Also, having interviewed 43 participants in this study, it may not be possible to generalise the findings of this study. Having focused on documentary film festivals, understanding from this study may not be generalised for film festivals in general and other festivals that facilitate B2B networking. However, considering the purpose of this study, which was to understand the phenomenon in what facilitates networking rather than to test one or more hypotheses, in-depth interviewing of a smaller sample population at documentary film festivals was necessary.

## **8.9. Scope for Future Studies**

Future research can include other professionals such as sales agents, journalists and actors attending documentary film festivals and analyse their experiences for not just better generalisation but also to see if there are any conflicting interests, experiences and expectations. Future studies should also look beyond documentary film festivals and find out what facilitates networking opportunities at non-documentary film festivals as well as other types of festivals and business events in different sectors and industries. This would be to find out the similarities and differences in the experiences of documentary film industry professionals. In future, academics can also look at each of the extraordinary and mundane facilitators to examine what makes such experiential facilitators succeed or fail in different sectors and industries where businesses gather in a festive environment, and offer comparative results.

As we are increasingly becoming tech-savvy and tech-dependent, in other words, as we are using more and more VoIP platforms such as Skype for not only our research but also for job interviews, it is now very important to understand the power and control issues between the interviewer and interviewee during Skype interviews. The contribution here is a result of my subjective personal introspection from collecting primary data on Skype for this research; it is an incidental by-product. Future research should explore the method of interviewing on Skype in more detail to understand power relations (between interviewer and interviewees) and, in this context, any differences between one-to-one Skype interviews, multiple interviews and focus groups using web conferencing, and one-to-one interviews. To do so, it could collect data from interviewers and interviewees who have used Skype and/or other VoIP platforms.



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## **11. Appendix 1 - Interview Schedule**

1. How do you choose which festival to go to?
2. How do you know which festival is right for you?
3. Can you share your first experience at a film festival?
4. Which festivals you find very useful and why?
5. Whom do you like to meet at festivals?
6. What helps you to meet these people at the festival?
7. Can you share your experience when you met someone important at a film festival?
8. How do you compare formal meetings and speed dating to informal social events?
9. How do you see these meetings with new people can be supported at the festivals?
10. If you were in charge of organising film festival, is there anything you would do differently?
11. What was the last film festival you went to?
12. How did you come to choose this one?
  - a. Is that always important?
  - b. Do you choose differently depending on whether you have a film there?
13. So was the last film festival worth going to? (Discuss hopes, expectations and experience)
  - a. Probe on intangible aspects (such as, location, ambiance, quality of films etc.) as well as tangible aspects (such as, food) that create experience.
14. Do you think the festivals are changing over the years? Have you seen, have you noticed any changes?
15. Can you share a bad experience at a film festival?

As stated in page number 108 “it must be noted that the schedule was not prescriptive for all the interviews, and the questions asked were not in the exact same order. The schedule was used to give direction, and questions were asked from the schedule depending on the flow of the conversation in the interview, as this was found to be more fruitful than asking the questions in the listed order below. This means the questions and the order in which questions were asked were different for different people.”

## 12. Appendix 2 - Sample Interview Transcript

Interview subject

Speaker key

Interviewer  
FM 25

Timecode	Speaker	Transcript
00:00:02	Interviewer	Hi, FM 25.
00:00:02	FM 25	Hi, Sumanta. Nice to meet you.
00:00:05	Interviewer	And you. How are you?
00:00:07	FM 25	Good, good. Yeah...I'm a...yeah, it sounds like your research is really...I'm also a researcher myself. I was trained in anthropology and had been actually doing anthropology research for 6, 7 years and kind of transitioned to documentary film from anthropology. So, I think it's fair to say that I still have very much of a foot if not both feet in the research world.
00:00:37	Interviewer	Was it at Baltimore where you had...In Baltimore, you were doing research, right?
00:00:42	FM 25	Yeah. I did undergrad in Baltimore and then I also...other stuff. And I kind...I don't know if you've heard of the social entrepreneurship community? I don't know how much there is in England. But in the east coast in the US, especially DC, there's a pretty strong community. And so, I was doing work that was more in the kind of public education and like civic engagements field. But you know, I guess I kind of see everything as pretty anthro-based when it comes to interacting with people and asking questions, just generally being kind of nosy and curious. Yeah, so, that's that. But I really...I really like the kind of frame that you're using in your research. Because I felt pretty frustrated and disappointed with the independent film community. You know, I felt [inaudible 00:01:47] and very little structure of any kind. You know, there's a couple of kind of [inaudible 00:01:54] institutions that seem to that kind of...people seem to congregate around but not obviously [inaudible 00:02:00]. But the structure is like pretty irrational and not transparent at all. And it doesn't seem to be very meritocratic in a way [inaudible 00:02:16].

00:02:22	Interviewer	Hello.
00:02:22	FM 25	[inaudible 00:02:22] Okay. It's only the [inaudible 00:02:32] yes. It's only the connection is too slow for the video.
00:02:37	Interviewer	Okay.
00:02:40	FM 25	Okay. Can you still hear me?
00:02:43	Interviewer	Yes, I can hear you now. I think the connection was a little bit fuzzy in between so, I couldn't hear you. But I can hear you clear now. Sorry.
00:02:52	FM 25	So, what I was just saying I felt the independent film industry to be fairly disorganised and kind of irrational and not so meritocratic as the other fields that I've worked in in other professional communities that I've worked in. And so, I'm just very excited when people are trying to do things to address that. And I mean, I'm kind of trying to do that with very limited resources and really like no reputation. I feel like to try to make a change in the documentary independent film, art film community requires significant reputation that kind of social capital that I don't have at all. So, yeah, that's my short story. So, I'll let you go ahead with whatever questions you need to ask me or however you want to proceed.
00:03:54	Interviewer	What you said is very interesting , can you elaborate more on this please?
00:04:50	FM 25	Yeah. I mean, I think that's...yeah. I couldn't be more behind that [inaudible 00:04:55] in that effort. And I'd actually like to, you know, lend a hand to whatever degree that might be relevant or necessary. The success is being hinging almost totally on the institutional kind of set-up or the kind of positioning that you have. You know, really making sure you get that [inaudible 00:05:19] whoever the hell it is in the UK or wherever you're kind of launching it. I don't know the UK [inaudible 00:05:26] BBC and the Channel Four Foundation, BRITDOC people I've had a bunch of conversations with them about an initiative they have called Good Pitch. It is important overall to get to chat with the documentary commissioners and anyone who can give me some money and support really for my film.
00:04:49	Interviewer	Yeah.. aha.
00:05:53	FM 25	I think...the project that I'm working on now is getting closer to completion, you know, broadcast release. I will have much greater social capital. I will have [inaudible 00:07:09] at that point. At least, I'm imagining that I will have this reputation in social capital should all go according to plan. And at that point, I'd love to use whatever contacts that I have to really push that agenda. Because the agenda that I feel like I've been trying to push from the kind of moment I got into this field which is, I guess, three and a half years ago or so.

		Because I feel like it really makes very little sense. I feel like you can't even really call it an industry because it's not rationally organised. Like from a sort of [inaudible 00:07:48] I think it's...an economist would not call film an industry, at least independent film. It's more of like a sort of fledgling community of some sort but [inaudible 00:08:01] interested to back it up well. But it's a kind of intuition from the little bit of economic exposure that I have. So, anyway that's kind of my piece.
00:08:15	Interviewer	There's still some problem with the line. Shall I take my video off? Maybe that will...
00:08:20	FM 25	Yeah, that might help, yeah.
00:08:22	Interviewer	Yeah. Okay. Can you hear me?
00:08:25	FM 25	Yeah, I can hear you.
00:08:27	Interviewer	Yes, yes, it's better now. Okay. So, if I start with some really general questions and then, we can narrow down to some specific questions. You worked at John Hopkins School of Public Health and then, the medical centre. And then, the US Department of State Fulbright fellow. You went to public education partnership back at the university. So, and then, you went onto work and produce this film. So, how is this transition and what attracted you?
00:09:17	FM 25	A good...a fine question. I ask myself that very often. And wonder if I made the correct decision. The very short story is that basically I really...I both love and hate academia, you know. I love the rigour, the intellectual drive, the community of scholars that is sometimes found in academia. But at the same time, the kind of small mindedness that can crop up in terms of being among a group of specialists who study the exact same thing that you study and, you know, really just speaking to them and speaking to the people who already have read the 5,000 pieces of academic literature that you've also read. You know, that I can find very frustrating. And I think I see so much wealth in academia that is is just kind of deteriorating or atrophying in data bases when it could really be applied in so many ways. That was my very kind of general and I don't know, maybe somewhat naïve intuition that I felt at Hopkins. And so, you know, I really saw doing the research work that I got. The Fulbright grant is seen as a pretty prestigious grant in the US. So, I felt like it was kind of too good to pass up. And I thought, rather than writing an academic paper, why don't I make a documentary film, which in theory, will attract more interest and bring more people into a subject that I clearly view as important or relevant today. So, that's a very short story. But in terms of kind of how I see myself in the field, I continue on the lines of like really being someone who can translate between academia

		and non profit advocacy and public policy. And there is a strong communications, you might say, marketing component in all that translation work. And so, I saw doing the documentary as an opportunity to strengthen some of those strategic communications and storytelling skills.
00:12:04	Interviewer	Was this your research topic before you decided to actually start the work on the film? Or you just decided to start, you know, working on the film?
00:12:15	FM 25	Yeah. The research came first. It was my research topic. You know, I applied for this funding, I got it and then, actually, I said...my brother's an actual film maker, and he's a trained film maker. He went to a very good film school in the US. And I thought, oh. Isn't this convenient? I can invite my brother to come down here and work with me and we'll make a film together and that's basically what's happened, you know. I thought I'll do all of the kind of social work, the kind of arranging of relationships, and the negotiating of [inaudible 00:12:55]. And some of the issues around framing and shaping the really basic foundation. And he'll do all the camera work, he'll kind of craft it into a story. Yeah. That was the idea. It's been an extremely long process, for better or worse, I think. In some part because we had pretty different ideas of what we were doing. At first, my brother and I...my brother, he came from a fiction film background and really wanted to make a very tight character and narrative with kind of Aristotelian three-act structure. And I was thinking more of like a visual essay. And so, it took us about a year to kind of compromise and find something in between but that's actually a little bit more towards his kind of side of the dramatic character three-act structure.
00:13:59	Interviewer	And you have followed that character all the way to the summit as well, isn't it? The...who was this character? This local...who was this character you followed?
00:14:14	FM 25	He was a Mayan [inaudible 00:14:16] Juan.
00:14:18	Interviewer	Juan, Juan, that's right. Yes, Juan.
00:14:21	FM 25	I'm pretty impressed you did a lot of background research. You know more about my work than pretty much anyone other than you know, the people who are participating in it. That's amazing. Yeah. We followed Juan who was one of the heroes in a cooperative that I was working with, really more as an organiser and advocate. You know, I did fund-raising, I did some kind of public relations type of work in networking. And we...and he was one of the...he was in my group when we followed him to the Cancun climate talks where he was really just kind of making his case as an indigenous healer speaking to a broader public about how he sees these big issues relating to environmental governance, climate change,



		biodiversity conservation. That kind of stuff.
00:15:18	Interviewer	You have been very successful in raising the funds as well, isn't it?
00:15:42	FM 25	Yeah, we did pretty well with Kickstarter. I think...you know, I would...we still need a lot more money from kind of mainstream institutions and that's what I focus on now. And I've actually been pretty humbled as a fund-raiser and grant writer from the institutional funding sector. And which, in the US groups, I'm sure you know about Sundance Institute, Tribeca Film Institute. There's a group called Cinereach, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation. There's a few other small ones but those are the, those are five biggest players. Then, obviously you have the public broadcasting system in the US which finances the few different vehicles. One is called ITVS, Independent Television Service. There's another thing called POV. I don't know how familiar you are with this landscape. But that's the kind of institutional landscape that I've been...I've been consistently humbled and done pretty poorly in institutional fund-raising. Yeah. And so, I think we will gain success, hopefully, quite shortly. But I made a couple errors in fund-raising institutionally. Yeah. Did you have a sort of more specific question or...?
00:17:06	Interviewer	Yes, I mean, I was coming to that now. Did you go to festivals and approach, not just institutions but independent, you know, distributors? Or did you speak to any of industry people at festivals?
00:17:25	FM 25	Yes, I have done that. Not as much as I should have probably. But I've been to...let me count. I have been...I went to the Silverdocs Festival in Washington DC in 2011 which was a very kind of eye-opening experience. I think it was extremely useful but didn't...no kind of funding came out of it. Although I did make a contact with a potential co production company, a sort of smaller one that specialises in social issue documentaries. The group is called Naked Edge Films. The man's name is Daniel Chalfen. He's the producer. He's actually...I think he's British. I don't know...I think he's like maybe a British Jew because he has ties to Israel as well. But that was a very useful contact that I made. I did go to...Silverdocs is unique in that it has a very comprehensive film conference. So, there's really just like five days of non-stop panels and workshops and the different types of interactive sessions, the pitching sessions. That I found to be quite useful in terms of getting what I call business intelligence. But I found the experience to be very overwhelming and even slightly alienating. And the reason why is that you know, there were, what I perceived, was a small number of what you could call kind of leaders or established professionals who had a reputation and had

		<p>resources. And they were just totally swarmed by you know, 10 times their number of people like me who didn't have a reputation. And didn't have resources. And were just trying to get, you know, 30 seconds of that person's time. And my personal reaction was that I didn't just want to be someone who was swarming with 10 other people trying to get 30 seconds of somebody's time, who is never going to remember me anyway. So, that...I would say that was a very mixed experience at Silverdocs. Where else have I been? I went to another all documentary festival called the True/False Festival in Columbia, Missouri which was I think, on the whole, much more positive. There was less...I got less business intelligence there because they don't have a conference. But True/False has a reputation for being a very relaxed kind of unpretentious place where people are just hanging out and enjoying themselves. And there isn't as much of the kind of swarming of the industry leaders. They're all there but they're...for reasons I don't completely understand, that culture of kind of flocking is not as present. And so, I was successful there at connecting to them. Some people are having some longer good conversations. But I didn't really learn as much about the industry because people weren't giving presentations or talks or workshops. So, I gathered less intelligence but I made more and stronger connections.</p>
00:21:18	Interviewer	<p>And was there any difference in the type of networking set up between Silverdocs and True/False in terms of...was there any after event party? Or was there speed dating sort of event? What was the, in ground level, what was the difference between these two festivals?</p>
00:21:39	FM 25	<p>Yeah, excellent question. I would say there were major differences. Silverdocs was extremely structured. And there were formal networking events. Again, there were these panels and workshops which had extensive interaction between the audience and the speakers. You know, I'd still probably say I prefer a more interactive form to a panel. But as far as panels go, Silverdocs did a very good job of facilitating interaction between the audience and the speakers. There were other kind of cocktail type networking events. And there were actual formal workshops where the...you know, it was a panel. The presenters were actually taking the audience through some kind of skill building practice or process. So, that was, again, quite interesting in terms of learning. True/False, it was totally unstructured. There were just a lot of...it's a very small town. You know, there are really not a whole lot of places for any one to go outside of this you know, kind of four-block radius. And so, pretty much everyone was just hanging out of a cafe or at a</p>

		bar or you know, outside the theatres. And it was fairly easy to just approach people while they were standing, you know, anywhere on the street. There were parties where by my assessment it was quite easy to get any kind of business conversation done. I'm not really a drinker but social one and it is easier to talk to people on a drink. A lot of the socialising and bonding that happens from heavy drinking that is, actually, I would argue is a key component to networking and building reputation I found.
00:23:36	Interviewer	That wasn't True/False, right?
00:23:38	FM 25	Yeah, True/False, yeah. And so, it was all...I think True/False had a few panels. Maybe there were, let's say...I think I probably went to maybe three at True/False and there were probably not more than a total of eight scattered out, you know. A couple a day over this 4- to 5-day period. Whereas, Silverdocs had a formal conference where there were panels going on constantly from you know, 8:00 in the morning to 6:00 at night. So, there were probably 10 panels a day over a 6-day period or something. So, something like 60 panels at Silverdocs compared to about eight at True/False. And the True/False panels were just also much less analytical. It was a lot more of kind of sharing personal stories. And yeah, you know, it was I think it was a great place to just approach people and start conversations if you were very proactive about it. People were in the right mood, so it made someone who's very proactive about networking like me...it made it a kind of optimal place to sort of target people and say, okay. You know, I need to talk with this person, for instance. I would argue that a man named Orlando Bagwell at the...who runs the Ford Foundations programme called JustFilms who has, if I remember correctly, about \$50 million to give to documentaries which I'm pretty sure is the largest sum of money for any single institution, at least in the US. And he is a guy who is utterly impossible to reach because literally thousands of film makers are trying to get his ear. And he has probably if at least hundreds and hundreds of emails a day if not thousands. His programme at Ford Foundation actually receives the most applications of any of Ford Foundation's programmes. And I was able to just approach him while he was walking to a film, and ended up talking with him for about 15,20 minutes. And he ended up saying, yeah, he felt that my project was a good fit for Ford Foundation. And that I needed to connect to Ford Foundation in Mexico and get them to recommend the project to him and his unit based in New York. And that that is how the funding process could move forward. And it's taken forever, but I did follow that process and I have got the Mexico branch of Ford Foundation to recommend the project to him back in New York. And

		that's kind of where it stands now. I have trouble trying to again reach him again despite the fact that the Mexico Foundation has recommended it. So, that was a little bit a long anecdote to just provide the information that certain people are just way more accessible at True/False than they would be at almost any other kind of industry stock or whatever you might call it. So, yeah, I've been to a few other festivals that were just less...there was less industry focus. I went to the Chicago International Film Festival because I grew up in Chicago and still spend a fair amount of time here, at least during the past few years that I've been working on this project. And there were, again, there were just a small number of panels there. I think there were maybe four during the whole festival.
00:27:40	Interviewer	Is that the Chicago International Film Festival, you attended there?
00:27:42	FM 25	Yeah, Chicago International Film Festival. So, I went. That was...I would say those panels were very [inaudible 00:27:55] for whatever reasons, the atmosphere of those panels was very kind of welcoming and interactive. People were very willing to talk to an audience member after the panel. The industry attendees were much lower profile though. There were some people that were possibly relevant to kind of my let's say festival or distribution or industry strategy. But not anyone near the kind of high level people that I found at Silverdocs and True/False. But folks were very friendly and nice and open and willing to talk to me. But the...as a kind of overall analysis, or overall take on the festival, it was a very different atmosphere because it was located at just a single movie theatre in downtown Chicago which, as you can probably imagine, is a large, big and fairly dense city. So, there was nothing like a kind of community space. It was just a large megaplex theatre where the film festival was happening. And so, it's hard, my view is that it's...the festival atmosphere is really dependent on the build environment and the physical landscape that you're operating in. And so, if you just have a megaplex in the middle of a crowded city, it's hard to community atmosphere.
00:29:36	Interviewer	It's very interesting what you said. Can I ask you to explore a little bit more on that in context to other festivals as well to the location, the community and, you know, the geography of the place, the landscape of the place as well? How does it make a difference in your experience?
00:29:54	FM 25	Oh, I think it's absolutely fundamental because if you think of a...I mean, I haven't done really research on this and I'm sure there's like a body of literature on like festival and celebration theory and stuff like that. But just for me, experientially, you know a festival is about creating this

		<p>environment of kind of openness of celebration, that of ritual in a sense that people can kind of reach out to people and start a conversation causally. Then, you know, just being much more open than they might be in a normal, urban environment. And to do that, it requires a kind of space that supports it. And I think like the best festivals in terms of creating that community environment, you know, my experience like true/false, it is this. The physical landscape was this very small area, I'd say about a four-block radius in a very small town arguably in the middle of nowhere in Missouri. And the simple reality is almost everyone that's in that space has to do with the festival in some ways. So, there's kind of a very group mentality around it. You know, everyone is participating, so, everyone is kind of a part of this group of open people who you can just talk to and have fun with or whatever, like celebrate with. And there's really not anywhere else to go in a place like that. So, it just creates more of like a small town atmosphere where you can just talk to people in a way that, you know that's just not as common in urban life. You know, just people don't feel open to talk to people as much. Although, you know, I'll say in the kind of urban west, there's definitely areas that have a lot more street culture where more people will just sort of yell at [inaudible 00:32:05] people extensively. So, yeah, I've spent a fair amount of time in India in my life and that is definitely from my experience a place where people have no problem just striking a conversation with a random person especially if you happen to be a white person who, you know, they think they could whatever talk to you or take advantage whatever. I love India but I've had a lot of...a lot of the experiences there. Yeah. I think the sort of short answer is just that the physical environment is really...I mean, maybe you can even say sort of determines the social environment in a lot of ways. Because if a festival can create this culture, a climate of celebration and of leisure, it just makes social intercourse that much more easy and that much a more normal...I guess...I mean, in a similar way to which, you know, in a bar, in any urban place, people feel much more open and conversation flows much more easily as compared to walking down the street. That would be a kind of comparison or metaphor I guess.</p>
00:33:34	Interviewer	<p>It's very interesting. As a person, how do you approach people when you go to the festivals? So, how do you approach them? Is it...and how do you prefer approaching them?</p>
00:33:44	FM 25	<p>Yeah. Good question and one that I spend a fair amount of time thinking about. I'm pretty intellectually oriented and strategic about these things. So, I have a pretty clear</p>

		<p>methodology around reading whatever information I possibly can about the festival. And kind of triaging or prioritising the people who I need to talk to, who I think can actually provide some service to my current initiative, my current project. And then, read as much about them as I can. Let's say, the top 10 people who I decided I actually need to talk to. This people can help build my reputation. This person might be able to give me money. This person could connect me to potential staff. This person could write an article about me, connect me to a co-producer or a distributor or some industry actor. I read as much as I can about them, what their kind of professional history is, what institutions they've been a part of. If I can get as much micro details as possible about deals they might have brokered or things they might have been a part of. I really...I have a strange, sort of slightly crazy methodology where I really try to understand these people very well. Almost till I get inside their mind and psyche. And come up with conversation topics or conversation starters that I can use with these folks depending on the situation, the sort of tactical situation in which I encounter them, whether, you know, someone like Orlando Bagwell that I see walking down the sidewalk going to a movie. Or it's...as part of a Q and A after a film or a part of a panel, I think the approach in like very logistical terms differs greatly depending on the physical or geographical situation. You know, in a panel, I'll usually try to speak during the panel to sort of build that sense of social recognition in that space. And that seems to provide a kind of legitimacy in conversation afterwards that doesn't happen if you haven't spoken publicly in the panel. Like if I speak publicly, then, we're somehow equals in this space. Whereas, if I didn't speak publicly, I have to be slightly more subservient to the person or polite, maybe. Sorry if I'm a little strong. Yeah. That's the...so, basically, I try to...I prefer to speak in panels in order to then continue the conversation afterwards makes it easy. Or if I didn't speak in a panel, I'll just wait afterwards, you know with the other 10 people who are waiting to talk to talk some person and just try to make sure that there's enough time for me to get whatever, very specific, strategic question that I have into them. And I try to limit it to one question that is both important for me and that they will likely find intriguing based on what I know about their lives, things that they're like directly involved in. So, it's a kind of part of a discourse that they're having in their mind already. And yeah, if it's just kind of ambushing someone on the streets, I'll usually be relativ...In general, I try to be pretty polite in these types of settings. Because there's no reason that this person has to talk to me. There's no social pressure on me then, it's just kind of like well, if I'll be nice then,</p>
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		hopefully, they'll be nice. But when I'm ambushing someone, I usually explicitly ask them if I can walk with them or if they have time for a question or, you know, something to just open up the kind of mutually acknowledged conversation space, versus just jumping right into it and kind of potentially catching someone off guard. So, yeah, that's my approach.
00:38:07	Interviewer	And do you think the way you approach and you communicate with these people has changed from the first festival you went to over the months or the years to now when you go to the festivals?
00:38:21	FM 25	Yeah. Yeah, I think at first, I was...I dropped into an observational mode where I was quite passive and didn't really reach out to many people because I was just trying to get a feel for how the social cultural worked at these festivals and at these industry kind of gathering points. Whereas now, I'm much more forward when I need to be and I don't want to let an opportunity pass by because I recognise there's a limited number of spaces throughout the year when I can have access to these people. They probably wouldn't respond to a cold email from me. I mean, most of them don't when I have, you know, done cold emails. So, there's a unique kind of openings in a social fabric if you will. Yeah.
00:39:23	Interviewer	Because it seems you are very strategic, you know what you want and you know about the person and you go and speak to the person, does it help in a setting where it's formal...relaxed but formal? Or a setting which is really relaxed and laid back? I know you have explained...you have touched a little bit on the differences between the Silverdocs and the True/False. But if this general setting came for your consideration at any festival, what would you choose? Which one would you prefer at a random festival?
00:40:07	FM 25	Yeah, that's a good question. I don't...my first instinct is that I appreciate both contacts. I like when there's a mix of both. I think the sort of formalism seems to be somehow a little bit less appropriate in the independent film world, just because most of the people in it don't really have 9 to 5 jobs. And they don't live like a very, very structured life in the way that someone working in a large corporation does or in the public sector, in the government. So, some of the formalism seems a little bit weird as compared to...Even like academic conferences where to me, certain kinds of formalities make more sense because everyone is very analytical about what they're doing. Whereas I found in the independent film industry is very much not analytical on the whole. That's been my experience. So, yeah, I guess what I like about the less formal atmosphere is that the people, the social group seems to be much more relaxed and much more themselves and approachable. Whereas, from what I've seen of the more

		formal setting in the independent film context, everyone is just less comfortable and less approachable.
00:41:47	Interviewer	You have been to a number of festivals so far. How do you get to know about these festivals? Where do you find the information? What do you rely on to make a decision to go to the festivals?
00:42:00	FM 25	Yeah. Mostly internet research, the combination of being involved in...you know, being on newsletters and publications. And then, blogs that talk about this stuff. You know, I try to...as I already said, I try to be super strategic about which festivals to go to because I don't have a ton of funds now to be just exploring. You know, I have to be really, really strategic about, okay. For me to pay the money to travel, you know, food, lodging, and then on top of it, to do what I need to do. I probably need like an industry access pass, you know, those things tend to run anywhere from 300 to \$1000 at different festivals because that's where you really can actually interact with folks. So, I...yeah. Basically, I try to really map out what are the exact benefits, you know, again in terms of networking, in terms of press connections, in terms of funding connections, in terms of potential staff. In terms of just sort of like supporters or champions who would just talk up the work and spread the kind of social buzz that is so important in the independent film world. That you know, I really am very methodical about planning out the pros and cons. And saying okay, you know, is this range of potential benefits worth the thousand dollars that I'm going to spend to go to this festival?
00:43:48	Interviewer	You mentioned something about the food and accommodation. Could you tell me about your experience at festivals on food and accommodation? Have you got anything specific in your memory or in your experience?
00:44:05	FM 25	Oh, yeah. That's a good question (on importance of food and beverages). I would say that both (food and beverages)) to me and to people in general, it's quite important. It's a part of in the sense that food is a part of a really basic human need. And you know, forms the huge part of, a lot me being super low budget right now and we've taken on a lot of debt to do this project. I've ended up staying at friend's houses you know, that's finding...going to a festival where I do have a friend there or I have someone who's happy to host me is a definite consideration. When there is food it forms like a space where people gather around food. And if it's good food or it's food that people have, you know enjoy eating or is healthy or whatever. That can certainly, very possibly contribute to the atmosphere of celebration in festival. I haven't been to Sundance yet because I don't know anyone in Park City, Utah, who can put me up for a while. Whereas I



		<p>know, almost every other festival location that is relevant to my field. I know folks in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Toronto...that Hot Docs Festival is a big documentary festival. There's a bunch of stuff in New York that I've been to. I didn't go through all the festivals that I've been to. I've been to a few others. Tribeca, I've been to a couple of times. So, basically, I try to stay with friends is the short story. And then, I just try to keep food as cheap as I can while maintaining some health standards. It is always helpful when there is free food, drinks, nibbles.</p>
00:45:47	Interviewer	<p>Okay. And what about the food at the festival itself? How important it is or how insignificant it is?</p>
00:45:54	FM 25	<p>Oh, yeah. That's a good question. I would say that both to me and to people in general, it's quite important. It's a part of in the sense that food is a part of a really basic human need. And you know, forms the huge part of...forms like a space where people gather around food. And if it's good food or it's food that people have, you know enjoy eating or is healthy or whatever. That can certainly, very possibly contribute to the atmosphere of celebration in festival.</p>
00:49:54	Interviewer	<p>How can festivals improve?</p>
00:51:06	FM 25	<p>I think that's just going to depend on the financial situation of the festival or what they might see as their capacity or their mission. Again, Sundance and Tribeca I think are two of the best examples. Then, again also San Francisco Film Society. You know, I know much less about how these things work say, in western Europe. My sense is that western Europe, everything is much more focused on public institutions, you know, like national film institutes. You know, say in the Scandinavian countries, have these things. My sense is that the UK is also much more focused on public resources and public institutions. But I haven't studied those fields as well. In the States, there's just a few of these sort of mega festivals. Again, Sundance, Tribeca, San Francisco that have built real institutions around themselves, that do have a kind of public engagement and education function. You know, I think those...they need to be strengthened or really sort of restructured and reorganised more seriously toward the education, mentoring talent development function. And then, I think they also need to partner with other groups such as universities or think tanks or whatever agencies from public, private non profit sector that do analysis, that do information gathering, that write up reports and guide the manuals to actually make the industry and the landscape intelligible, not just to new people but to everyone. You know, to really start to bring some basic transparency to the industry.</p>
00:53:19	Interviewer	<p>How do you plan the sequence of events at the festival? You know, what I mean by this is how do you plan your day?</p>

00:53:43	FM 25	I mean, I think my answer there is similar to many of the things I've already said which is basically just being really strategic and doing as much of my own analysis and my own information and data gathering beforehand. So, I can try to identify who are the people that can fill these gaps. You know, who are the people that are one, have the resources and capacity to support or help me in some way. And two, are most likely to be willing to do that.
00:54:22	Interviewer	How relevant it is to have an event which is not directly connected to the film industry? So, for example, entertainment, dance, shows, songs. If you think you are at the festival for five days, how important it is for you? Or is it important at all?
00:54:45	FM 25	Yeah, for me, personally, that's super important. I recognise the importance that they have for large numbers of people. And that those are major draws for people who are less involved in the industry and just want to be a part of is celebratory atmosphere. And like I said, for better or worse, the understanding that I've gathered is that a huge amount of social bonding between business, potential business partners or potential collaborators does happen over beer while dancing you know, at parties. I don't think I would ever tell a festival they should like cut down on their parties necessarily. Just because they...you know, that's what people like.
00:56:06	Interviewer	How can the festival bring the community of independent film makers together?
00:56:29	FM 25	Yeah, I mean, those are...again, yeah, the kind of crucial questions. I don't know that I have any great answers. I mean, I think it kind of...the devil's always in the details in terms of what any given festival is dealing with, you know, what their physical landscape is, what their profile is in terms of, you know, who their audience is, what types of people do they see themselves as serving? Do they see themselves as an important place for industry to gather, you know, for industry to network and for deals to be made. So, I don't know that I have any broad generalisations on that. I think what True/False...True/False is a good model and is recognised as a great model for generating this sense of community amongst the attendees in generating just a relaxed feel in the sense of just you know, really everyone being pretty approachable and open. And I think a lot of that depends pretty heavily on the leadership of the festival, their kind of public and social profile. You know, how they conduct themselves and the structures they put in place. Like True/False for instance is, as I mentioned, it's very informal. They're very like folksy. They have what they call buskers, like street musicians playing constantly on the street and

		before every film screening. You know, they have crazy parades where people are just wearing weird costumes. You know what I mean? I think it just takes being creative about what one, knowing your audience. And two, knowing what your audience is going to get excited about and what's going to make them feel comfortable and at home. And relaxed so that they can just sort of do the nitty gritty mundane work of getting to know people, you know. That is community building. I don't think that True/False would work everywhere. I think the fact that it's in a relatively rural place, a small town in the middle of Missouri is really the defining factor.
00:58:55	Interviewer	It's very interesting what you said.
01:00:11	FM 25	Yeah. Yeah.
01:00:35	FM 25	Yeah, yeah. I've been to a bunch of places in Rajasthan, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Pushkar...I'm trying to think where else I've been. There might be Ajmer to get to Pushkar. I think that's probably about it in Rajasthan, off the top of my head. But yeah.
01:00:54	Interviewer	So, there's a small festival in Jaipur. And they have grown up and they have done really well.
01:01:26	FM 25	Yeah.
01:01:27	Interviewer	So, that's very interesting what you said.
01:01:36	FM 25	Yeah. I mean, it's pretty...it seems pretty straightforward to me as far as the...as a sort of basic principles of community organising go. I think that...I guess that is, that is one point. I guess that's a good point is just really having the right...you know, the leadership, having the right mentality of seeing the festival as a community organising opportunity. As you know, an opportunity to build a long standing community. And I think a lot of festival organiser do do that. I don't know, you know, the field well enough but I feel like they're a lot of people who really want to do that. Whether they have the resources and capacity, are exposed to the right kind of tools is another story. But I tended to find that that is...that's at least the language that people use. Yeah.
01:02:33	Interviewer	It's definitely true. And also we found some interesting festivals who were employing really professionals but they were professionals from management consultancy firms. And they had different approach because their experience was different. They were used to, you know, dealing with...in the corporate world. But the film makers are different because they have got (Laughter).
01:02:54	FM 25	Oh, yeah. It's a totally different thing.
01:02:58	Interviewer	(Laughter)
01:03:24	FM 25	Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it's an interesting feeling. I hope, you

		know, at some point that it sort of does become a more rational and structured industry. But we'll see. I'm not holding my breath for any time...at any time soon. But yeah, I hope it happens.
01:03:44	Interviewer	Yes.
01:04:09	FM 25	Yeah, yeah.
01:04:10	Interviewer	Laughs
01:04:13	FM 25	Oh, I'd love to. I mean, that would be really wonderful. Because as I said, I'm really kind of like a...my orientation is very research. That's just kind of how I think and operate. I'm constantly, you know...see everything like a data gathering exercise. Although it sounds a little neurotic and boring. But there's a certain component of me that is doing that all the time. So, yeah, no. I'd love to. It's interesting. I've...part of my work in Mexico...one last point. Part of my work in Mexico involved getting pretty deep into a field of kind of international affairs that gets called security studies relating to you know, national security in just broader conflict issues. And I remember King's College, I was thinking of going there for a little bit because they have a...I think they have a defence studies department.
01:05:08	Interviewer	At King's, yes.
01:05:10	FM 25	Yeah.
01:05:10	Interviewer	And war studies and...
01:05:12	FM 25	Exactly. Yeah, it was one of the only...I think it is the only place I saw in academia anywhere that had something called defence studies. And it was particularly because the space that I worked in in Mexico is a sort of hot bed of insurgency and counter insurgency activity. So, I got really, really into it, the sort of counter insurgency theory. And I thought, oh, this King College would be a cool place to sort of...I'm not...this was a couple of years ago and I'm no longer going to follow that path. I'm more interested in documentary filmmaking. But that was the one kind of main reference that I had for King's College that they had this really good defence studies department.
01:05:59	Interviewer	Yeah.
01:06:09	FM 25	Yeah, I know. That's interesting. And you're in the Department of Management, you said?
01:06:13	Interviewer	Yes, that's right. We are in the department of management.
01:06:18	FM 25	Great. I'll look...I'll spend some time on that website, when I have a chance. Is that a part...I don't really know how schools...I don't know the UK academic infrastructure particularly well. Is that a part of a business school or is it a free standing entity?
01:06:38	Interviewer	Well, King's College is a part of University of London but it's

		just like London School of Economics, they have got their own powers. Now, if you look at London School of Economics, King's College, London, they have chosen not to have a business school as such. Although, they have department of management Whereas if you see Imperial and London Business School, they have a business school and they are more into practices rather than theories. Other than that...the Department of Management is a part of School of Social Science and Public policy at King's College London; that is a school in itself.
01:07:32	FM 25	Yeah, so, it's trained as social science and public policy academics. Yeah, I know. Everybody's got their different way of dividing things and grouping and all that. Yeah. That's interesting. And it makes sense with the more theoretical orientation versus the applied focus. Yeah. That's very interesting.
01:08:16	Interviewer	Yes
01:09:52	Interviewer	But does it help that your brother was...or he is a professional film maker, right?
01:09:58	FM 25	It helps a bit. He's pretty young, too. You know, I'm 28, he's 26, so, neither of us has extensive experience in anything. So, his connections are...you know, he has connections to young editors who he'd worked with but they just...You know, these people were just not producing the quality of stuff that we needed to get funds. We're going to have to pay for these folks and we're going to pay them, you know, top dollar. These people have given us like their discount rate but it's still super expensive. So, that's the reality of it.
01:10:34	Interviewer	Good luck with your project.
01:10:36	FM 25	Thank you.
01:10:38	Interviewer	I'm sure because what I have seen so far, you've done really well. Especially if you have started from scratch and this is your first project, you have done so well so far.
01:10:47	FM 25	Thank you so much, I really appreciate that, Sumanta. And yeah, I look forward to staying in touch. Actually, I have a phone conversation with the Al Jazeera network, up in like seven minutes. They want to (Overlapping Conversation).
01:11:00	Interviewer	Good luck, good luck. Yeah. Go ahead.
01:11:02	FM 25	Alright. Well, thanks so much, Sumanta. It was great talking. And you know, we'll be in touch via email, set up another time to Skype.
01:11:09	Interviewer	Sounds great. Yeah. Let's be in touch.
01:11:11	FM 25	Alright. Take care.
01:11:12	Interviewer	Take care. Bye.
01:11:13	FM 25	Bye.

[01.16.14]


[End of Audio]

Duration 71 minutes 13 seconds

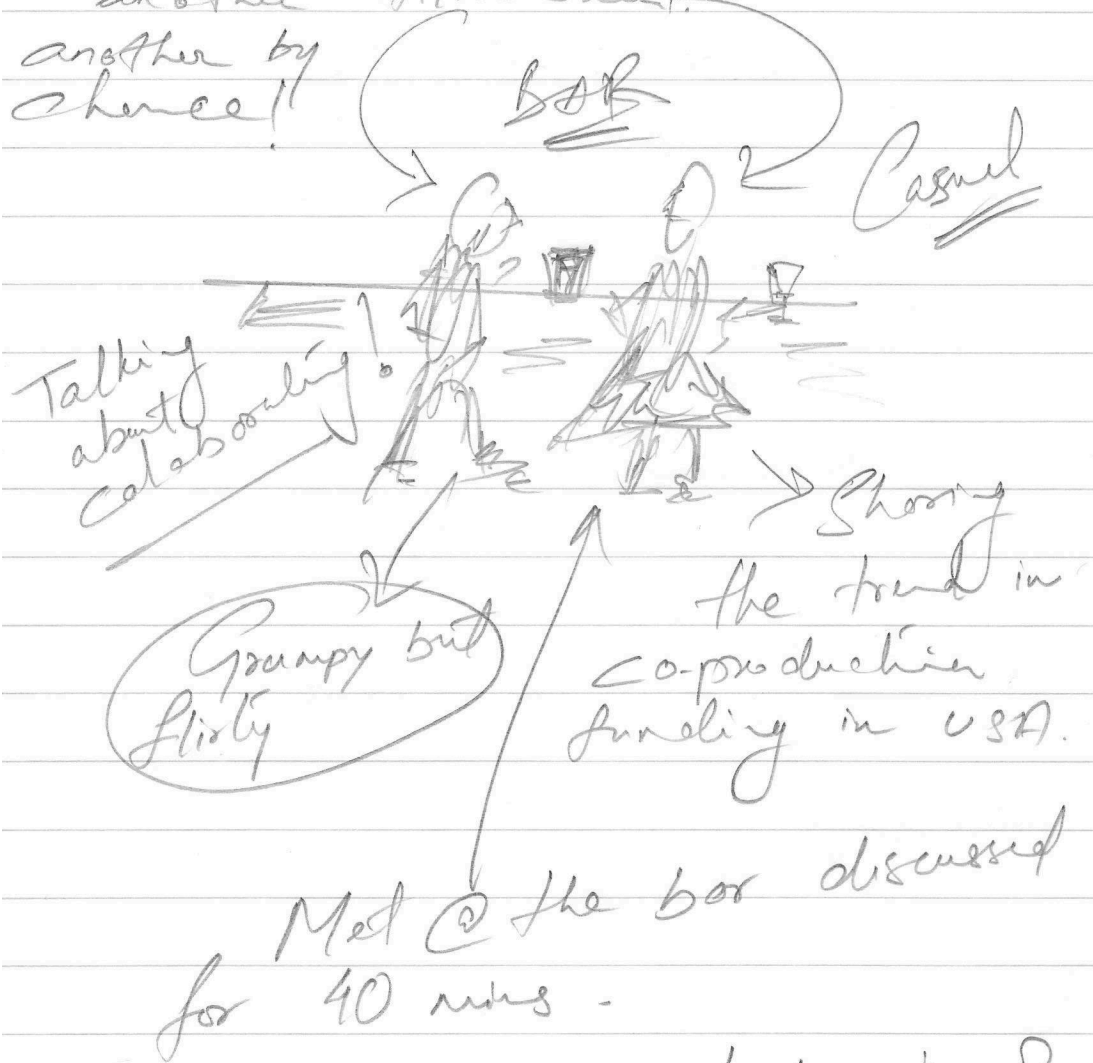
### 13. Appendix 3 - Sample Observation Notes



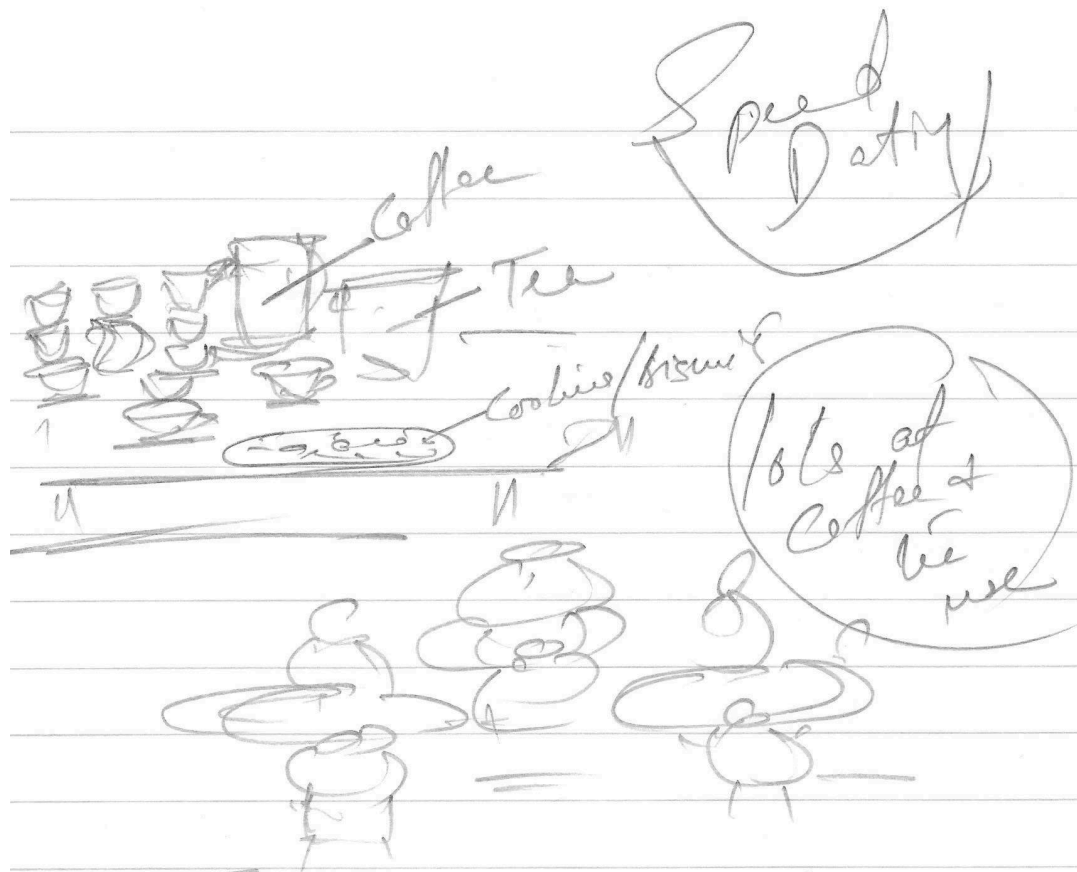
- Outside Limshaw screening filmshes & compressor chat about the film the watch
- Good to stoot talking with strangers.

- 
- Evening they met in social meeting. They ~~toget & talk like in social~~
  - Friendly talk. Others who did not meet befor- fosdy start.

Film maker went to see  
another filmmaker, but met  
another by  
chance!







@ The end people complain no coffee or tea left.

@ one man didn't eat all day to meet all courses @ the festival

@ A female hairdresser very upset with no restaurant in the venue for quick bite.

@ Big hairdresser very happy coz he got coffee.

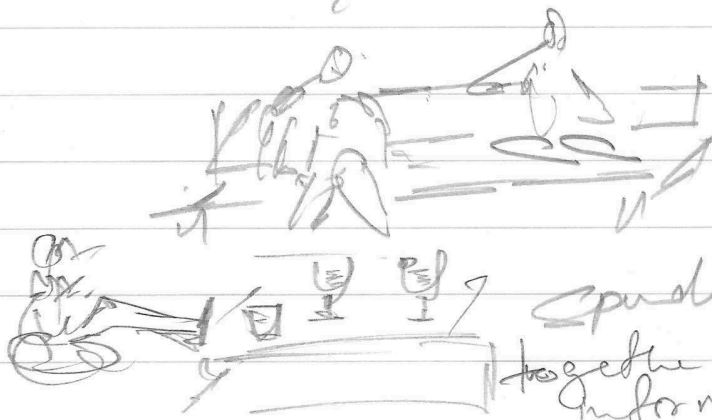


Commissioners not getting time  
to talk to other commissioners.

— One gave card to another —  
committee "make no chance to  
talk here — come to hotel"

— ~~Com~~ Organisers not  
doing much for commissioner  
to committee meetings!

Butterflies sitting  
& enjoying



spending more time  
together when  
informed;

relaxed.

laughing & enjoying

45 mins.

1680 mins

→ 2 hrs. came up  
with an interesting idea  
to a shot film on  
butterfly migration!