

Supporting Pro-Environmental Behaviour:
A Case Study of the Roberts Creek Earth Day Festival

by

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Abstract

The impending climate crisis creates a critical need to understand the complex social phenomena of human behaviour for the purpose of meaningful interventions to support and foster sustainable practices. Using a qualitative case study approach, the annual Earth Day Festival (the Festival) in the rural community of Roberts Creek, British Columbia, is examined for its supporting effect on pro-environmental behaviour (PEB). Using grounded theory, the research finds six themes identified as place, education, community, support, practice, and celebration. These themes, when mapped onto the belief, normative and control constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, demonstrate how the Festival successfully influences PEB at the individual and community levels. Explored also are three unique properties of the Festival that further support PEB change. These are diversity of experience, interconnection of interventions, and the supportive feedback of celebration. These properties emerge from the combination and interaction of the six themes.

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Introduction

How does the Roberts Creek Earth Day Festival support pro-environmental behavioural change in the rural community of the Sunshine Coast? It has become irrefutably clear that the way humans are living on the planet is having a dangerous impact on the sustainability of ecosystems, which can ultimately lead to significant harm for humans. Global examples are discussed in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's recent reports on the potential effects of climate change should we continue to introduce carbon into the atmosphere at a rate equal to or higher than we do now. These effects include severe impacts such as shifting climate patterns that will increase forest fires and the intensity and frequency of storm events, raise sea levels that displace millions of people, change the chemistry and temperature of the ocean and, in general, destabilize the ecosystem upon which humans rely for their continued existence (Allen et al., 2018).

People who know this are inspired and motivated to take action, such as hosting and participating in Earth Day events. In my community, the Roberts Creek Earth Day Festival (the Festival) has been held every year from 1990 to 2019. I decided to examine whether this festival advanced the concrete implementation of sustainability. To answer this question, I completed a case study, exploring the mechanisms of the Festival in depth. Essential to this case study research is drilling down in the context-specific area of the Sunshine Coast and examining if this community festival is successful in advancing pro-environmental behaviours, and if so, what features are essential for success. This thesis reflects what I found.

It is common to use the word "sustainability" when describing human action, political policy, environmental technology, or even philosophical approaches to resource management.

However, when I asked the research participants from this case study to define sustainability, they responded with a mix of hesitation and uncertainty. Several of them did cite the Brundtland Commission's definition (Emas, 2015) or a paraphrased version. However, no unified stipulative definition emerged. The closest approximation of sustainability emerged as the quality of the relationship between human beings and the planet. During the interviews, as I probed deeper into asking for concrete examples of sustainability, the degree of uncertainty in defining sustainability was consistent. It became clear that using sustainability in anything more than a broad context is not useful to describe specific actions.

While my research was initially focused on uncovering if the Festival had advanced the concrete implementation of sustainability, this ended up being a question that did not have a clear answer. However, what was clear was that the research participants were able to describe outcomes of the Festival, which had tangible actions considered to be 'sustainable', or pro-environmental actions, such as bike tune-ups and zero-waste initiatives.

In search of language that was more useful to convey the research findings, I discovered literature supporting pro-environmental behavioural change to be relevant. The field of pro-environmental behaviour (PEB) is broad and contains work from environmental psychology, community sociology, environmental economics, and community-based social marketing, to name a few.

Additionally, throughout the case study interviews, participants identified significant intangible experiences of importance. These intangible aspects coincided with much of the literature and modelling developed around PEB change. To explore these experiences, I used grounded theory and my deep involvement with the event organization and development over

five years. I identified six themes that are foundational to supporting the Festival. These six themes are place, education, community, support, practice, and celebration.

To investigate how these themes may work together to play a role in advancing PEB, I examined theories of behaviour change. There are many existing models of PEB change, and it is outside the scope of this research to address the entire breadth of those models and the included social models, economic models, and environmental psychology models. It is enough to say that, as Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) propose, there is not a single model that can encompass all the different dimensions of PEB change.

However, one famous and well-documented model, the theory of planned behaviour, emerged as having a framework in which the six themes could be mapped and offer theoretical explanations for their interactions with each other and their influences on PEB. These findings were exciting and provided a more in-depth insight into the themes through understanding them inside the context of a well-developed theory. This theoretical understanding brings insight and useful information as to why the Festival is a success and how it can be improved, and how the model can be shared with other communities.

The following sections explain the research context of the case study, the methods used to obtain the data, a discussion section that explores the six themes, and an analysis of how these themes interact with the theory of planned behaviour. I conclude the paper by examining how the Festival is more than the sum of its parts. I demonstrate how the Festival supports PEB in the rural community of the Sunshine Coast. I propose insights on three key elements of the Festival: diversity, interconnections, and celebrations. Finally, I summarize recommendations for future research and approaches for increasing the Festival's impact.

Research Context

This case study research seeks to understand the social phenomena of the Festival and its impacts on supporting PEB change in the rural community of Roberts Creek and the greater area of the Lower Sunshine Coast.

Geographically, the Festival takes place in Roberts Creek, which is located on the Lower Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, Canada. Physically the Sunshine Coast is divided into two areas separated by the Hotham Sound and connected by a vehicle and passenger ferry. These areas are commonly referred to as the Lower and Upper Sunshine Coast. The Upper Sunshine Coast is governed regionally by the Powell River District and the Lower Sunshine Coast by the Sunshine Coast Regional District. The Lower Sunshine Coast is located on the mainland of southwest BC to the northwest of Vancouver and east of Vancouver Island. The Lower Sunshine Coast is a peninsula bounded by the Salish Sea (the section formerly known as the Georgia Strait), Howe Sound, and Sechelt Inlet. The Lower Sunshine Coast is not connected by road to Vancouver and is only accessible by ferry, marine vessel, or aircraft. Although technically a peninsula, the Lower Sunshine Coast functions practically as an island and is often mistaken for one by visitors.

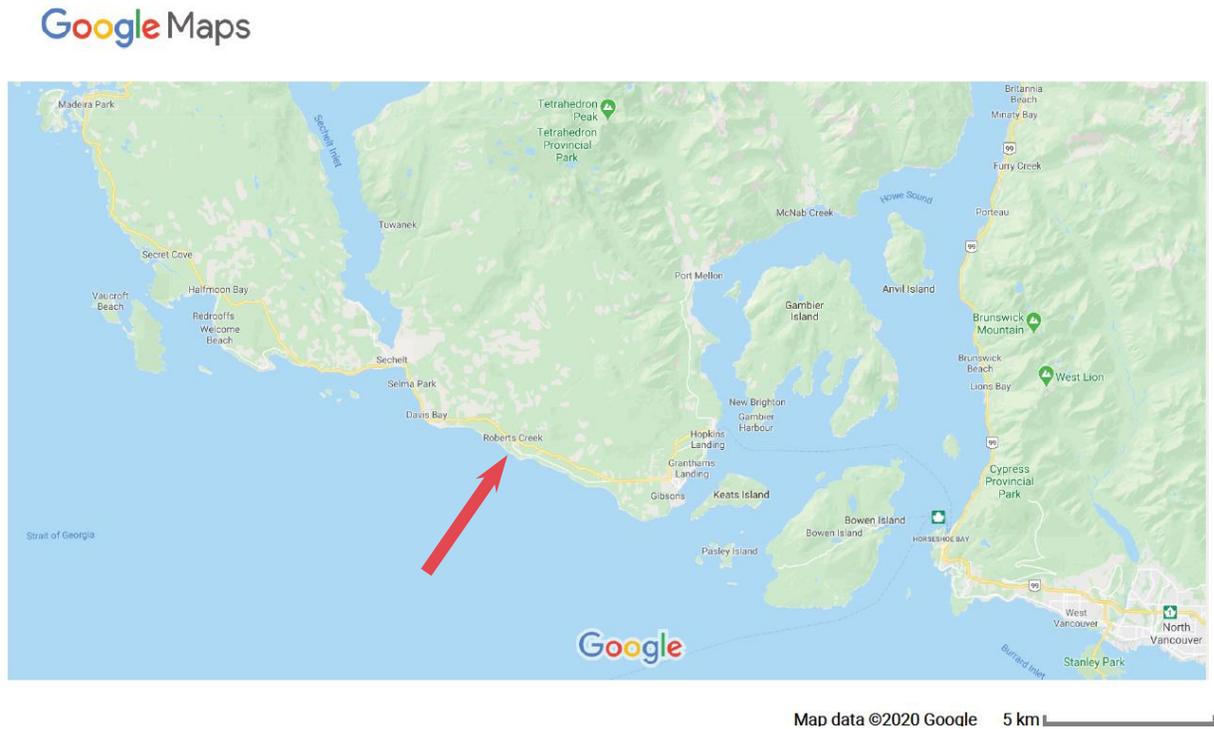


Figure 1. Map of the Lower Sunshine Coast.

Historically, the celebration of the civic phenomenon Earth Day started in 1970 and marked the beginning of a massive environmental movement. Today Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22nd each year, typically as a one-day event, although it first took place throughout the spring months of 1970 with millions of individuals across the United States honouring the environment. Earth Day was a call to action, addressing the unbalanced relationship between humans and nature (Rome, 2010). It raised awareness that the natural environment and the ecological health of the planet were at risk. Senator Gaylord Nelson from Wisconsin was the originator of the Earth Day concept. Nelson envisioned national teach-ins, with collaboration from the government, students, and grassroots organizations. Earth Day then, much like now, was constructed around supporting education, awareness, the natural

environment, a passion for nature, and engaging citizens in a call to action. This movement has captured the hearts of grassroots organizations (Rome, 2010).

Today Earth Day is celebrated in over 192 countries, and as of 2014, the Earth Day Network had over 22,000 partners. It is estimated that close to 1 billion people participate in Earth Day annually, which makes it the largest civic event and secular holiday in the world (Dasu, Rajendran, Sawkar, & Rao, 2014). Earth Day Canada (official organizing non-profit body, not associated with the Roberts Creek Earth Day Festival) President Jed Golberg said:

Earth Day Canada was formed in 1990 to coordinate and promote Earth Day activities across Canada. It was really the first opportunity for all Canadians to publicly express their concern for the health of our planet. Up until this point, environmental issues were dominated by government, scientists and environmental organizations. We recognized early on that we were in a unique position to engage the public, so we began developing our year-round programs to involve all Canadians in environmental education and action. (Anonymous, 2010, p. 53)

The first Sunshine Coast Earth Day Festival was held in a grassroots fashion in 1990, with no formal connection to the Earth Day Canada organization. During the first two years, it took place in the Sunshine Coast town of Gibsons, at the central shopping hub, Sunnycrest Mall, and was called the Sunshine Coast Earth Day Festival. The event was held inside during the first year, and in the second year it was moved outdoors to the newly opened Coast Recycling Depot, created by the Sunshine Coast Recycling and Processing Society (SCRAPS). The Festival's founder and first coordinator, Participant H, decided to move the Festival in 1992. The selected location was Cliff Gilker Park, a large flat area that includes soccer and baseball fields and is surrounded by coastal Douglas fir forests. Cliff Gilker Park is in the unincorporated area of

Roberts Creek, also known as Area D in the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD). The SCR D owns and manages the park (SCR D, n.d.; Participant H, personal communication, February 16, 2017).

The Festival took place at Cliff Gilker Park for several years. In 1996 it moved to the Roberts Creek Pier, which is now known as the Roberts Creek Pier Park and is managed by the SCR D. The Festival's move to the pier coincided with the removal of unsightly propane tanks that once served as fuel storage facilities.

The celebration of Earth Day on the Sunshine Coast has taken place for 30 consecutive years. In its current form, the Festival engages over 50 different organizations, 5 or 6 musical acts, more than 50 volunteers, and over 2000 visitors in a single day. The event often includes notable environmental organizations, speakers such as local politicians or members of local First Nations, workshops, and activities. The location of the Roberts Creek Pier is a stunning natural landscape with a sizeable salmon-bearing creek, which opens into the Salish Sea. The Park is accessible by a road ending in a cul-de-sac called the "Mandala." The "Mandala" is celebrated at the annual Manna Festival held each July, during which a large mandala is collaboratively painted on the cul-de-sac by community members. See Figure 2 for reference to the Roberts Creek Pier Park.

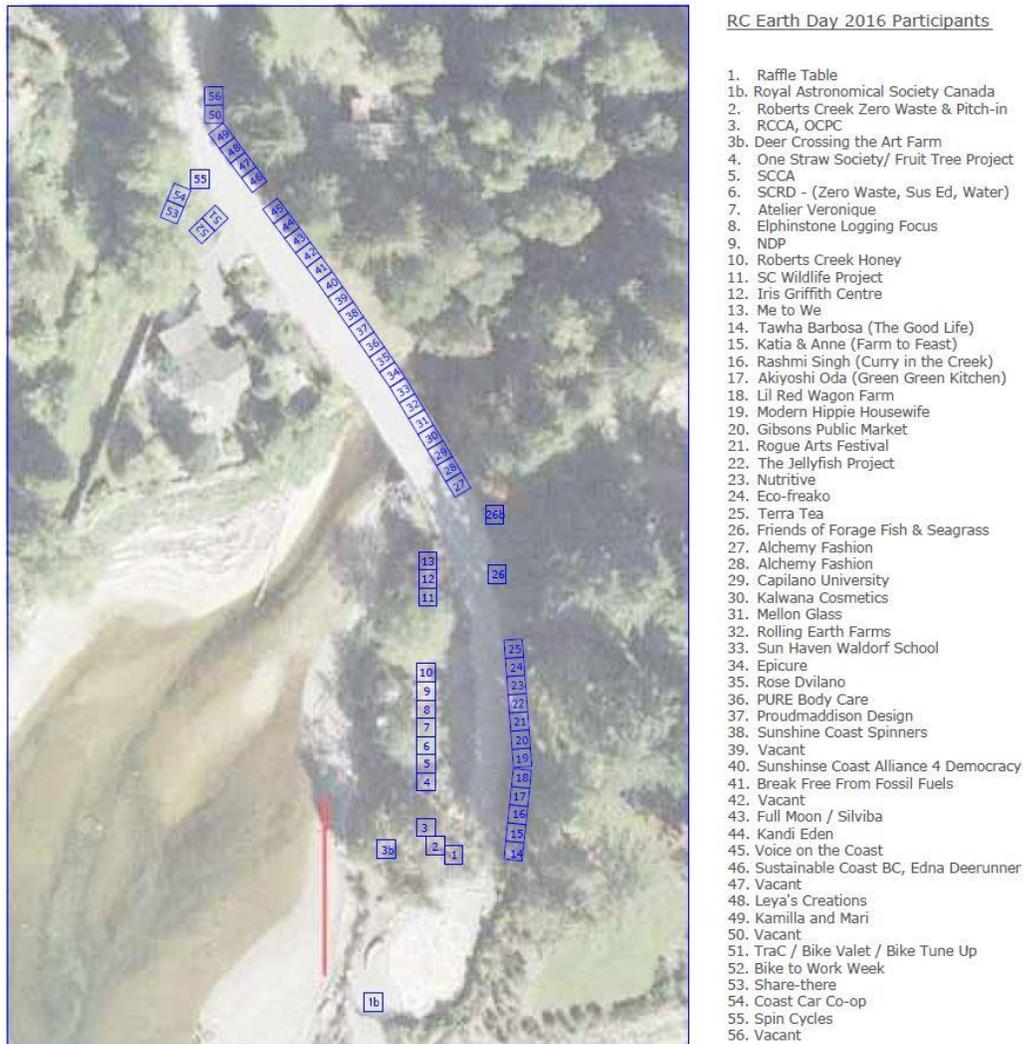


Figure 2. Roberts Creek Pier Park and Earth Day Festival layout.

The original coordinator was this study’s Participant H, who organized the first 12 years of the Festival from 1990 to 2001. The Festival has evolved under different leadership. I was Festival coordinator from 2015 to 2019, under the title of Community Sustainability Coordinator for the Roberts Creek Community Association.

During Participant H’s tenure, the event was characterized as a grassroots movement and had a strong advocacy context, seeking to make targeted environmental change. Some examples include recycling, freeing orca whales in captivity, and preventing logging in the local

watersheds. The financial, municipal, and corporate support for the Festival was virtually non-existent in the early years. This lack of support was intentional as Participant H chose not to follow a corporate or business event model, choosing instead to focus on grassroots participation. To support the Festival financially, Participant H collected donations, sold raffle tickets, and rented table space. For much of Participant H's tenure, using the Internet and digital media was limited, and most communications took place by telephone and face-to-face conversation (Participant H, personal communication, February 16, 2017).

After several interim coordinators, Participant B took over from 2007 to 2014. Under her leadership, the event continued to evolve as she implemented procedures and created standard documentation supporting efficiency, thereby increasing the scale that could be managed by a coordinator. Participant B noted that, during her tenure, the environmental movement had become more mainstream (Participant B, personal communication, January 25, 2015).

During Participant B's tenure, the SCRD and the community of the Sunshine Coast experienced growth and change, which are still occurring today, moving from a less regulated rural governance to a more formal bureaucracy. An example of this increasing bureaucracy was a requirement from the SCRD for the Festival coordinator to obtain a special event permit. This permit included limitations and requirements for the event, such as food vendor licenses, transportation plans, security, and emergency response protocols. In response, Participant B had begun to apply for rural grant-in-aid funding from the SCRD to help offset the cost of the event and to resource new initiatives (Participant B, personal communication, March 15, 2015).

One example of such an initiative was a grant to produce short films created by students from the Roberts Creek Community Elementary School. These films were shown at the Roberts Creek Library, which is in the downtown core of Roberts Creek and is a Festival venue. The

limit of the grant was \$500 for non-profits that were not registered under the BC Societies Act (SCRD, 2015).

In late 2014, Participant B made a request at a meeting of the Roberts Creek Official Community Plan Committee, of which she was the secretary, and I was a member, asking to pass on the coordination of the Festival. I volunteered, and we came to an agreement that I would undertake coordinating the Festival for a minimum of several years. We also agreed upon a transition year where Participant B would assist me in planning. I began co-coordinating in January of 2015, and we hosted the Festival on Sunday, April 24, 2015. The co-coordination supported my transition and training, ensuring that the quality of the event was maintained. Participant B introduced me to her systems for organizing participants, advertising, promotion, raffle fundraising, and event day coordinating. In March 2015, I wrote a grant under her guidance as a non-registered non-profit for the 2016 Earth Day Festival to the SCR. The grant application for \$500 was successful.

In 2016, after consulting with other similar registered non-profit organizations, I believed it could be valuable for the Festival to be a registered non-profit. However, it did not make sense for a one-day event to undertake the significant bureaucratic steps required to become a society. Instead, I proposed to the Roberts Creek Community Association (RCCA) board that I become their Community Sustainability Coordinator. I would be retained for \$60 per month to help support grant writing, consult with the board around sustainability issues, organize the Festival, and for the year 2016, coordinate a second community outdoor festival event called Creek Daze. In exchange for my services, the RCCA would allow me to bring the Festival under the umbrella of their organization. I created a sub-committee of volunteers to help run the Festival that would now be a project of the RCCA.

The adoption of the Festival was a straightforward transition as the RCCA had long been unofficially supporting the event. Examples of their support included providing access to equipment, stages, tables, chairs, and the free use of the community hall. The main benefit in aligning the non-registered organization under the umbrella of the RCCA was to provide a stable management structure that allowed for growth, including the ability to fundraise under the registered non-profit society of the RCCA.

I have a deep love for the community of Roberts Creek and the Sunshine Coast. My bias then, as a former coordinator to the RCCA, is firmly embedded. I officially retired as the Festival coordinator in May 2019. Over the five years that I organized the event, I received approximately \$1000 in compensation for approximately 800 hours of work.

Further, as a resident of the Sunshine Coast, I have a relationship with hundreds of “Coasters.” It is not possible for me to be objective in this research process, and I do not feel it is necessary. In approaching this research, my design was to employ the results and findings to improve the future impact of the Festival. What was important is that I maintained self-awareness throughout the research process, allowing me to record participants as they intended to be heard. To help with this process, I practiced mindfulness, meditation, and journaling.

The geographical context of this research primarily focuses on the rural community of Roberts Creek, BC. However, there is a large portion of secondary focus on the adjacent communities of Gibsons and Sechelt, with the sphere of influence weakening in the tertiary field of Pender Harbour and, lastly, Egmont. It is unclear if the West Howe Sound area is affected by the event. This research does not investigate the impact beyond the Lower Sunshine Coast.

The governance areas and their corresponding population, which may be impacted by the Festival, are indicated in the following Table 1, derived from the 2016 Census (SCRD, 2016).

Table 1

Sunshine Coast Population Distribution

SCRD Area	Name	Population	Area (sq. km)	Governance Type
Area A	Egmont & Pender Harbour	2,624	1091	SCRD
Area B	Halfmoon Bay	2,726	1,271	SCRD
Area D	Roberts Creek	3,241	143.6	SCRD
Area E	Elphinstone	3,664	21	SCRD
Area F	West Howe Sound	2,043	381	SCRD
-	District of Sechelt	10,216	39	Municipal
-	Town of Gibsons	4,605	4.33	Municipal
-	Sechelt Indian Government District	671	10.81	First Nation Independent Government

Note. SCR D, Sunshine Coast Regional District.

In summary, the Festival, which is at the heart of this case study research, started in 1990 on the Sunshine Coast. The Festival focuses on promoting environmental initiatives and is a free, volunteer-driven community event. I was the coordinator of the event for five years (2015–2019) and am embedded in the project.

Methodology

Understanding what influences individuals and communities to adopt PEB is critical to establishing frameworks that support change. I identified a variety of methods that would provide rich and valid data. The primary method of information gathering included a case study approach, using semi-structured, open-ended interviews of purposefully selected participants. Grounded theory and triangulation were also applied to data coding and analysis. I focused on personal reflexivity throughout the study. The study has limitations and biases which are identified. The following sections explore the applied methods.

Participant Observation

I moved to the Sunshine Coast in December of 1999. For the last seven years, I have rented a home on a one-hectare property in Upper Roberts Creek at the base of Mount Elphinstone. I am embedded in the community socially through my family (children), and I am currently the Director of Development and Programs at the Gibsons Marine Education Centre Society in Gibsons, BC.

As the coordinator of the Roberts Creek Earth Day Festival (2015–2019), I was able to observe five annual events in detail. Coordinating the Festival provided in-depth, lived observations of community. These included relationships with the regional government, environmental organizations, green and livelihood entrepreneurs, community groups, musicians, media representatives, local businesses, volunteers, and eventgoers.

Case Study

As this research targets a specific event that takes place annually, I chose the case study approach (Yin, 2017) as my primary methodology. Case studies are well suited to providing detailed, descriptive research into a single phenomenon. The case study can be used to look at a single phenomenon, not to prove a hypothesis, but to gain in-depth understanding. This case study provides context-dependent information on how the Festival supports PEB change on the Sunshine Coast. This study provides in-depth knowledge that can be used towards generating expert knowledge as “context-dependent knowledge and experience are at the very heart of expert activity” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 221). This knowledge and learning can support other rural communities by sharing expertise to help develop community engagement activities that positively impact PEB change.

The case study is an ideal research method for social sciences, in this case, by providing practical knowledge of how individual, organizational, and community behaviour can be influenced to adopt pro-environmental actions in a rural community setting. Thus, the phenomenon of the Festival is well suited to a case study approach. The Festival has complex social interactions, a rich cultural history, undetermined mechanisms of function, and known importance to the community.

The opportunity of studying the Festival goes beyond the attempt to prove something, as it is an opportunity to learn about many interdependent and connected experiences as they pertain to behavioural change. The intense observation of this event in a case study format brings forth information that can create a critical case (Flybbjerg, 2006, p. 229), one that has strategic importance concerning a societal problem, in this case having rural communities engage citizens in PEB. Based on my experience of the Festival and the community, I propose that the Festival is a critical case, as it is “most likely” to influence PEB (Flybbjerg, 2006, p. 231).

One of the criticisms of the case study is that the researcher will bias the results by influencing the research to show their preconceived notions (Flybbjerg, 2006, p. 234). While this concern is valid, the benefits of embedded research are significant and outweigh the criticism provided that the researcher can maintain adequate self-awareness. As both researcher and Festival coordinator, I had the benefit of applying contextual learning to research. My embeddedness supports the achievement of rich data. Flybbjerg (2006) proposes: “the advantage of the case study is that it can ‘close in’ on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” and “the most advanced form of understanding is achieved when researchers place themselves within the context being studied” (pp. 235–236). Both proposals are true in this research.

Research Participant Selection

The Festival is remarkably diverse. An individual can connect to the Festival in many ways. It has considerable reach and legacy in the community, having been a successful event with decades of consecutive celebration. Commonly, individuals participate by representing an organization and hosting an information booth. These organizations have environmental focuses and range across a broad cross-section of the community. Livelihood and green business entrepreneurs showcase their environmental products. Government agencies engage with the public, presenting their environmental policy and bringing awareness to regulations. Non-profits advocate for their cause and enlist volunteers. Food vendors sell their planet-friendly products. Artists participate in promoting their wares connected with environmental themes. Local municipal and provincial politicians share their environmental campaigns. First Nations representatives often ceremonially open the Festival as it takes place on what is commonly considered the boundary between the Squamish Nation (Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw) and the Sechelt Nation (shishá7lh). Other ways an individual can connect to the event include speaking or playing music at the main stage, running a workshop or volunteering in a variety of different roles to plan, coordinate, and contribute on the day.

To select appropriate research participants, I began by identifying a group of individuals representing a diverse range of participation in the Festival. These individuals were chosen to represent four target groups purposively sampled (Draucker, Martsoff, Ross, & Rusk, 2007) from the Festival, including organizers, volunteers, local municipal government officials, and event participants. Through my embedded research perspective, I was generally aware of participants' backgrounds before requesting their participation. This awareness included details about their vocations, partners, children, lifestyle choices, age, gender, history, and their relationship to the

community and the Festival. This understanding allowed me to select a group of participants who had participated in multiple different ways with the Festival, thus providing strong representation and triangulation of experience. The final research participants selected came from a shortlist of 16 individuals; 11 of the 16 participants contacted agreed to participate in the case study. All the participants were full-time residents of the Sunshine Coast, with the majority residing in Roberts Creek. The participants varied in gender, age, and the number of years participating in the Festival. Participant characteristics relevant to the Festival research have been summarized below in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant Information

Relevant Background	Participant	Volunteer	Visitor
Area D Director (Roberts Creek) for 2 terms	Yes – speaker	Yes	Yes
Earth Day Festival organizer for 8 years, works at Roberts Creek Community School	Yes – principal event coordinator	Yes	Yes
Chair of Official Community Plan Committee for Roberts Creek for two terms (4 years), DFO Education Coordinator Sunshine Coast	Yes –organization booth	No	Yes
Business owner in Roberts Creek, Raffle Coordinator for the Earth Day Festival	No	Yes	Yes
Area D Director (Roberts Creek), Sustainability Educator	Yes – speaker and organization booth	No	Yes
Business owner in Roberts Creek, organizer of transportation hub groups	Yes	Yes	Yes
SCRD employee (Sustainability and Water Management)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Originator and organizer, first 12 years	Yes	Yes	Yes
President, Roberts Creek Community Association; Vice-Chair Official Community Plan Committee	No	Yes	Yes
Festival photographer, on the Land Use Planning Committee	Yes	Yes	Yes
Program Coordinator, Sunshine Coast Conservation Association	Yes	No	Yes

Semi-Structured Interviews

The primary method used to gather data in this research was semi-structured, open-ended interviews. I chose this interview format because, combined with participant observation, interviews “allow the researcher to understand the meanings that everyday activities hold for people” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 112). The interviews consisted of asking open-ended questions (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey,

2005; Dilley, 2000) following the interview guide, which was developed based on information gaps arising from the initial literature review conducted for my research proposal.

These methods were used to provide the rich data that would prove meaningful to the specific context of the Festival and the community of Roberts Creek and the Sunshine Coast at large. I reasoned that because the research participants were carefully selected to be a purposive sample with experience and connections to the event, they would be able to provide insightful answers in an open-ended format. The semi-structured, open-ended interviews allowed for more spontaneity between interviewer and participants (Marvasti, 2004). This interviewing format has the advantage of being focused enough to elicit in-depth responses from participants yet structured enough so that the conversation does not stray off-topic (Given, 2008). As well, this format allows interviewees to be guided both consciously and unconsciously by the details and themes that are most important to them.

To support the participants in feeling comfortable and relaxed in the process, I travelled to their homes or a location of their choosing. When I interviewed the subjects, I left space for them to answer questions as they wished without directing the answer. I allowed adequate time for responses. To mitigate biases, details of responses from other participants were not shared. I strove to be friendly, open, and kind, providing a safe atmosphere to speak freely. Additionally, I previously knew the participants at minimum as friendly acquaintances, both in and outside of the context of Festival organizing.

I audio-recorded each interview and took notes by hand while staying engaged with the participant. The interviews ranged from 20 to 90 minutes. I asked many clarifying questions. In general, some of the questions I had scripted were not entirely clear and could be improved for future research. Some questions could have been interpreted in multiple ways, and some of the

questions had supplementary questions embedded in them; for example, question no. 4 “Are there elements, attitude, character, and situation of the people of Roberts Creek that make this community and its engagement with Earth Day that stand out to you as being significant towards implementing sustainability?” In these cases, I took the time to unpack them. I maintained the same order of questions for objectivity and continuity. Lastly, I offered a way for the participants to connect and share further should a thought arise, although this did not happen. I completed the interviews between June 2016 and November 2016.

Interview Protocol

I selected 17 questions focused on four key areas: sustainability, community, mechanisms, and personal experience. The questions focused on sustainability sought to explore whether the Festival made concrete advancements of sustainability in the community. During the process, I found sustainability too difficult for the participants to define, and the research has been reframed to focus on exploring if the Festival supported individuals and the community in adopting PEB. The questions focusing on community looked to explore the connection of people, culture, and the geographical landscape of Roberts Creek and the Sunshine Coast and their roles in making the Festival a success in influencing PEB. The questions focusing on the mechanics or nature of the event looked to find data on how it worked and how it could be improved. The questions focusing on personal experience captured the emotional and felt experience of the individuals: their attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Data Saturation and Analysis

The final research consisted of 11 interviews, which I conducted in person. By the sixth interview, I started to hear many of the same themes repeated and, by the eighth, felt I was

headed towards data saturation. After completing the 11 interviews, I felt confident that through the research process, data saturation was achieved (Glaser, 2002).

By November 2017, the 11 interviews had been transcribed verbatim into written text. I then approached the analysis of the data guided by the Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) framework for case study research using a grounded theory approach. The five steps of their framework include familiarization with the material, identification of a thematic framework, indexing the data, charting according to the framework, and then mapping the interpretations. My process of data analysis included reviewing each interview three times. First, I read the interviews and absorbed the information without looking for patterns. Then I highlighted key points and interesting observations. Next, I reviewed in finer detail the themes within the individual interviews and noted patterns. I assembled these patterns as general observations. I then collated these observations into aggregated groupings of sub-elements. I organized these sub-elements into six themes. Finally, I contrasted the six themes within the transcripts and identified supporting data. I captured and used this data in the form of quotations and notes as the foundation for analysis. During the analysis I mapped these themes onto an existing theoretical framework. Deepening the experience of data gathering and analysis and the process of review and investigation, I coordinated the Festival in 2017, 2018, and 2019 and was able to reflect upon the data while reliving the experience.

After this process was complete, I had identified six themes that I classified as place, education, community, support, practice, and celebration. I will examine these themes further in the discussion and analysis section.

Grounded Theory

I used the grounded theory approach in analyzing the data in search of a theory connecting the identified themes, as is a common technique used in social sciences (Gibbs, 2007; Seale, 2001). Grounded theory assumes that social science theory can be built from data collected systematically in a social setting (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which is well suited to a case study using an inductive, qualitative approach. It has been defined as a “theoretical rendition of reality” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 22). Unlike many other research traditions, the process of a grounded theory study is relatively descriptive.

Grounded theory helps the researcher find emergent themes that arise without looking for predetermined hypotheses and ideas (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach of openness in social science studies helps to understand the human condition by allowing the multiple viewpoints of stakeholders to be captured. It provides a means to capture a spectrum of perspectives, which was particularly important for this research as it sought to understand a social phenomenon and its impact on advancing PEB for the first time.

An additional alignment of grounded theory to this research is through the iterative examination of data from practice to theory. This was possible through my role as a coordinator of the Festival during the ongoing research process. As a result, the grounded theory approach produced a useful result by identifying a pre-existing theory that fit the data presented, which was completely unknown to me at the beginning of the process. The theory identified was the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). My initial ignorance of the TPB removed the risk of the data being biased by trying to fit the data into a predetermined construct.

Triangulation

To arrive at reliable and valid data, I used the research strategy of triangulation (Golafshani, 2003). Typically used in qualitative research, triangulation helps to converge or complement results in research. It does so by providing a kaleidoscopic depiction of a phenomenon (Flick, 2007), where a convergence of perspectives from multiple viewpoints is achieved; it helps reduce bias and subjectivity. Interestingly, in this research, as the participants selected for an interview had often interacted with the Festival in many different capacities, there was an additional layer of self-triangulation. They were able to see the event from different perspectives and to thus have more reliable and valid insights. Triangulation helps support confidence in the data achieved.

Reflexivity

My focus during the research process was to stay grounded and use a mindfulness approach while listening. The mindfulness training I have received has been through medical doctors who are both general practitioners and certified in health coaching and mindfulness. I find the techniques of body centering and groundedness to be extremely useful to support active listening. Combining this approach with an observation of my reactivities and triggers, I worked to hear what the participants were saying, and less to hear how I was interpreting their words. This process is by no means perfect or completely objective. It may be intangible and challenging to prove.

During the interviews, when unclear as to a participant's meaning, I would use a feedback method to ask for more clarity. For example, to clarify a comment, I would ask, "What I think I heard you say was _____," to check if their comments matched my interpretation. With more conceptual topics, like sustainability, change, and influence, these were nuanced

conversations with qualitative elements as distinct from quantitative information such as how many times they had been to an event or what their role was in participating, and therefore more complex to capture.

With my limited interview experience, there were likely limitations to the reflexivity I employed. However, given the broader context of the research, the information achieved is still by a large measure accurate and representative of the community, event, and outcomes.

Research Biases and Assumptions

As both the researcher and the coordinator of the Festival, I am deeply biased and embedded. I have a stake in the success of this research and the Festival. It is worth noting here that my primary assumption before commencing this research was that the Festival advanced sustainability, a belief that I shifted during the research, as described in the introduction. Now I believe the event advances PEB on the Sunshine Coast. I reasoned that, from the number of organizations that participated and the number of visitors that attended, it must be meaningful. I believed that the diversity of organizations participating, and the goodwill expressed by all those who participated, correlated with advancing sustainability or PEB in the community and felt it important to investigate how.

Study Limitations

One of the study limitations is that this research focuses on a single case in a small area with minimal resources (financial, capacity, and time). Another limitation is that the research reflects a changing community over a temporal period. Conclusions about the event, especially regarding historical context, may not extrapolate in the future as the social actors in the community are subject to change. Notwithstanding this, at the time of the research (June 2014–April 2019), I had been working to systemize an organizational model that would retain the

knowledge capital carried by the organizers and coordinators to stabilize and develop the event through time, and I believe these structural changes let the research generalize to other similar smaller communities.

Discussion

The following section focuses on exploring themes derived from the research. The rationale supporting the selection of each theme is presented. Quotations from the interview participants are used for evidence. The quotations are analyzed for additional insights. Relevant references to existing fields of academic research as they may pertain to this case study are also included.

It was challenging to find a connection between the broad themes and how they worked together under the umbrella of the Festival as a mechanism to support PEB in the community. In attempting to find the clues as to how the Festival advances PEB, I began by studying each theme's own specific literature as directed by the title I had chosen. However, with broad themes such as place, education, and community, these concepts quickly eclipsed the scope of this thesis. Bringing the research back under control was a significant challenge but was necessary to ensure the research could contribute something meaningful when completed. In that regard, the limitations of the following discussion section are to present the reasons that support my selection of each theme and not to explore their individual fields in depth.

After codifying the data, I identified six distinct themes. I propose that these themes are the mechanisms essential to the success of the Festival in advancing PEB. In the process of grounded theory, I self-identified a title for the themes. These can be reclassified with academic language pertaining to the field of psychology under the framework of the TPB to be addressed in the analysis section. The themes under my broad titles are as follows: place, education,

community, support, practice, and celebration. Each theme is composed of many smaller sub-elements or details, but it is helpful to put them into larger groupings to facilitate discussion. The six broad themes work not only in isolation but also through collaboration and connection with each other. I believe connection is a key to the success of the Festival and an important element in providing the individual inspiration needed for change. I will discuss the element of connection and the depth of its importance in the conclusion. For the sake of discussion of the themes, it is useful to look at how their characteristics manifest.

Place

The theme of place was not one I had anticipated; in fact, there is not a specific question in the interview script that mentions place, or sense of place. However, the theme of place was recurring and one that deserves consideration in regards to the impact of the event and how it supports PEB changes. As I reviewed the interviews, I focused my definition of place on the role played by the physical location of the event, the characteristics of the location, and the chronological time the event takes place. By “chronological time,” I refer to both the event taking place in April of each year and the cyclical nature of its being an annual celebration. As with all of the themes, there are deep interconnections. The sense of place overlaps with other themes and does not stand alone. It connects to the themes of celebration and community strongly. The theme of place acknowledges the important wheres, whens, and hows of the Festival’s success.

The idea and interpretation of the sense of place appear in a variety of academic literature. Stedman summarizes “that a sense of place encompasses an emotional bond that develops between people and their environment” (2003, p. 672). He further makes a distinction that sense of place comes from both attachments to the place and satisfaction with the place.

Stedman states “One may be satisfied with the setting but not particularly attached, and the reverse may also be true. Sense of place is therefore conceived of as encompassing meanings, attachment, and satisfaction” (2003, p.672). While the definition of sense of place is not agreed upon by all (Williams & Stewart, 1998), for the sake of discussing how it impacts PEB change through the Festival, it can be agreed that it is connected to the perception of human experiences, is deeply involved within social contexts, and is influenced by the natural landscape. Williams and Stewart (1998) provide a simplified definition of a sense of place as a “collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values and feelings that individuals or groups associate with a particular locality” (p. 19). However, they argue that place attachment and a sense of place is more complex, contextual, and holistic than that. Although this research is not an in-depth treatment on the field of sense of place, it is useful to examine how the experience of connection to place impacts those who participate in the Festival.

The research, in general, found that most individuals felt the physical location of the venue for the event was significant. They cited the natural beauty of the Roberts Creek Pier Park, and there was a strong response that the aesthetic beauty of the venue leads the community and individuals to enjoy the event in a way that is significant to them. The interviewees discussed the feeling of connection to nature that emerged through the presence of the ocean, wind, waves, trees, and wildlife. They expressed a reverence and a sense of awe or spiritual feeling associated with being outside in the spring and feeling the awakening of the environment. Also, many found that the location played a role in inspiring them to act environmentally; they felt a desire to change their behaviours through a reminder of the presence of nature. Interconnected with this is the combined momentum felt by the number of people celebrating nature together through

music, food, art, and education. The outdoor natural environment, the raw elements of rain, wind, sun, and clouds, create a moving and visceral experience of aliveness that is undeniable.

Several quotations from the participants demonstrate the impact of the physical location. The following two quotations summarize this: “I think it’s a gorgeous place with the mountains, freshwater; environmentally, it’s beautiful. Yeah, it’s unique. It’s small enough that I think people feel really connected here and we know each other” (Participant B, Personal Communication, June 18, 2016) and “It’s a great place to, I mean, the pier and the road leading down to it, and the whole area is a great place to, location-wise, to celebrate Earth Day” (Participant F, Personal Communication, July 4, 2016).

As mentioned earlier, the Festival was not always held in such a beautiful setting. One research participant noted this change:

The difference between an Earth Day here, down by the river, and up in Cliff Gilker was significant. The people were the same. The difference in culture, certainly the unique feel was the same, but it still has a difference. It still had an obvious difference in the event when it was there versus where it is now. (Participant C, personal communication, June 22, 2016)

In this last quotation, we can see a glimpse of what Stedman (2003) refers to as the distinction between attachment and satisfaction. Stedman writes in the context of the sense of place, arguing that some believe this sense only comes from social construction and the prescribed meaning placed on a space by humans, while others say the natural landscape creates the experience for people and gives rise to sense of place. I would say that both are true for the Festival. The physical place is naturally beautiful, and the cultural and social history and meaning of the place are held in the hearts of those who visit; this deepens the experience and its

connection to themselves and to the landscape. It is worth noting that while there was already existing attachment to place in the Roberts Creek Pier Park, after the removal of the unsightly propane fuel storage tanks, the increased satisfaction of place encouraged the Festival to move there. While I do not attempt to quantify this value, I think that it is worthy of consideration for the generalizability and sharing of knowledge to other rural communities in duplicating successful experiences, that the greater the connection one can feel to the sense of space, the more they may be inspired and moved to operate in pro-environmental ways.

Education

All research participants cited that they gained meaningful and significant environmental education from the Festival. The connection of the Festival to education is clear; the sub-elements identified to create the theme were awareness, exposure, sharing, and learning. We know education plays a role in many behaviour models, often as the first step in linear models. While the exact location of education in a model framework is debated, some form of construct related to education or awareness is ultimately present (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Regardless of the placement of education in the order of operations for behaviour change, the necessity of education as an intervention for PEB change is apparent. The research interview data show that the Festival plays a significant role in educating the participants.

Participants emphasized elevated awareness and educational qualities of the Festival for themselves and visitors. Specifically, they referenced experiences gained through the Festival, such as exposure to and learning about new initiatives, ideas, technologies, community groups, organizations, and societies that help address environmental challenges. The participants were in consensus that, through education, the Festival created a positive environmental impact. They also mentioned the diversity of organizations focused on different scales, including individual,

local, provincial, federal, and global scales. Some focused on a specific project at a specific time, like stopping the Site C Dam. Some had a strong activism focus on targeting corporations like Monsanto. Others provided information about initiatives like the 2 Degrees Institute and some more local initiatives that are less environmentally focused but have a social sustainability aspect, like Voices on the Coast, that work to attract and retain residents under age 40 to the Sunshine Coast. An example of the diversity of organizations participating in the Festival can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Roberts Creek Earth Day Festival Participants 2018

Booth No.	Organization Name	Type
1	Roberts Creek Community Association	Non-profit
2	Roberts Creek Community Elementary School Garden	Education
3	Sunshine Coast in Transition	Non-profit
4	Sunshine Coast Regional District	Government
5	Salish Soils (Environmental) Inc.	Corporate
6	Waste Management Inc.	Corporate
7	Strawless Coast Campaign & Bee Kind	Vendor
8	Modern Hippie Housewife	Vendor
9	Elphinstone Logging Focus	Non-profit
10	Green Party	Government
11	Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project	Non-profit
12	Pender Harbour Ocean Discovery Station	Non-profit
13	Gaia's Fair Trade	Vendor
14	The Good Life	Food Vendor
15	Farm to Feast	Food Vendor
16	Green Green Kitchen	Food Vendor
17	Hot Pot	Food Vendor
18	This Is It	Artist
19	This Is It (second spot)	Artist
20	Rogue Arts Festival	Non-profit
21	Sunshine Coast Conservation Association	Non-profit
22	Resilient Coast	Non-profit
23	Georgia Strait Alliance	Non-profit
24	Blue Moon Legacy	Non-profit
25	Eco-Freako	Vendor
27	Alchemy Fashions	Vendor
28	Alchemy Fashions (second spot)	Vendor
29	Nutritive Health Food Products	Vendor
30	Kalawna Cosmetics	Vendor
31	Alalucia	Vendor
32	Wolfpups	Vendor
33	Rosa Dvilano	Vendor
34	Delvin Solkinson	Community
35	Sunshine Coast Roller Girls	Non-profit
36	We Love This Coast	Non-profit
37	Sunshine Coast Grandmothers and Grandothers	Community
38	Maria Hunter	Vendor
39	Tamara Goble	Vendor
40	Exotic Fruit Nursery	Vendor
41	Fair Vote Organization	Non-profit
42	Baha'is of the Sunshine Coast	Faith
43	Sunshine Coast Spinners and Weavers Guild	Community
44	Busy Bee	Vendor
45	Norwex	Vendor
46	Mellon Glass	Vendor
47	Arrowhead Clubhouse	Non-profit
48	Roberts Creek Honey	Vendor
49	i2i peer support (Vancouver Coastal Health)	Government
50	2 Degree Institute w/car	Non-profit
51	Transportation Choices - Sunshine Coast (TraC)	Non-profit
52	Free Bike Tune-up	Community
53&54	Coast Car Co-op	Non-profit
56	Jo Jantac	Vendor
1b	Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Sunshine Coast Centre	Non-profit
Gazebo	Sunshine Coast Health Care Auxiliary – RC Branch	Community
Top of hill	WE	Non-profit
Pier	Intertidal Design	Workshop
Grass patch	Deer Crossing the Art Farm	Non-profit

As discussed in the introduction, the themes coalesced through the research have overlapping connections. When does education become practice, and practice become a community? A few quotations that illustrate the effectiveness of the Festival in advancing both education and awareness are as follows:

Earth Day is all about education and trying to encourage people to the right thing from our viewpoint. (Participant F, personal communication, July 4, 2016)

Environmental education is getting bigger every year, from year to year. More and more people are recognizing it as a need. More and more people who didn't talk about sustainability or recycling or whatever, it's becoming a focus. They realize that something has to happen, and so Earth Day is a natural portal to send that information through. (Participant F, personal communication, July 4, 2016)

...there is an opportunity to engage with a whole bunch of members of the community and talk about different issues, be it car sharing, be it water management on the Coast, be it waste reduction initiatives and composting. Yeah, the opportunity to engage with people about these ideas, these concepts, these challenges and these opportunities is where the value was highest for me. (Participant G, personal communication, July 11, 2016)

These three quotations show the value and importance of education in the Festival. They also hint at the interconnectedness of community, practices, and social norms. Not addressed in this research is the philosophy of education, but in simple terms, we can say that for the Festival, education means gaining awareness of or learning more about a subject previously unknown or

understood. The first step of education focuses on awareness and subsequently becomes more complex. Participant A phrases this well:

I think the Festival's an amazing consciousness raiser, so in that sense, it helps people implement sustainability because it raises awareness. (Participant A, personal communication, June 15, 2016)

Community

The concept of community is well worth discussion for a whole range of topics that relate to sustainability and PEB. Impacts on policy and regulatory decision making, resilience and adaptation to climate change, social services, and education can all be targeted at the community level. How community is defined is just about as nebulous as to how to define sustainability. That said, community was identified through the research process by the participants and emerged as a key theme. The sub-elements that were identified to describe community in the research included inclusiveness, acceptance, gathering, connection, engagement, identity, neighbours, friendships, and politics. These are all, therefore, part of the working definition of community in this research.

The participants identified these key elements in the following ways: the importance of the friendships and connections they felt with each other and those they engaged with during the Festival celebrations; the uniqueness of Roberts Creek itself, as exemplified by the residents who self-identified as "Creekers"; the significant number of local groups that come together at the event; the values of inclusiveness, acceptance, and diversity that are demonstrated on the day; and the extension of the impact beyond Roberts Creek to the Lower Sunshine Coast.

As with all six emergent themes, the theme of community is interconnected with the other themes. A quotation showing the interconnection is as follows:

The Earth Day Festival attracts people from everywhere; it doesn't just belong to the people of Roberts Creek. People come from all over the Coast. People love to celebrate; it's a party. They get to listen to music and eat some good food, but in the process, they experience the same type of consciousness raising I mentioned before. (Participant A, personal communication, June 15, 2016)

The quotation speaks to the reach of the Festival and to the gathering of individuals in community, intertwined with the themes of celebration and education (awareness). It is indicative of a general sentiment among research participants, that they felt drawn together and connected as a whole, embraced and supported on this great single day of celebration representing the start of spring and reconnection to the outdoors and the natural world. The participants used the word "community" to impart the sense of belonging to a greater human whole they experienced during the event.

I found that, in general, community was more challenging for the participants to express than education, place, practice, or celebration. It felt more intangible, as it certainly is; however, the following is a good quotation to illustrate how culture impacts community:

I do think the people of Roberts Creek are engaged in this way and are leaders in low impact living and the sustainable lifestyles, and I think it spills out in the rest of the community.... I think our OCP [Official Community Plan] is pretty unique. I think it's a pretty interesting document in terms of sustainability, that was a big focus. (Participant A, personal communication, June 15, 2016)

This quotation is another good reflection of the community and identifies an important background factor that sets a regulatory standard that is beyond the individual. The Roberts Creek Official Community Plan (RCOCP) references the environment 113 times, and 8 of the 17

goals focus on environmental objectives that support sustainability. The lengthy vision statement of the RCOCP states commitment to a “clean and healthy environment,” “ecologically sound transportation systems,” and “green spaces and parkland,” and a vision of preserving a 1500-hectare forest area as a park. These visions, commitments, and goals help explain the background tone of the Roberts Creek community and speak to the situation of the Festival in this area (SCRD Board, 2012).

A strong statement from Participant I speaks to how community sets the tone for our cultural values, or social norms, and the influence that has on one’s own beliefs, thereby affecting attitudes:

Because I lived in the community. I believed that community is the large effect on the earth in that area. And if you engage with community and you all walk away feeling positive then the effect is going to be a positive one in the overall community, and people will be that much more mindful of what they’re doing as opposed to abusive. (Participant I, personal communication, August 8, 2016)

Here one can see the influence of social norms on the behaviour of the individual.

Another key point that arose from the theme of community and can be important to the successful implementation of PEB was open-mindedness or tolerance, which I would reframe as non-judgement or acceptance. Through my experience and personal ethos, I believe this to be key to overcome the “us versus them” divide in advocating for change. Providing a safe space and acceptance forms a community of individuals who participate in the event and can allow themselves to be open to new ideas. This is corroborated by yet another quotation:

There’s a tolerance ... there’s always some people who have different points of view, but they’re all part of the community, and they’re not criticized as strangers, but sort of

nurtured along and enjoyed for who they are. (Participant I, personal communication, August 8, 2016)

Another insight is that the Festival itself helps build community. This building is part of both the practice theme and the celebration theme, which, like all of the themes, are integral to sustainability. This is summarized in the following statement:

It's community building, and that's another component of social sustainability, is finding ways for the community to gather together, to celebrate together, to be together with a common purpose, so I think that's a big impact. (Participant 1, personal communication, June 15, 2016)

In conclusion, a sense of being part of a community, in its wide and encompassing definition by the participants, is critical to the underpinnings of the success of the Festival.

Support

It is no secret that many PEB changes, and the choices that accompany them, are less convenient and more work than maintaining the status quo (Davis et al., 2015). During the interviews, I found support to be a recurring theme. The sub-elements that composed this theme were commitment, accountability, spirituality, challenge, inspiration, hope, appreciation, service, and volunteerism. Individuals reported feeling supported by their peers and the community at large. The participants spoke of the feeling of connection and belonging on the day, and conversely to a general feeling of isolation in regular day-to-day living. The following telling remark referenced the pressure individuals can feel regarding the state of the environment and their role:

I think we just want to make the world a better place. We see that we are living in scary, terrifying times that are so dark on one hand. It's so dark, and you want to feel like you're

just carrying a little ray of light there. You want to feel like you're doing something to make a difference. (Participant B, personal communication, June 18, 2016)

This quotation was especially poignant as it came from an individual who had spent eight years coordinating the event and had a depth of understanding developed from experience.

As with all of the themes identified in this research, the theme of support is interconnected to several other themes. For example, community is a theme, and within the theme of support, feeling supported by the community is a theme. Also, practice is a major theme, and many individuals referred to finding support for themselves and their choices of actions through the observations of others' practices on the day. For example:

I'm always impressed with the community, and I always have my faith in the community renewed when I go to events like Earth Day. Seeing people with those bicycles, doing all that bicycle repair, it's just amazing, the efforts that people make to be community members with this particular focus, it's awesome, so yeah, I feel pride. (Participant A, personal communication, June 15, 2016)

One can see from the above quotation the blend of community, support, and practice coming together to make a deep and moving experience for the individual. This type of peer support or witnessing peer behaviour was inspiring to the participants and had a significant impact on their subjective norms. Because others were demonstrating positive environmental behaviour, they felt it was the right and important thing to do. They also felt recognized and acknowledged for their own efforts, as behaving in an environmentally responsible way is often more difficult or comes at a perceived higher cost than the current status quo.

Practice

During my years organizing the Festival, I received consistent feedback from the participants, committees, and organizations to deliver more workshop activities. The individuals who made these requests communicated to me that their primary reason was to learn how one can live more “sustainably” or in a positive environmental manner. Individuals were looking for guidance, for information on relevant skills they could use, for new technologies, and to learn these practices through demonstration. These skills are important to an individual’s belief in their self-efficacy, which I discuss in the analysis section.

During the research interviews, many comments were made to reinforce my observations from coordinating. For example:

Yeah, so that’s like you can tell people oh, you can bike to work and the electric bike will make it easier and then you have people trying it with the huge hill right there coming out of Roberts Creek pier and they go up the hill in two pedal strokes, like oh my god, yeah, they feel empowered. That’s the metaphor for many things, right, there’s an educational booth that empowers people to take action in their own lives. (Participant G, personal communication, July 11, 2016)

This view demonstrates the impact on an individual when experiencing a new way of acting. There are many such events during the Festival, and these visceral experiences impact both an individual’s belief about their ability to change their behaviours and their beliefs about how the community values specific behaviours.

As with the other themes, practice is interconnected, in the following quote, with education and community:

People often have very hands-on sort of activities with their booths as well as a lot of information, so as a community member you have access to a lot of different potential actions you can take and a lot of education to inform you choices. As a group, you have a lot of opportunity to network and connect with a lot of other groups and do a lot of outreach and get a lot of feedback from the community. (Participant K, personal communication, November 30, 2016)

These diverse ways of connecting to the event are interwoven in a myriad of permutations. This interconnection strengthens the event as a weave strengthens cloth. Each of the different interactions offers a unique value to the individual. The strong theme of connection arises from the research, culminating in celebration.

Celebration

The theme of celebration was present in each interview. The sub-elements of the theme included joy, music, art, dance, and spirit. The participants spoke of the Festival with joy and happiness. What differentiates the Festival from other initiatives that seek to advance PEB change is its nature as a unique, one-day-only event recurring annually. It was evident that the celebration played a role in reinforcing individuals' behaviour choices by rewarding them with positive feedback from the social group or community. Such reinforcement is likely a strong indicator for the uptake of new, more PEB. Two quotations that illustrate this are as follows:

So any time you're creating a gathering that has celebratory capacity, mission, to it that brings people together to honour something, to sing and dance and celebrate together, and especially since Earth Day is really about kind of recognizing how important the Earth is and honouring and celebrating it, I think that does a lot of buoying up our energies so that

we have great capacity. It certainly could be a venue for recharging. (Participant K, personal communication, November 30, 2016)

When it's done in a positive light and with a feeling of lightness and fun to it like a festival, I think there's something that's levitating about that as opposed to just depressing. I think that it holds more possibility for engagement. (Participant B, personal communication, June 18, 2016)

Overall, the participants referred to the atmosphere, the art, the food, and the fun of the event: how it was a light against the dark depression of environmental crisis, how it buoyed their spirits and reinforced their drive and commitment to behaviours that had a personal cost but were better for the biosphere. They enjoyed the connection felt in celebrating with their friends, neighbours and community, which was of great importance and resonated with a strong vibration of intangible spirit. Its annual recurrence then helped each participant reinforce their behaviours and maintain their commitment to pro-environmental actions. This celebration is a critical step in sustaining the progress towards PEB.

Analysis

As presented in the Discussion section, the case study data provided evidence of six strong themes, identified as place, education, community, support, practice, and celebration. I reflected for many years on the possible connection, if any, these themes had to each other and to advancing sustainability, or as I had reframed it for the purposes of this research, as “pro-environmental behaviour.” In my interviews with all the participants, and in my own experience, I recognized the feeling that the Festival did advance ‘sustainability’, though the definition of sustainability is difficult to define. Consistent in the review and coding of the data from the

interviews, the themes were regularly presented in connected layers and worked in tandem with each other to create an impact that was greater than the sum of their parts. To describe this impact, I would use the word “inspiration.” The participants were inspired to act in pro-environmental ways and therefore supported sustainability, through the combination and connection of themes present at the festival. But how could this be modelled? Moreover, was there an underlying theory?

In the fashion of grounded theory research, one could develop a theory of how the event influenced human behaviour, but more appropriately, I examined the broad fields of behaviour change as addressed through social, organizational, environmental, and moral psychology (Turaga, Howarth, & Borsuk, 2010; Unsworth, Dmitrieva, & Adriasola, 2013). A prevalent, well-researched and well-documented theory of particular relevance emerged: the theory of planned behaviour, pioneered by Ajzen (1991), originally developed out of the theory of reasoned action.

In general terms, the study of human psychology and human behaviour is an expansive field and beyond the scope of this research; however, two important behavioural theories that commonly enter the same conversations as the TPB are norm activation theory (NAT), largely attributed to Schwartz (e.g., 1977), and the value-belief-norm (VBN) theory developed by Stern in the 1990s (Kaiser, Hübner, & Bogner, 2005; Turaga et al., 2010; Unsworth et al., 2013). Both NAT and VBN are moral theories developed to explain human behaviour and have been applied to empirical studies related to conservation or environmental behaviour. For the sake of this paper, it is worth understanding them at their basic level.

NAT was developed to explain altruistic behaviour. It proposes that activation of an individual’s personally held moral norms influences pro-social behaviour, and therefore, it is

relevant to the exploration of PEB. Turaga et al. (2010) describe Schwartz's theory of NAT as having two main conditions. The first condition is an individual's awareness of the impacts of their behaviour or, as they label it, the awareness of consequences (AC). The second condition is that an individual must feel a personal responsibility to act, which they call ascribed responsibility (AR). In NAT, if an individual has a strong correlation with AC and AR, this will activate the personally held moral norm, and they will perform a pro-social or PEB. Essentially, they want to do the "right" thing once they have awareness and feel responsible. It is important to note that the magnitude of the moral norm held by the individual is also a predeterminant for action; the more strongly held the importance of the norm, the more likely it will be to activate behaviour (Turaga et al., 2010). Unsworth et al. describe this element of behaviour as self-concordance, the degree to which an individual's goals align with the PEB that is suggested for adoption (Unsworth et al., 2013).

In VBN, Stern worked to improve on Schwartz's NAT model. He proposed that the NAT assumed at its base the value of "social altruism" or caring about other humans. On this basis, he expanded his VBN model by adding two additional base values. One is based on self-interest, which he characterized as "egoistic" and the other as altruism towards nonhuman species, which he called "biospheric." He holds that these other value orientations also guide an individual's motivation for pro-environmental actions (Turaga et al., 2010). VBN hypothesized that the biospheric and egoistic values are activated in the same way as altruism. In general, Stern found that the self-transcendent values of altruism and biospheric positively influenced PEB, while egoistic values had a negative influence. Further, Stern identified four categories of PEB: activist behaviours, which include involvement in organizations and demonstrations; non-activist behaviours that take place in the public sphere, such as supporting petitions and policies; private-

sphere environmentalism, such as green consumerism; and behaviours within organizations (Kaiser et al., 2005; Unsworth et al., 2013). Worthy of note are the strong associations between Stern's four categories and the breadth of the Festival. Through the Festival's diverse range of experiences, all four PEB behaviours are addressed.

In the broad field of behavioural psychology, there is much debate on the model with the greatest explanatory power to predict an individual's behaviour. Unsworth et al. (2013, p. 212) state, "that it is highly unlikely there will be a 'silver bullet' intervention or set of interventions that will suddenly be able to change employee's behaviour to incorporate more pro-environmental action." Turaga et al. (2010, p. 216) contend that:

In summary, the moral theories in social psychology literature emphasize the role of moral norms and beliefs about environmental conditions and personal responsibility in predicting PEB. The research, however, recognizes the limits placed by external and contextual factors on the norm-behavior relationship.

Furthermore, there is much debate between moral theory models and models of reasoned action, the most well known of which is the theory of planned behaviour (Kaiser et al., 2005). To summarize the criticism, it implies that the TPB does not account for the influence of moral norms on behavioural intentions. The TPB model is a rational choice model represented by calculated cost-benefit evaluations undertaken by the individual. However, "evidence has shown moral norms to be well represented already in a person's attitude" in the TPB model (Kaiser et al., 2005, p. 2153). Additionally, there has been considerable development of the TPB model over time, including background factors, more delineation of normative beliefs, and even experimentation of including moral norms as additional proximal determinants of intention (de Leeuw, Valois, Ajzen & Schmidt, 2015). However, the evidence, according to Kaiser et al.

(2005, p. 2167), continues to “raise doubts about the necessity of including moral concepts as a separate, proximal determinate of intention in addition to attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control,” the key constructs in the TPB model.

A famous historical quote by British statistician George Box on modelling is, “all models are wrong; some are useful.” In the case of the TPB, some identified limitations include the following. First, the TPB assumes that an individual has the opportunity and resources to act. The model reflects a linear process of arriving at intention and decision making. As well, the model focuses on the intention, not the completion, of the behaviour, and does not address the time frame between intent and action. Furthermore, the model does not specifically account for other psychological measures such as fear, threat, mood, and trauma that can influence behaviours (LaMorte, 2019). The model is better designed to look at specific behaviours, not types of behaviours (Kaiser et al., 2005).

With all of the preceding information taken into consideration, the best way to describe the TPB model is through a visual representation. See Figure 3 below (Ajzen, 2019).

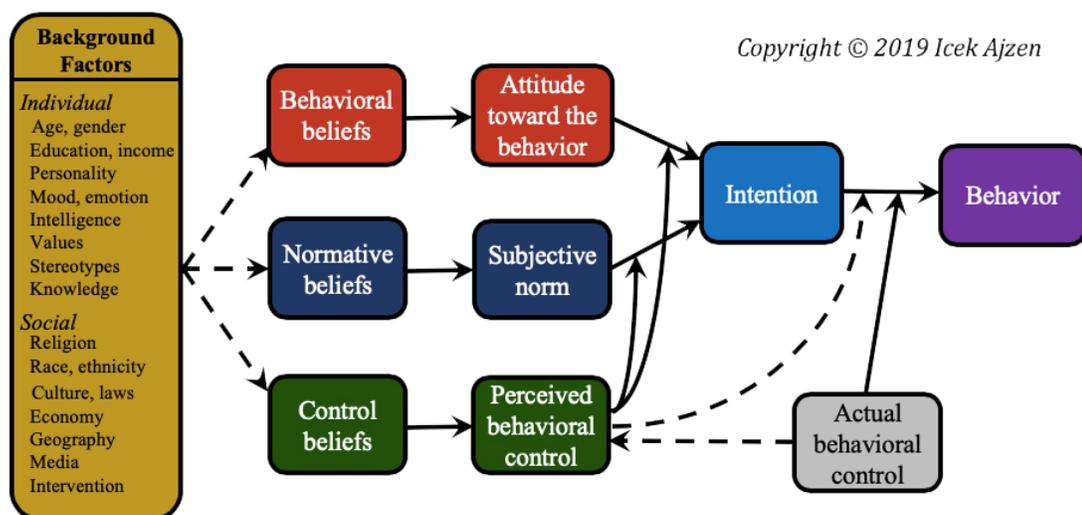


Figure 3. Theory of planned behaviour.

The TPB is a model used to predict an individual's intention and to understand why a behaviour has taken place; it can be used to explore interventions to achieve specific behaviour. The basic explanation of the theory as presented by de Leeuw et al. (2015) (note that Ajzen is a contributing author to this paper) is as follows:

According to the TPB, intentions to perform ecologically friendly behaviors and perceived behavioral control can have a direct effect on behavior, and it can also influence behavior indirectly by its effect on intentions. The TPB postulates that one's intention to adopt PEB should increase to the extent that one holds favourable attitudes towards PEB, thinks that significant others support these behaviors or adopt PEB themselves, and perceives to have control over these behaviors. (p. 129)

Their behavioural beliefs influence an individual's attitude towards a specific behaviour. A person evaluates the outcome of behaving in a certain way. The attitude to the behaviour is then a representation of the sum of the evaluation of the outcomes. The higher the score, the better the attitude will be towards the behaviour. This evaluation action is seen as logic or reasoned action (de Leeuw et al., 2015; Kaiser et al., 2005; Unsworth et al., 2013).

The subjective norms are influenced by normative beliefs, the beliefs about what the referent group will think about an individual's behaviour. The more importance an individual places on the value of the perceptions of the referent group, the greater the influence the normative belief will have on the individual's subjective norms. In later models of the TPB, subjective norms are further divided into injunctive and descriptive norms, with an injunctive norm representing how an individual feels the group thinks the individual should behave and the descriptive norm being how the individual perceives the referent group themselves as actually behaving (this division is not shown in Figure 3). Kaiser et al. (2005) and de Leeuw et al. (2015)

identify the attitude and subjective norm factors as the inclusion point for moral beliefs and thus connect to NAT and VBN.

Control beliefs shape the perceived behaviour control of an individual and can include factors such as an individual's perception of resources, as well as opportunities and abilities to perform the behaviour. Perceived behaviour control is used as a proximal for actual behavioural control, as actual behavioural control requires a much deeper understanding of both the activity and the individual, therefore making it much more difficult to measure and study (Ajzen, n.d.).

Ajzen (n.d.) states that "attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control are conceptually independent predictors of intention." In tests, they are often found to be interconnected because the information that an individual receives can influence all three of the antecedents to the behaviour. I found this to be congruent in general terms with the case study results, given the participants' regular identification of the interconnection of themes and their combined impact.

Background variables are an important element not to be overlooked and are generally self-explanatory. They represent the pre-existing conditions that an individual is relating from and by which they are influenced. Many of the background factors are internal and controllable processes; others represent external factors that are beyond the individual's control but are still part of the foundation from which develop the behavioural, normative, and control beliefs.

To further analyze the themes presented in the discussion, they can be mapped onto the TPB model. Despite the initial naming differential between the analysis of the field study data and that of the terms commonly used in psychological literature, there is a clear link. It can be shown that each theme can fit appropriately and distinctly on the TPB model, and in this way,

provide a constructive framework to explain the workings of the Festival and make sense of its success.

Initially, I had classified a group of commonly repeated sub-elements under the theme of “place.” These sub-elements included the physical scale, location, timing, and natural beauty of the venue. Also included were cultural sub-elements, including the uniqueness of the Roberts Creek community and the sense of place individuals experienced in participating. These sub-elements, which construct the theme of place, align well with the elements described as background factors in the TPB model.

The theme of education spoke to the experience of the individual during the event. It included sub-elements of awareness, exposure, learning, and sharing. The evidence shows that the theme of education can span and inform the behavioural beliefs of an individual in a broad context. The theme of education can also specifically impact the individual’s attitude and influence the evaluation of the behaviour. For this reason, it is valid to propose that the theme of education can be mapped onto the TPB model across behavioural beliefs and the attitude towards the behaviour.

The theme of community, which is also difficult to define initially, makes sense using the TPB model in the context of normative beliefs. The community is the culture, language, traditions, and norms that inform the subjective norm of the individual. At the Festival, the values, beliefs, and norms of the community are clearly presented, and an individual participating is inundated with data to inform decision making. The sub-elements of the community theme, which we can now see as the normative beliefs, comprised of inclusiveness, acceptance, gathering, connection, engagement, identity, neighbourhood, friendships, and politics.

The theme of support is truly fascinating. It rose to the top as key for so many individuals. Another phrase I had considered using to describe the data was “monkey see, monkey do.” Through the interpretation of the TPB, it is clear to see how support is represented under the subjective norm and how an individual feels the referent groups value the behaviour. In the case of the Festival, this is so often positively reinforced by peer behaviour. The sub-elements of the theme were commitments, accountability, spirituality, challenge, inspiration, hope, appreciation, service, and volunteerism.

The theme of practice is a straightforward connection to the construct of perceived behavioural control. Repeatedly, participants referenced the tangible aspects of learning that showed them how they could undertake the behaviours themselves. The sub-elements of the theme included demonstrations, initiatives, functionality, and relevance. The practices shared and presented at the Earth Day Festival support individuals in achieving a high level of PBC.

The theme of celebration is significant, though not immediately apparent from the model, where its location is not shown. However, as presented by Egmond and Bruel (2007), a feedback loop can be drawn from the achieved behaviour to the background factors. This reinforcing loop takes an individual’s achieved behaviour and reintegrates it into society, thereby, in a circular fashion, changing future outcomes. Another word for celebration, in this sense, is feedback. This theme of positive feedback to the individual is a significant key to the event and reinforces an individual’s PEB.

By analyzing the data and subsequently mapping the themes onto the TPB model, an explanation of how the Festival mechanics work to support PEB is achieved. By using the framework of the model, conclusions and recommendations can be drawn regarding the research question.

Conclusion

Life and human behaviour are messy, complex, and difficult to predict. This case study was initially designed to explore whether the Roberts Creek Earth Day Festival helped to advance concrete implementation of sustainability. As discussed in the introduction, however, sustainability became difficult to define in this context, and I reframed the question to explore whether the Festival advances PEB in the community. The research findings yielded six themes identified as place, education, community, support, practice, and celebration, explored in the discussion and then mapped them onto the well-established TPB in the analysis. The TPB explains how these themes work as mechanisms influencing PEB at the individual and community levels.

What is fascinating is that during this case study research, I had no previous knowledge of the concepts and constructs presented in the TPB, and they are therefore unlikely to have influenced data collection or biased the identification of the themes to fit the model. With a specific research context and a methodology that ensures rich and valid data, there is strong confidence that the six coherent and interconnected themes, after comparison against existing literature for behavioural change models, can be logically mapped onto the TPB. The mapping demonstrates more accurately the mechanisms that make the Festival successful in influencing PEB choices. Beyond the straightforward significance, as shown in the analysis section, of how each theme supports PEB as described by the TPB, there are three unique ways in which the Festival expands on the TPB model, transforming the experience into more than the sum of its parts, thereby generating a more profound impact. I will discuss them below.

Diversity – Something for Everyone

Behavioural models are built for a variety of reasons. One is to predict outcomes. Another is to find intervention points that can influence outcomes (de Leeuw et al., 2015). A third is to evaluate different interventions against each other. These intervention points can be targeted through policies at governance level, implementation of standards and practices in workplaces, or community-based social marketing campaigns (McKenzie-Mohr & Schultz, 2014). In general, the TPB is designed to examine either a single behaviour, for example, installing a low-flush toilet, or a set of similar behaviours, such as water conservation at home (Kaiser et al., 2005). What is exceptional here then is that, in examining the Festival, this research looks at an event that targets a myriad of different individual behaviours and many groups of similar behaviours at the same time. I have not discovered another study that applies the TPB across so many different behaviours, in a broad-level analysis. Further, the analysis indicates that the Festival supports behavioural changes in participants despite its lack of specificity in targeting an individual or group of behaviours.

What this shows is that there is something for everyone at the Festival—a magic sauce. By providing a huge diversity of experiences, the Festival offers an individual a myriad of possible interactions at the different levels identified in the TPB model to support their intention to complete PEB behaviour.

To take a deeper dive, one can start from the beginning of the model and work towards the behaviour. The first and most significant aspect of the Festival is that it is so broad. There is a large diversity of organizations present, participants attending, and activities taking place. This diversity increases the odds that an individual, regardless of their background, including demographics such as age, sex, race, philosophy, religion, worldview, education level, financial

means, physical abilities, and self-efficacy, will connect to a way of engaging in PEB. An individual may sign a petition, practice a skill, learn about a new initiative, find a meaningful volunteer opportunity, and feel supported by their peers and community in activities they are already undertaking. These actions can deepen their commitment and promote positive social pressure to move from egoistical to biospheric norms.

An insight, then, is about the background factors. While I had designed several of the interview questions to look for connections among the citizens and community of Roberts Creek in supporting the success of the Festival, I did not find conclusive evidence related directly to the rural village known as Roberts Creek. However, the data did support connection to the broader area of the Sunshine Coast, encompassing both the natural and cultural landscape. I initially called this theme “place.” As demonstrated in the analysis section, place can be associated with “background factors” in the TPB. The TPB shows the importance that background factors play in arriving at a behavioural intention, as they set the stage for the emergence of behavioural, normative, and control beliefs. The background factors present in the rural area of the Sunshine Coast and the community of Roberts Creek, such as community mindset, natural beauty, and political demographics, are all significant in setting the stage for the adoption of PEB. This is specific to the Sunshine Coast, as there is strong pre-existing support for environmental awareness.

Another insight, key to behavioural modelling is education or awareness. Without question, the Festival supports the education of all participants at some level. As shown through the analysis, this theme of education can be located in the behavioural model, influencing the individual’s attitude toward the behaviour, as an individual may be exposed to many kinds of new knowledge and education at the event.

Under the theme identified as community, shown through analysis to straddle both normative beliefs and subjective norms, visitors are exposed to their friends, and so their subjective norms are influenced, and they get both positive and negative pressure to act. They see what others are doing and feel an obligation. They are also shown a specific set of normative beliefs that the group of participants hold, and this can later have an impact far beyond the event. Visitors may, in fact, feel dozens of obligations on the day of the Festival, and although the other factors in the TPB model are not necessarily strong enough to create a behavioural intention for every suggested behaviour, the likelihood of individuals finding a combination that does add up to enough pressure is higher, given that there are so many opportunities.

Another interesting finding under the theme identified as community is that the subjective norm pressure that an individual feels is often positive during the Festival, as demonstrated in the research results. Although it is not addressed specifically in this research, positive reinforcement likely has a greater impact on the uptake of behaviours than negative reinforcement (Egmond & Bruel, 2007). The same logic goes for the construct of normative beliefs. Visitors are surrounded by a field of pro-environmental norms, as the day and the event focus on how one can support the environment and the Earth.

Moving on to the theme of practice, which is linked to perceived behavioural control on the TPB model, the Festival is a boon for individuals. They are presented with a myriad of ways to move along the spectrum from believing they cannot achieve a behaviour to learning and practicing a way they can, whether this is through conversations with others, workshops, trials of products (such as an electric bike), demonstrations, signing petitions, or committing to behaviours. In fact, of the four identified types of PEB—activist behaviour, non-activist behaviour, private-sphere environmentalism, and organizational behaviour—the Festival

provides an opportunity to support increasing self-efficacy of the individual toward their perceived behavioural control for each type.

In this light, the diversity of awareness and opportunities to engage that the Festival provides individuals is critical and ends up providing a means of supporting PEB for everyone who participates. Participants in the Festival can self-select opportunities that have lower barriers; for example, if financial cost, equipment, location, personal agency due to age, education, or ability are barriers to a specific action, participants can find another behaviour that meets them where they are. The event can also provide a plethora of information for the participant should they wish to move along the spectrum of perceived behavioural control by providing possible directions for how to achieve their goals.

Interconnection – A Non-Linear Process

The TPB has three primary constructs, as noted: behavioural, normative, and control beliefs. These beliefs are not dependent upon each other for the creation of behavioural intention (Ajzen, n.d.); that said, it stands to reason that the more intervention points an individual is subject to for a specific behaviour across the three constructs, the greater the likelihood they will be motivated or inspired to create the intention for that behaviour. In this way, the Festival does an excellent job of being messy and interconnected. Similar to the theme of diversity, there is significance in the number of opportunities an individual has to connect, in this case, with the different constructs for a single behaviour. Moreover, these connections do not have to happen in a linear fashion, as one might infer from the model diagram. At the Festival, they can take place coincidentally, or happen in any order. As referenced by the participants, it is hard to have one of the themes act in isolation, as they feed on and give support to each other.

During the Festival, an individual can experience a learning moment happening in a beautiful place, supported by their friends, while gaining education and awareness, and practicing a new skill. In the TPB model, this can be explained as helping people shift their attitudes towards the behaviour through education that influences their normative beliefs and their subjective norms, thereby shifting their beliefs about perceived behavioural control. This deep connection is powerful and transformative. It can move an individual effectively along their continuum of experience.

The Festival, as a recurring, cyclical event, also allows the interconnection to occur over time. At any given Festival, an individual may move along a continuum of experience for one or more possible behaviours and, upon their return in subsequent years, may deepen their experience, having integrated, practiced, reflected, or removed a barrier in moving towards intention. This recurrence, or repetition, is another key to the Festival and is also seen in the theme of celebration as well.

Celebration – Getting It to Stick

It is unequivocal from the research that each participant felt that celebration was key to the Festival. An interesting observation in the TPB model is that it focuses on the intention, not the actual behaviour itself, which is not captured. So, in some cases, it could be said that the TPB is limited in speaking to a concept like celebration or feedback. We know that actual behaviour does happen, however; moreover, at the Festival, this behaviour, or steps along the continuum to the behaviour, are celebrated. This celebration is inspiring to the participants; it is the light against the dark, it lifts their spirits and connects and motivates them to carry on, despite the individual costs to themselves to shift the status quo.

I feel confident that, due to the cyclical nature of the event and the ongoing attendance of visitors and participants, celebration is an important mechanism to recognize and support the achieved behaviours of individuals. Celebration creates a positive feedback cycle for the community, which influences the background factors of the model. These evolved background factors then, in turn, inform the behaviours and the normative and control beliefs of the community. This feedback cycle therefore fosters PEB, which, in turn, could potentially advance sustainability in the community.

Given the power of the themes and their location on the model as well as the Festival's ability to support the key mechanisms of diversity, interconnection and celebration, I conclude that the Festival positively influences PEB in individuals, organizations, and the community of the Sunshine Coast. Not to be understated is the role a community with strong pro-environmental beliefs plays as a background factor to success. Translated to another community, this Festival may have less relevance and momentum if the social norms do not initially align. However, over time, with the positive feedback loop created through celebration, change towards PEB can be supported.

In addition to the qualitative interview data, other evidence also exists to support the notion that the Festival is successful in engaging the community at large. The Festival has shown a consistent trend of growth in size and level of community engagement. The evidence includes both quantitative measures, such as the increasing number of visitors and participating organizations, increasing financial support from the regional government, and other indicators such as the fact that the festival has been led by volunteers for 30 consecutive years, and the endorsement by the Roberts Creek Community Association. This additional data helps demonstrate the importance of the Festival to the community. However, these measurable

outputs alone do not demonstrate that the event has supported PEB; but they do strengthen the case for the Festival's success and endorsement by the community. This may speak to the Festival's ability to stay relevant. As times are always changing, events like the Festival must change with them to continue to have an impact. In light of this, further recommendations for research follow.

Future Recommendations

- In pro-environmental event and program planning, use the TPB model to help locate initiatives, activities, organizations, and workshops in synergistic ways to support greater impact.
- To increase the success of pro-environmental events, maintain inclusiveness for all participants, and provide a diverse array of interventions to explore.
- Provide an atmosphere of celebration and positive feedback to help reinforce pro-environmental behaviours.
- Explore mechanisms to involve individuals who do not already attend pro-environmental programs and events.
- Explore how festivals support community resilience and adaptation—how they maintain relevancy.
- Investigate how to turn PEB into habits.
- Ask case study questions in a group format, facilitating dialogue between participants.

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