

Theatre as a risky activity

A quantitative analysis of the influence of festivals on the risk perception of theatre

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Abstract

In order to face attendance and financial issues, theaters have been employing audience development strategies. Much research has therefore been devoted to uncover the factors that specifically demotivate attendance in order to address them. One factor that seems to encapsulate all of them and to be actively preventing attendance to theatre venues is the perception of theatre as a risky activity. This can be considered to include the Satisfaction, Social, Psychological and Economic risk, whose perceptions all contribute to consumers' decision (not) to attend.

On the other hand, performing arts festivals are striving in attendance numbers and also seem to be popular across all age groups, a feature theaters often fail to achieve. Being festivals "special events" that happen only occasionally and showcase specific themes that help form temporary communities of festival goers, it is hypothesized that they may provide relievers for the specific components of risk associated with theatre.

Therefore, the main research question is: to what extent does the experience in arts/theatre festivals affect the perception of theatre as a risky activity? A quantitative analysis is employed to identify such an influence among people who attend theatre in a variety of contexts in the Netherlands, particularly regular theaters and festivals. It is found that participating to arts and theatre festivals does affect to some extent the appreciation for theatre, the perceived value in a performance and the overall perception of risk, which all ultimately lead to an increased attendance.

These results may be of use to policy and theatre makers alike in formulating new strategies to appeal to a more diversified audience, addressing their expectations and worries, both in theaters and in the performing arts field at large.

Keywords: theatre, perception, risk, festival, experience.

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1. Introduction

Audience development and retention have always been one of the goals of theaters and performing arts organizations. Theatre performances have the specific objective of addressing audiences (Martin & Sauter, 1995; Sauter, 2000; Boerner, Jobst & Wiemann, 2010) so theatre makers' desire to reach more and diverse people is understandable. In this way, they can show their work to a wider and more diverse audience, hoping it could be relevant for them, achieve their mission and also maybe gain a visibility that could be used to face the issues that are common to many theaters today, in particular those related to finances and attendance.

The idea that arts audiences are an élite group of people in terms of education, income and even ethnicity, so not a trustworthy representation of society, has been discussed at length by a number of researchers (see for example O'Hagan, 1996; Peterson, Hull & Kern, 2000; McCarthy & Jinnett, 2001) and often used as an argument against public subsidies to arts. Therefore, theaters strive to achieve audience diversification also to meet the criteria for public subsidies and to be eventually able to rely more on other forms of financing, like ticket sales (Kolb, 1997).

However, reports on the participation to the performing arts show how only some segments of the populations are appreciating theatre in its most traditional form and these are usually older, caucasian people (e.g. The Audience Agency Theatre Report 2016, Torreggiani, 2016; the Survey on Public Participation to the Arts 2017, National Endowment for the Arts, 2018; Het Culturele Leven, Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2018). Moreover, a report published in 2016 by UK-based The Audience Agency highlights two issues related to this audience: first, that they are ageing faster than the overall population is, with the most represented group in theaters currently between ages 65 and 74; second, that there is no sign of any significant changes in this audience profile in the near future. Therefore, not only theaters are currently facing problems to diversify their audiences, which has a series of consequences connected with maintaining financial and business operations, but are likely going to face the same issues also in the future.

To face these problems, research is done on which factors demotivate attendance and on what is appreciated when theatre is properly experienced even by the non-frequent attenders in order to better understand people's needs and expectations and then formulate marketing and audience development strategies. When effective, these may also have monetary outcomes in the forms of additional resources from tickets sales and governmental fundings (Radbourne, Johanson, Glow & White, 2009).

Many of these studies show that the one factor actively preventing attendance today is the perception some people have of theatre as a risky activity. In these studies, and consequently in this

research, the definition of risk according to Knight (1921) is used: when there is the possibility to assign specific probabilities to the outcomes of an event, whether positive or negative, we are talking about risk, as opposed to pure uncertainty when this possibility is not present. Therefore, when talking about the risk related to theatre, audiences feel able to assign a rather high probability to specific negative outcomes, like not understanding it and/or feeling uncomfortable.

Nevertheless, there is one context in which the performing arts seem to be more appreciated than ever and can count on increasing numbers of visitors every year around the world: festivals. Specifically, the SPPA 2017 shows how performing arts festival in the United States of America were attended by 24% of the population against the 9% of non-musical plays during regular theatre seasons and how they are largely appreciated across all age groups. Two considerations can be made about this difference in attendance: first, that despite having the possibility to attend live performances at both regular theatre venues and festivals, consumers, even the non-frequent theatre attenders, still choose the latter; second, that given the increase in disposable income which presumably leads to higher consumption on culture (Throsby & Withers, 1979; Baumol & Baumol, 1984; Taylor, Owen, & Withnall, 2000), consumers potentially do possess the resources to attend at least theatre more, whose price has traditionally been regarded as one of the main factors demotivating attendance, but still spend little on it.

It is reasonable to assume that this difference in attendance is therefore mainly caused by two different perceptions of risk. As it is proved that both theatre plays and festivals can be considered as multifaceted event experiences (see for example Au, Ho & Chan, 2016; De Geus, Richards & Toepel, 2016), festivals may be characterized in such a way that diminishes specific components related to the risk perception of theatre, prompting people to attend arts and theatre festivals and the performances presented.

Hence, the aim of this research is to investigate whether participation to arts and theatre festivals influences consumers' perception of theatre as a risky activity and consequently their attendance beyond the festival context. In order to do so, first, in the theoretical framework a deeper analysis of theatre as a risky activity will be conducted, with notions from cultural economics and consumer behavior. An analysis of the festival context and how it could provide relievers for the risk perception associated with theatre will also be provided. Second, the methodology used in order to test whether this perception changes after participating to festivals will be explained. In this section, the choices regarding the type of analysis, the sampling and the collection will be illustrated and justified. Third, the findings of this analysis will be described and framed in the context of the literature on cultural economics and consumer behavior reviewed in order to answer the research

questions. Lastly, the limitations concerning this study will be addressed, as well as the possibilities for future research that emerged from the analysis of the results.

This research sets out to contribute to the expansion of the theory on risk to cultural events, starting from an attempt to operationalize constructs that could relieve the risk components specific to theatre performances. In so doing, it aims to provide a better insight on how central the audience is for the work of theatre organizations to succeed and consequently of how the theatre experience is anticipated and lived by audiences, which will be useful for both policy and theatre makers in formulating audience development strategies and allocating resources. It will also approach the recent phenomenon of festivals and create a new perspective on their popularity. Specifically, it is expected to find that participation to arts and theatre festivals can have an influence on the risk perception of theatre and so that the growing success of festivals can be beneficial to the performing arts at large not only because they provide a new setting for visitors to appreciate them, but also because they emphasize some particular features of theatre and the other performing arts, leading to increased appreciation and attendance overall.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Theatre attendance studies

In this paragraph, an overview of the main topics that emerge from studies on the factors that motivate or discourage attendance will be presented, concerning especially the difference between the ex-ante and ex-post impression non-regular attenders have of theatre when given the chance to experience it properly.

When analyzing people's preference for theatre, and cultural activities in general, Levy-Garboua & Montmarquette (2002) state that our previous consumption plays a role, becoming part of our experience and starting the process of "taste formation". Kids' first encounter with theatre usually happens either because of the family or the school (Kolb, 1997; O'Toole, Adams, Anderson, Burton & Ewing, 2014). Parents and teachers choose the plays to be viewed, provide information about them and arrange the visit, which includes, but is not limited to, taking care of transportation and payment. However, once grown up, the young adults lose these facilitator figures and have to take on the tasks of researching, organizing and paying themselves. This passage from facilitated to autonomous audiences does not always prove to be a smooth one because of the difficulty to retrieve this kind of more practical information, which is taken for granted by regular visitors and theaters, and the subsequent feeling of inadequacy. These factors, together with the time needed to autonomously get informed about these topics, discourage future attendance (O'Toole et al., 2014).

In addition, in making their own consumption choices, young adults bear the responsibility of successfully selecting the best options for their enjoyment, as to maximize the utility from the resources invested. Het Culturele Leven, a report on participation to the arts of the Dutch population by the Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, provides some empirical evidence on this because its data shows how, for the period 2012-2016, participation to the traditional performing arts is rather high for the first two age groups, which are the ones comprising school kids, and then drops abruptly from the age group 12-19 to the group 20-34 and rises again only for the group 50-64 (p. 106).

One of the main variables taken into consideration when furthering the studies on attendance is the price of the performances. This is in turn related to the concept of price-elasticity, namely being sensitive to increases in price when making consumption choices. For example, Kolb's (1997) study on pricing to attract university students, considered to be the price-elastic group for excellence, initially found that 31% of the students themselves did name price as the first obstacle to attend when confronted with a list of possible barriers. However, almost as many, namely 29%, mentioned being bored. In addition, when asked about their average spending on a night out, 44% of non-attenders declared to spend more than the average £15 ticket and that most of this percentage was aware of that. Therefore, this study suggests that the price variable, even for a segment of the population disposing of limited resources, may be playing a role in deciding whether or not to attend only in relation to other factors.

Taylor et al. (2000) found a similar result: the respondents spent from £20 to £70 weekly in their leisure time, while the project taken in exam was offering student tickets for £3.50. Despite this, both attenders and non-attenders mentioned monetary constraints to, respectively, attend more and start attending, but attenders also mentioned lack of time as often and non-attenders mentioned lack of interest. The authors conclude stating that, when compared to other leisure activities, the choice of attending theatre is subject to more financial considerations because of a possible perception of greater risk associated with the product. In fact, the respondents of the afore-mentioned studies confirmed that they would start attending theatre, or attending it more often, if they were certain they would enjoy it, so could lower the level of perceived risk to a comfortable level.

Although these studies are rather old and only consider a specific segment of the population, they are still relevant because, as noted by Taylor et al. (2000), the hypothesis of price being the major constraint to attend theatre does not hold, given the increase in disposable income and consequent spending on leisure activities in the medium and long run (Throsby & Withers, 1979; Baumol & Baumol, 1984). This is confirmed by empirical evidence, showing that the majority of

the population does engage with and spend on leisure activities today (Torreggiani, 2016; NEA, 2018), so would also own the resources needed to engage (more) with theatre.

The main reason actively preventing attendance, therefore, appears to be an ex-ante perception of theatre as an experience likely not very entertaining or even unpleasant for those who are not familiar with it and so lack the tools to properly enjoy it (Jacobs, 2000; Radbourne et al., 2009). The performances are seen as too expensive to attend, in terms of money but also time, in relation to the rather high risk of not enjoying them. Therefore, the perception of theatre, like other cultural experiences, plays a role in the process of deciding whether or not and how to experience it because it shapes the evaluation of costs and benefits and the practicalities involved, as described also in the RAND behavioral model of participation, developed by McCarthy and Jinnett (2001). This model recognizes that an individual goes through several stages when going from their initial perception of an experience to making the decision to engage in it and that each one is affected by different factors which need to be accounted for.

As per the ex-post impressions, the *TheatreSpace: Accessing the Cultural Conversation* Research Project (O'Toole et al., 2014) can be referred to: this research, conducted with people from 14 to 30 years old and a number of partners in the theatre field, found that, after attending a performance, the majority reported a better impression of theatre as an experience and only a minority still manifested a lack of understanding of this art and a discomfort in the venues. Most of the participants enjoyed both the content and the format: they appreciated how they could identify with the stories told but also sometimes feel intellectually challenged, while on the other hand the proximity to the action allowed them to establish a sense of intimacy with the actors on stage and to appreciate the liveness and immediacy of their performances. Radbourne et al. (2009) also highlight how attenders appreciate the authenticity of the live performance, both of what is being offered by the artists and of the related emotional response of the visitors themselves, and to be able to experience it together with other visitors from diverse backgrounds.

As theatre seems to be an activity that most people could potentially enjoy once properly experienced, the main challenge seems to be to get them past their initial perception of something risky, so probably not worthy of their resources, as mentioned by Taylor et al. (2000), in order for them to give it a try.

In the next paragraph, the theatre experience will be better defined, to then proceed to define the perception of risk associated with it.

2.2 The theatre event experience

In this paper, it is argued that a theatrical performance constitutes an event experience for the audiences. Au et al. (2016) also add that understanding how audiences' experiences are structured is important to explore both how various components contribute to an appreciation of theatre and how these lead to reconsumption behavior (p. 28), which are the objectives of this research. Therefore, in order to further analyze how the risk perception of theatre is formed and link it to its specific dimensions, theatre experiences will first be defined and framed in the context of the event experience economy.

When they first introduced the concept of experience economy, Pine and Gilmore (1998) stated that the commoditization of goods and services drove down their perceived value, which turned the attention to memorable experiences as the new proposition of value companies had to sell to gain consumers' attention and survive. Today, empirical evidence proves these initial statements: 78% of millennials, now aged between 23 and 39, declare that they prefer spending on experiences and live events than on goods and 82% of them declares to attend a variety of these on a yearly bases (Eventbrite, 2015). But although the millennials are taking the place of the other generations as they get older and so are starting to form the bulk of arts audiences, seeing the experiences as real propositions of value is not only a trend to be considered for the future but also for the present times, as Eventbrite (2015) also reports that older generations are not far behind the millennials when it comes to participating to experiences and live events, with 70% attending many of them every year.

As mentioned also by Pine and Gilmore (1998), experiences have always been at the heart of entertainment and events and because of their intrinsic nature of something that happens only occasionally, events have always been perceived as unique, extraordinary occurrences (Getz, 2012; Morgan, Lugosi, & Ritchie, 2010; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Volo, 2010). Therefore, in this new stage of the economy they are gaining even more value as consumption possibilities in the eyes of consumers (Richards, 2017) and more research is done on what exactly constitutes the event experience. In addition, in today's world of increasing communication and entertainment possibilities found online, they are also valued as a communal space for physical interaction (Richards, 2017; White Hutchinson Leisure & learning Group, 2015) where to share these experiences. Finally, Richards (2017) underlines how the growing co-creation role of the consumer, which contributes to the overall experience, is evident in various events.

The theatre experience can be seen as a multifaceted process, a concept from De Geus et al.'s (2016) event experience framework: O'Toole et al. (2014) underline how for the audience, the

experience of a night at the theatre starts before the actual play and ends after its conclusion. In fact they proceed to analyze the factors characterizing both the pre-phase and the post-phase, like purchasing tickets, getting there, coming in contact with the environment and fellow audience members and so on, but also factors like the possibility to interact and still feeling welcome in the space after the conclusion. Furthermore, the multidimensionality of this process is proved by Au et al.'s (2016) investigation of the arts audience experience which found that different dimensions of the theatre experience contribute meaningfully to the audience's positive evaluation of it.

As other art forms that are based on narrative stories, theatre plays are characterized by specific time and space dimensions which can be different from the ones in which the performance is attended. However, the particularity of theatrical performances is that they are ephemeral, so they are consumed in the same moment they are produced and their live character implies that anything unexpected can happen. All of these aspects were found by Reason (2004) to strongly characterize the experience for the audience and to create the idea of theatre as something special and unique, which never repeats itself exactly in the same way so very different from the other entertainment options available to them (for example, television and cinema are cited). This characterization of unique occurrences, separated from ordinary life, is often seen as one of the greatest appeals of an event experience. Interestingly, even Pine and Gilmore (1998) use different types of theatre performances and settings in order to describe the different ways in which a memorable and unique experience can be created by businesses for their consumers and state that "every business is a stage" (p. 97)

Furthermore, Reason (2004) also reports the proximity with the actors and with the other members of the audience as fundamental for audience engagement, as mentioned also by O'Toole et al. (2014) as some of the factors most appreciated even by non-regular theatre attenders. This social dimension is referred to by many studies as part of conceptual frameworks of the performing arts and theatre experience specifically (e.g. Eversmann, 2004; Brown & Novak, 2007; Radbourne et al., 2009; Independent Theatre Council (ITC), Society of London Theatre (SOLT) & Theatrical Management Association (TMA), 2005). They all recognize it as a fundamental aspect for the audience's evaluation. In particular, McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras and Brooks (2004) underline how the collective engagement in the arts impacts their perceived value because of a feeling of emotional affinity (p. 50) and Jacobs (2000) also finds the audience's theatre experience is heightened through interaction with fellow audience members and discussions about the performance.

In their event experience framework, De Geus et al.'s (2016) also conceptualize the interaction between the individual and the event environment. This proves to be defining of the theatre experience as well, first because, as mentioned by O'Toole et al.'s (2014), the respondents who manifest concern over the possibility to feel discomfort in venues not suited for them, both because not familiar with the specific codes of conduct in theaters and because not feeling welcome to stay once the performances are over, then report that they would not attend again. Therefore, the different contexts and environments in which a performance can take place all contribute to it as a whole experience.

Finally, Radbourne et al. (2009) include risk as one of the four basic dimensions experienced by attenders in theatre, defined as the fear that the outcome will not be as anticipated. Because of this, they underline how an evaluation of the possible benefits of a positive outcome and the loss in case of a negative one characterizes theatre and so organizations in the field should take on the onus to relieve this perception in order to attract more attenders. Interestingly, the risk dimension is related to the other three identified, authenticity, knowledge and collective engagement: respondents report to associate a certain level of risk with theatre because of its intrinsic nature of performing art in which emotions are portrayed, so with its authenticity; because of a supposed knowledge that is needed to properly experience it and because of the collective engagement that may expose attenders and their emotions but may also function as a reliever of risk when the experience is presented as a collective one. Furthermore, Crealey (2003) identifies in this perception of risk consumers have the factor that theatre organizations should focus on in order to find solutions to attendance and financial issues related to running such a business activity.

It is therefore useful to consider what are people's expectations and perceptions regarding not only the content of a theatre event experience, but also regarding all its other dimensions, to understand which ones play which role in the overall perception of risk and know how to act to modify them. In order to better analyze this perception in relation to all these dimensions and identify how exactly it influences the consumer behavior of evaluating options for consumption, first a review of the main concepts in the theory on risk in the consumer behavior field will be presented, followed by a comprehensive analysis of the dimensions of the theatre experience outlined above in relation to these concepts.

2.3 Consumer behavior theory on risk and its components

The perception of risk is included in the evaluation processes that lead to, or discourage, purchase, including choices among alternatives with different attributes (Fischhoff, Watson, & Hope

1990). In other words, it has an effect on consumer behavior. Therefore, in this paragraph an overview of the main concepts that emerge from the consumer behavior literature on the subject and their related reduction strategies will be presented.

In one of the first papers defining the effect of perceived risk in consumer behavior, Bauer (1960) recognizes two dimensions to it: the consequences to a consumers' action and the impossibility to define these consequences with certainty beforehand. He adds that, because of these, consumers not only engage in an ex-ante information acquisition process to lower the level of risk, but in addition seek ex-post confirmation about their choices. Cox (1967) further specifies that the level of perceived risk is formed on the basis of what would be lost if the outcome of the action were not positive (which is in turn dependent on the goals of the action) and on the subjective feeling that the outcome of the action will not be positive. As for the theatre performances, this translates into the aggregate effect the perceived probability of having wasted resources and of a negative experience play on the decision to attend. In fact, Cox (1967) mentions two strategies to lower the perceived risk: reducing the amount of resources that would be lost if the outcome were not positive to a level consumers feel comfortable with and/or increasing the certainty that no loss will result, or that the outcome will indeed be positive. Brown (2004) confirms how performing arts audiences engage in these two strategies when assessing the risk, since the higher the ticket price, the less likely consumers will be to take a chance with something unfamiliar, whose outcome they cannot be sure about (p. 2), hence when ticket prices are considered high and no discounts are available to reduce the amount of resources at stake, consumers will try to reduce the likelihood that loss will occur before making the purchase. Cox (1967), however, also notices that the second strategy is most often employed, which, in the case of theatre, can be attributed to the fact that ticket discounts usually apply only to specific segments of the population. In fact, in his study to find the best strategies from the new product development field to be applied to the performing arts to manage the perception of risk, Crealey (2003) suggests policies to help the consumer feeling more comfortable about the outcome of a performance, from providing knowledge about it, to product testing and even to sell risk as a positive aspect of the performing arts.

In the field of consumer behavior, various components are traditionally seen as contributing to the overall perceived risk: consumers worry not only about losing money and time on a product/service that is not performing up to expectations, but also about their social status and self-perception and how products/services/activities they engage with may influence them (Roselius, 1971; Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972; Colbert, 2003). If on one side, being associated with a classical music concert or a contemporary art exhibition may enhance some impressions others have of us,

the White Hutchinson Leisure & Learning Group (2015) also notices how consumption has become a form of self-expression, and therefore self-actualization, through the possibility for customization that is increasingly expected in order to fully enjoy an activity, so both the components mentioned above can be expected to be associated with cultural activities. Furthermore, there is extensive research on how different components of risk need different relievers in order to be overcome (e.g. Roselius, 1971; Perry & Hamm, 1969; Lutz & Reilly, 1973; Zikmund & Scott, 1973; Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972; Kaplan, Szybillo & Jacoby, 1974; Newton, 1967), therefore, as Roselius (1971, p. 61) suggests, a producer should first determine what components of risk are most strongly associated with their offer and how they contribute to the overall experience to establish strategies to appeal to consumers (Au et al., 2016, p. 28).

Jacoby & Kaplan (1972) identify the performance component as the risk that something will not work properly. Lutz & Reilly (1973) found that when this component is perceived as low, the preferred strategy to acquire information on the product will be to just buy the product, while on the other hand when it is perceived as high, observations and experience are relied upon to acquire and evaluate information in order to decide whether or not to make the purchase. The latter strategy may be considered as a viable one in relation to the cultural products, like theatre performances, that are increasingly appreciated through the process of experience-induced taste formation described by Levy-Garboua and Montmarquette (2002).

Chéron and Ritchie (1982) studied how all the components found to be forming a perception of risk by the previously mentioned authors relate to leisure activities. Although this study does not regard specifically cultural activities, but includes a variety of leisure time options, from reading to watching movies and visiting friends, it still provides an interesting starting point to identify the components that prove more useful in discriminating between these activities, as opposed to goods, thereby extending the risk theory to the area of leisure.

It was found that specific components of risk show significant correlations with the overall perception of risk related to leisure time: the social and psychological components of risk (regarding how others view us and how we see ourselves), followed by the financial, satisfaction and time components (related to having lost resources, both in terms of money and time, and to the personal satisfaction of having accomplished something). The authors also highlight how all these components are not independent from one another. However, they also recognize that because of a faulty sample, results could be hardly generalized and further conceptualization is needed. Nevertheless, this study provides further evidence for the need to go beyond the concept of whether a performance will enable consumers to accomplish their needs for entertainment and symbolic

meaning when investigating the related perception of risk, including other components in the analysis.

Therefore, in the next paragraph, a more comprehensive analysis of the components of risk associated with the theatre experience specifically will be provided, starting from the definition of the categories of risk most often associated with leisure activities provided by Chéron and Ritchie (1982).

2.4 Theatre as a risky activity

As previously mentioned, risk is part of the theatre experience for audiences (Radbourne et al., 2009). It is so because of its intrinsic nature of experience good, making it difficult to evaluate before consumption (Nelson, 1970). Therefore, consumers will try to reduce the perception of risk before purchasing a ticket. Crealey (2003) suggests some strategies that performing arts organizations can adopt in order to make consumers more comfortable about the emotional and cognitive outcomes of a performance and consequently about spending their resources. These include providing information on the play or allowing the consumers to pre-test a performance in order for them to be able to evaluate it or just selling risk as a positive feature of theatre altogether. While these strategies may provide signals on quality, that are found by Abbé-Decarroux (1994) to influence strongly the attendance, they may be of greater use to frequent theatre-goers, who are better equipped to interpret signals to assess the prospective quality of the performance. On the other hand, non-attenders likely find it more difficult to assess the expected quality and utility, and will therefore engage with theatre less.

Hence, a Satisfaction risk component as defined by Chéron and Ritchie (1982) is associated with theatre because of the difficulty to assess whether this particular art form will enable the audience to accomplish entertainment, intellectual stimulation and an overall pleasant experience before the consumption. However, theatre was identified above as a multifaceted experience in which many factors play a role in the evaluation and appreciation for it, so an analysis of this experience in relation also to other components of risk is needed.

Various surveys on participation cited other barriers to attend, which for example include not enough information on programming, distance and access (Research Surveys of Great Britain, 1994, Taylor et al. 2000, Tajtáková & Arias-Aranda, 2008), defined as “practical knowledge” in the *TheatreSpace* project. To these, the fear of feeling uncomfortable in a space not designed for everybody has to be added, as most people see theaters as special places with specific codes of behavior and even a particular dress code (O’Toole et al., 2014). Recognizing the lack of these

types of knowledge, which are taken for granted by regular theatre visitors, contributes to the perception of non-attenders that theatre is a context not suited for them, where they will feel uncomfortable. This probably adds up to the Psychological risk of being in a place and doing something that is not aligned with one's self image, preventing visitors to feel comfortable enough to fully enjoy the experience.

To these, the concern about the lack of possibilities for social interactions has to be added: non-theatre attenders may feel that they will not have anybody to share this experience with, as it may not interest their friends, but also that the theatre space itself does not encourage them to stay and talk about the performance just seen with fellow audience members (O'Toole et al., 2014). As the social sphere is mentioned to play a fundamental role in a number of studies in the evaluation and even heightening of the theatre experience (e.g. Bauer, 1960; Jacobs, 2000; Eversmann, 2004; Brown & Novak, 2007; Radbourne et al., 2009; ITC et al., 2005) it is plausible that the perceived lack of the possibility to interact and feel the collective engagement will increase the Social component and ultimately add up to the overall perception of risk.

Finally, as many studies on theatre attendance highlight how non-frequent theatre attenders are concerned about the value of a performance and declare prices and time to be barriers to attend but then spend more resources than the ones needed for a night at the theatre on other activities (e.g. Radbourne et al., 2009; Kolb, 1997; Taylor et al., 2000) it is reasonable to assume that the perceived value of a performance will impact both the Financial and Time risk component. These concerns result particularly relevant in the formation of overall risk perception given that theatre is a rather time-intensive activity (Throsby, 1994; Hoogenboom, 2010), in comparison to others whose consumption can be more freely decided upon and given the relatively high price of tickets, whose discounts, if present, are available only for some segments of the population. Given these conditions, there is no possibility to reduce the resources at stake, neither in terms of time nor money, and decreasing the likelihood that loss will occur remains the only viable option (Brown, 2004; Cox, 1967).

It is interesting to see how respondents in the previously mentioned studies express worries about the perceived value of theatre also in relation to other performing arts or activities in general, which was anticipated by Fischhoff et al. (1990) who define decisions about risk as about decisions among alternatives. In doing so, consumers articulate their worries in terms of both money and time. Therefore, the next paragraph will attempt to further conceptualize the different perception in terms of economic value of theatre in relation to other leisure activities in order to also lead to the

definition of economic value in terms of both time and money, whose related Financial and Time risk components will be aggregated in the Economic one, the perceived risk of wasting resources.

2.5 Comparison of theatre and other activities in terms of perceived risk

As previously mentioned, the perception of theatre as a risky activity seems to be accentuated because of the wide variety of leisure time activities considered as valid, or better, alternatives for one's enjoyment. There is a specific profile of cultural consumers who are open to and eventually appreciate a wide variety of cultural products, from both the so-called highbrow and lowbrow arts, the "cultural omnivores" (Peterson, 1992; Peterson & Kern, 1996). These people can be expected to be particularly sensitive to the variety of alternatives for their leisure time and this profile seems to be relevant to a number of national contexts and studies on cultural taste (Peterson, 2005; Wright, 2011). The large variety of easily accessible activities for one's enjoyment and the breadth of interests of the growing profile of "cultural omnivores" are therefore resulting in theaters facing an increasing competition not only from each other, but also from many other cultural products. Furthermore, the changing practices of cultural production have to be considered (Wright, 2011): thanks to technological improvements in distribution, a larger variety of content becomes available to consumers, who are able to easily satisfy their needs for fun, education and socialization. Location-based entertainment, like the one based in cultural venues, is particularly suffering from the competition of improved at-home entertainment options: while people will always feel the desire to meet in a physical, communal space, they will go out less often (White Hutchinson Leisure & Learning Group, 2015) and when they do, many places and activities will compete for their attention.

Hence, for more and more people, the opportunity cost of theatre is rising because the resources invested could be spent on many other valid alternatives. Specifically, while in monetary terms most people probably possess sufficient resources, given the spending patterns on leisure activities (see for example Kolb, 1997; Taylor et al., 2000; Torreggiani, 2016), although carefully considered, in terms of time they face a bigger constraint. Our time is limited and, in contrast to money, it is a non-storable resource. Our (leisure) time budget is therefore subject to constraints (Bonato, Gagliardi & Gorelli, 1990; Gray, 2003; Ateca-Amestoy, 2008). In addition, quite a substantial amount of it is usually needed for theatre, both for the actual performance, whose duration can be known in advance, and for all the related activities (transportation, getting there in advance, getting tickets, summarized as transaction costs by Williamson, 1981) whose duration likely cannot be known in advance for sure (Hoogenboom, 2010; Taylor et al. 2000). In order to deal with this time scarcity,

defined by the increase of its demand in face of a stable supply (Linder, 1970), consumers either try to increase their time budget or try to make the most of what is available to them through a trade-off between the quality of the experience and the ease of access (White Hutchinson Leisure & Learning Group, 2015).

As an at-home entertainment option can be considered as high in ease of access, a competitive location-based entertainment option, like a play in a theatre, needs to be perceived as surpassing it in quality, and even when it is so, it still faces the competition of other location-based ones. The possibility to invest resources in something that, in addition to not being easy to access, will likely result to not be high quality either demotivates consumption (Colbert, 2003; O'Toole et al., 2014).

Finally, while accessing a variety of content at any time for a fixed price seems to be regarded as a good option because increasing the likelihood of encountering something enjoyable (like a Netflix subscription), which would mean applying the strategy identified by Cox (1967) of decreasing the likelihood that loss will occur, attending a theatre play means committing to a specific cultural product for a fixed amount of time, which likely increases the level of risk perceived.

Since consumers seemed to be concerned about the opportunity cost of theatre in terms of both money and time, for this research the Financial and Time components identified by Chéron and Ritchie (1982) will be considered to jointly form the Economic one. Because of this Economic risk, which is in turn related to the other components, other activities could be considered as better value for money and time by people who do not attend theatre or do not attend it as often as some arts organizations would like and need. Furthermore, it was mentioned how some specific characteristics of events may influence visitors in seeing them as value for their money and of likely to deliver a pleasant outcome. It is also interesting to see how many surveys on attendance (e.g. Torreggiani, 2016; NEA, 2018; SCP, 2018) report that while theatre is visited mostly by only some segments of the population and only occasionally, arts and theatre festivals are gaining visitors year after year from all age groups. Therefore, in the next chapter an analysis of the festival setting will be provided in order to verify how such a context may constitute a motivation for people to attend theatre performances, thereby experiencing them and having the possibility to rely on past consumption in order to assess the level of risk, applying the risk reduction strategy identified by Lutz and Reilly (1973).

2.6 Festivals and relievers of risk

Today, the festival format is largely widespread and it is possible to find many festivals showcasing different themes, from arts and culture to food and lifestyle. According to the

aforementioned reports, many people every year attend performances during arts and theatre festivals, which result in higher participation than performances during venues' regular theatre seasons. Since within their programming these festivals present content that is essentially the same found in theatre venues, namely live performances, other characteristics of this format are likely playing a role in people's decision to attend, especially considering what was previously said about events and theatre being multifaceted experiences. Moreover, it was also mentioned how many studies report that once people experience theatre, the majority of them find it satisfying and worthy of their resources. Therefore, the characteristics of festivals will now be presented in order to frame them as possible relievers of risk that may impact visitors' perception and eventually their attendance to theatre.

According to Getz (1989), a festival can be defined as a special event that includes various separate activities in display and/or celebration of a theme, open for the public, scheduled at a specific time and place. Schoenmakers (2007) and Bennett and Woodward (2014) also emphasize how the time and space dimensions strongly characterize festivals, as they happen for a limited period and are deeply connected to the city or region that hosts them, at one time influencing and being influenced by the city's social, economical and cultural characteristics. Frey (1994) adds that with the increase in disposable income, people increasingly want to spend on holidays and on culture (testified also by Throsby & Withers, 1979 and Baumol & Baumol, 1984) and festivals fit these two categories of demand by taking place during holiday seasons and appealing also to foreign visitors. For all these reasons, a festival becomes an unmissable event because it takes place only occasionally and, because of the foregrounding principle, it is also perceived as something other than the "normal" occurrences, and so receives special attention (Bennett & Woodward, 2014, Schoenmakers, 2007). A direct consequence of this is that this format is perceived as a safe context where to experience and consume something new and get into contact with people we normally do not engage with on a daily basis (Bennett and Woodward, 2014). It may also be perceived as an opportunity for escape from daily life, an unregulated space that transcends the normal behavior rules (Iso-Ahola, 1980, 1983; Li & Petrick, 2006; Davis, 2008; Martin, 2014).

This perception of festivals as a safe space may have an impact on both the Psychological and Satisfaction risk component: visitors feel comfortable in the space so can experiment with new activities they would normally not engage with, leaving the evaluation of the experience until the end. In this way, people who do not frequently attend theatre may decide to visit a theatre festival because on vacation in a city that is hosting one or because looking for something "special" for their

leisure time; alternatively, they may decide to attend a live performance during an arts festival that includes theatre in the program in addition to the other activities they originally came for.

However, there are other aspects to consider that may lower the perception of risk in attending an arts or theatre festival as opposed to regular programming in a venue even further. To start, a festival is usually a collection of interdisciplinary events. This interdisciplinary character could particularly attract the aforementioned “cultural omnivores” (Peterson, 1992; Peterson & Kern, 1996). By offering a variety of consumption possibilities consumers can pick and choose from in constructing their own schedule (Botha, Viziens & Slabbert, 2012), this format increases consumers’ perception that they will find something enjoyable. This likely contributes even further to relieve the Psychological risk component but also the Satisfaction one, as visitors are given the possibility to accomplish entertainment but also emotional and cognitive engagement all in one place.

Interestingly, Botha et al. (2012) also report that monetary considerations are the least important factor when deciding to attend cultural festivals, which confirms how consumers see festivals as value for their resources because of the variety of content they get access to and because they think that a pleasant experience is a highly likely outcome.

Festivals are also usually organized around a specific theme (Cremona, 2007) and, in order to define it, a choice of certain aesthetic, moral and educational values is made (Sauter, 2007). In addition, a festival is embedded in the cultural identity of the place hosting it (Bennett and Woodward, 2014). Therefore, audiences can recognize themselves as part of a community, although maybe temporal, that adopts and praises the same lifestyle and values (Cremona, 2007; Bennett and Woodward, 2014). This has an impact once again on the perception of Psychological risk by making visitors feel comfortable in the space and community created, but also on the Social component, and in particular on the possibility to interact with fellow community members in the ex-post assessment of the experience, which proves to be defining for a positive evaluation (Bauer, 1960; Jacobs, 2000; Eversmann, 2004; Brown & Novak, 2007; Radbourne et al., 2009; ITC et al., 2005).

Finally, the overall festival structure will enable consumers to place, experience and interpret the single events in a broader context of continuity (depending of course on the degree to which they are aware of that structure) and transfer a sense of excitement from one to the other. These kinds of interpretation, emotion and excitement may be more hardly achievable in the context of a single performance not placed in a framework with others (Schoenmakers, 2007) and lower once again the perception of the Satisfaction component and the overall perception of risk, leading consumers to a desire to attend more similar performances, maybe even in different contexts.

2.7 Research questions

For all the above-mentioned reasons, consumers feel able to assign a rather high level of risk to the theatre experience, which can be deconstructed into various components that relate in turn to the various dimensions of the theatre experience. When attending arts and theatre festivals, even the non-regular theatre attenders get to engage with the overall theatre experience that starts before the performance and ends after its conclusion (O'Toole et al., 2014), perceiving all the multiple dimensions that contribute to it and that are emphasized by the festival context. Whether experiencing theatre in this way could lead consumers to perceive a lower level of risk related to theatre altogether is the subject of this research. Therefore, this research aims at answering the following main research question: to what extent does the experience in arts/theatre festivals affect the perception of theatre as a risky activity?

Given the various components of risk that play a role in the overall perception of risk related to the theatre experience, this question will be tackled by attempting to confirm (or reject) the following four hypothesis:

H1: relievers of satisfaction risk provided by the festival experience have a positive influence on overall risk associated with theatre;

H2: relievers of social risk provided by socialization at festivals have a positive influence on the overall risk associated with theatre;

H3: relievers of psychological risk provided by the comfort of festivals have a positive influence on the overall risk associated with theatre.

H4: Arts/ theatre festival attenders and non-attenders look for different relievers of risk in a theatre performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research strategy

In order to test the above-mentioned hypothesis and answer the research question, a quantitative analysis was conducted, specifically by means of a survey. The choice of this methodology was influenced by the possibility to test how well the theory on festivals may fill the gap between the perception of risk and theatre on a broader scale. In addition, given the various locations and schedules of the festivals in the Netherlands which appeal to various people, a quantitative approach in the form of a survey increased the feasibility of this project (Bryman, 2012, p. 41).

As previously mentioned, in order to research the influence of participation to arts and theatre festivals on theatre as a risky activity, the different components of risk are taken into account.

Specifically, the ones highlighted by Chéron and Ritchie (1982) as forming the main dimension characterizing leisure activities were used, with the modification of considering the Financial and Time components as one, as these authors provide the most relevant analysis in terms of risk associated with leisure time as opposed to tangible goods.

Therefore, firstly a review of the dedicated literature led to the identification of the main constructs related to experiencing theatre performances at festivals that could function as possible relievers of the risk components associated with theatre in general. For the satisfaction component, defined by Chéron and Ritchie (1982) as the concern consumers have that engaging in a determined activity will yield a sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction, the prospect of an experience that allows for accomplishments of various natures in order to satisfy the omnivore character of most audiences and the desire to access more content in one place was identified as a possible reliever. For the Social component, defined as a concern on how engaging in a determined activity will influence the social sphere and social status of a person, a Socialization construct was identified, which enables assessment of the experience just lived and the derived status from participating with other people. As per the Psychological component, or concern on how engaging in an activity impacts the self-perception and self-actualization, a feeling of comfort derived from the special character of the festival context is identified in order for consumers to feel able to realize what is important to them. Finally, as the Economic risk is mentioned in many studies about non-attenders and their motivations, either explicitly or implicitly, in this research it will be analyzed together with the other dimensions of a better perception of theatre after seeing a performance at festivals.

The components of risk and their related relieving constructs are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Risk components and relieving constructs

Construct	Risk component
Experience	Satisfaction
Socialization	Social
Comfort	Psychological
Perceived Value	Economic

Second, the independent variables related to each construct were identified and operationalized. In particular, it was considered how many frameworks underline the importance of various types of engagements for the positive evaluation of the theatre experience, from emotional to cognitive (e.g. Eversmann, 2004; ITC et al., 2005; Brown & Novak, 2007; Radbourne et al., 2009) which could be emphasized by specific characteristics of the festival context for the Experience construct. Possibilities to interact within the social sphere to heighten the experience just lived through discussions and recollection were identified as main factors of the collective engagement of both theatre and festivals, underlined by Jacobs (2000), Radbourne et al. (2009), Cremona (2007) and Bennett and Woodward (2014), and so of the Socialization construct. For the Psychological component, it was considered how a feeling of comfort enabled by festivals could allow visitors to interpret the performance in relation to their own values and emotions but also in relation to the ones experienced by the collective and how these aspects of theatre are appreciated even by respondents who do not normally attend (McCarthy et al., 2004; Radbourne et al., 2009).

Lastly, the items of the survey were derived directly from the variables. In the questionnaire, respondents were first asked whether they had ever attended theatre performances during arts/theatre festivals. If they had, they were asked to relate the items to the last of those performances they attended and to react to them according to a five point Likert scale, from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. If they had not, they were asked to relate those items to their motivations to attend theatre and theatre festivals more, and to react to them again according to the five point Likert scale. A Likert scale was chosen because of its superior convergent and discriminant validity (Maddox, 1985).

The operationalization table summarizing the constructs and their related variables, authors and items is as follows:

Table 2. Operationalization table

Constructs	Independent Variables	Authors	Items
Experience	Enjoyment	Kolb (1997); Taylor et al. (2000, 2001).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know I would enjoy myself; • More content I could enjoy;
	Intellect	Pine & Gilmore (1998), Eversmann (2004); ITC et al. (2005); Brown & Novak (2007); Radbourne et al. (2009); Boerner et al. (2010); O'Toole et al. (2014).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wanted to use my intellect; • More content to challenge me intellectually;
	Program theme	Cremona (2007); Schoenmakers (2007); Botha et al. (2012); De Geus et al. (2016).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The performance was an integration to other thematic activities at the festival; • Multiple performances revolving around a theme.
	Novelty	Botha et al. (2012); Bennett & Woodward (2014).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To experience something new
	Escapism	Iso-Ahola (1980, 1983); Pine & Gilmore (1998); Li & Petrick, (2006); Davis (2008); Martin (2014).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provided me with an escape from reality
Socialization	Social interaction	Kolb (1997); Jacobs (2000); Eversmann (2004); Radbourne et al. (2009); O'Toole et al. (2014); De Geus et al. (2016).	I was able to socialize

	Sense of community/ belonging	Cremona (2007); Radbourne et al. (2009); Bennet & Woodward (2014); O'Toole et al. (2014); Kinnunen & Haahti (2015).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I felt a sense of belonging; • Feeling welcome and belonging at the venue.
	Recollection	Radbourne et al. (2009); Tung & Ritchie (2011).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was able to relive this later (talk about it with others and show pictures); • Being able to relive this later with friends through pictures.
	Reflexivity	Radbourne et al. (2009).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I reflected on ideas and discussed them with others; • Being able to discuss ideas with others.
Comfort	Value creation	Cremona (2007); Tung & Ritchie (2011) Bennett & Woodward (2014).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It makes me aware of my own values
	Symbolic meaning	Eversmann (2004); ITC et al. (2005); Morgan (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can identify with what some performances represent; • More content I can identify with.
	Emotional affinity	McCarthy et al. (2004); Radbourne et al. (2009); O'Toole et al. (2014).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It makes different people feel similar emotions; • Feeling emotions similar to other people.
	Interpretation	Eversmann (2004); Volo (2010).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It allows me to explain/interpret things for myself
	Self-realization	Radbourne (2007).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like my true self when attending so I feel comfortable

Perceived value	Value for money	Kolb (1997); Taylor et al. (2000); Brown (2004); Radbourne et al. (2009), White Hutchinson (2015).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel more confident spending my time and money on theatre; • I still think I am risking to waste my time and money if attending theatre (RV); • Ticket discounts.
	Value for time	Taylor et al. (2000); Hoogenboom (2010); White Hutchinson (2015).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel more confident spending my time and money on theatre; • I still think I am risking to waste my time and money if attending theatre (RV); • Shorter performances.

In order to increase the number of possible respondents, the survey was first formulated in English and then translated in Dutch and both versions were made accessible when starting to complete it. It can be found in Appendix A.

3.2 Data collection

The sampling selection of this research aimed at reaching people who attend theatre performances at least occasionally in a variety of contexts, in order to get the impressions of people who are able to compare and evaluate different experiences. In this way, it was possible to collect data from people who attend performances both in festivals and theaters, the two specific contexts at exam in this research, in order to investigate a possible change in their attitude toward theatre, but also from people who do not attend festivals and maybe are not frequent theatre attenders at all in order to get also their impressions on the theatre experience, enabling a comparison between festival attenders and non-attenders (better explained in the Data analysis and Findings chapters below).

According to Het Culturele Leven (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2018), from 2012 to 2017 there has been an increase in the number of theatre festivals around the country of the Netherlands and also of theaters partaking in the organization of festivals. The website Theater Festival Agenda

(theaterfestival.info), in addition, signals around seventy festivals, focusing on theatre specifically but also on arts and culture in general, that include theatre performances in their programming. Therefore, the Netherlands provides a good context in which to initiate research on how experiencing theatre at festivals may influence the overall risk perception, thereby expanding Chéron and Ritchie (1982) study on how to apply the theory on risk to the leisure activities. Het Culturele Leven also reports that the latest data on attendance shows 4,5 millions visits to theatre festivals in 2017 and 18,2 to professional stage performances in general.

Selecting festivals and theaters from the same country also ensured a certain degree of coherence in the analysis, increasing the reliability and validity of the results. Finally, feasibility considerations regarding this project also played a role in deciding to limiting the collection of data to one country and to the Netherlands in particular.

In total, thirty-five festivals of the ones listed on the Theatre festival Agenda website and fourteen theaters partaking in the organization of festivals in various cities all cross the Netherlands were emailed and asked to distribute the survey through their channels or, depending on their schedules and agendas, to allow the physical distribution of the survey to their visitors in between the performances listed in their programs. Of these organizations, eventually two performing arts festivals, one taking place in Amsterdam and one in Groningen, distributed the survey through their social media, respectively on Facebook with almost 3.000 followers and on Twitter with almost 10.000. An anonymous survey link was sent to them to be shared with their visitors on social media and they each decided independently which would have been the best channel for it to be posted, as to not conflict with their own scheduled posts and survey distributions. The choice of an anonymous survey link was dictated by both the need to ensure the anonymity of respondents and the will to detach the data collected from the two festivals, since the aim of this research is to investigate a general possible trend among festival attenders.

Furthermore, two organizations allowed for physical distribution during their upcoming event/ performance, a theatre performance in Rotterdam and a performing arts festival in Delft. In particular, according to the Facebook pages of the two events, 70 people attended the theatre performance and around 270 attended the festival. Finally, in order to increase the number of responses and go over the required 150, the survey was also physically distributed at a spoken word event at Erasmus University. During these last three events, respondents were either given a paper copy of the survey or were sent the previously mentioned anonymous link, according to which medium they stated to prefer. This choice was allowed in order to increase the number of visitors willing to take the survey. Because of the afore-mentioned reasons, it was made sure that the

academic nature of this research and its aim were clear to respondents, as well as the anonymous character of the data collected. Visitors were approached randomly, but since two of the events were related to academic contexts (namely the festival in Delft and the performance at Erasmus University), the populations attending resulted to be predominantly younger than 30 years old and students. The possible effects this sampling composition may have on the possibility to generalize the present results will be further analyzed in one of the next chapters. At the end, a total of 164 responses was collected, 60% of which declared to have attended at least one theatre performance during an arts/theatre festival.

3.3 Data analysis

In this paragraph, the techniques and tests used to produce the results will be explained and justified in relation to the type of data collected and the underlying questions this research aims to answer. All the following analysis were run with the program SPSS Statistics 25.0.

As each risk component was associated with its own construct and dependent variables that could influence its specific perception, firstly a reliability test was conducted separately for the three constructs. An exploratory factor analysis was therefore run to confirm the existence and unidimensionality of the stated constructs. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test and Bartlett's test were conducted and revealed that for the data collected, sufficiently large correlations between items confirmed the suitability of an exploratory factor analysis (to be found in Tables 3, 4, 5, Appendix B). Specifically, all KMO tests yielded values above 0,5 (0,67 for Experience, 0,57 for Socialization and 0,77 for Comfort) and all Bartlett's tests of sphericity values below 0,05 (0,00 for all three constructs). The exploratory factor analysis resulted in two components for each construct as having eigenvalues above 1 but, while the variables for the Experience construct can be divided between Enjoyment, Program theme and Escapism and Intellect and Novelty (Tables 6, 7, Appendix B), both the Socialization and Comfort construct show all variables belonging to one of the two components except for one (specifically Reflexivity for Socialization and Value creation for Comfort, to be found in Tables 8, 9, 10, 11, Appendix B). Therefore, while the variables influencing the Satisfaction risk component could be better defined, the constructs pertaining to the Social and Psychological components show a higher level of internal consistency. This analysis, however, shows that for all three constructs, results have to be interpreted with caution, as no absolute unidimensionality can be established with the variables selected.

Secondly, to test the first three hypothesis, so to test the effect of the variables pertaining to each component of risk on the Perceived value, Theatre appreciation and Participation, a bivariate

analysis was conducted. In the survey, the dependent variables were referred to also through some reverse items (i.e. “I still do not particularly enjoy theatre”), which were recoded through SPSS in order to then run the analysis. As Bryman (2012, p. 335) and many other writers suggest that Likert scales produce ordinal variables, Spearman’s rho was calculated to measure each of the three relationships between two sets of ordinal variables, selecting a level of statistical significance of $p=0,05$. This means that when p-values lower than this level were found, the related results of the tests could be regarded as statistically significant and included in the discussion of results.

Finally, in order to assess the fourth hypothesis, the group of the so-called festival attenders, those who responded yes to the question “Have you ever attended a theatre performance at an arts/theatre festival?”, and the group of the so-called non-festival attenders, those who responded no to the same question, were compared in regard to their evaluation of the variables that could make them attend theatre more. In order to do so, the Mann-Whitney U test was chosen as an alternative to the t-test because it does not require the normal distribution that the two groups of data do not show. In order for this test to be run and its results to be interpreted, the following assumptions must be present:

1. Independent observations from the two groups;
2. Ordinal responses;
3. The distributions of the two groups are rather similar.

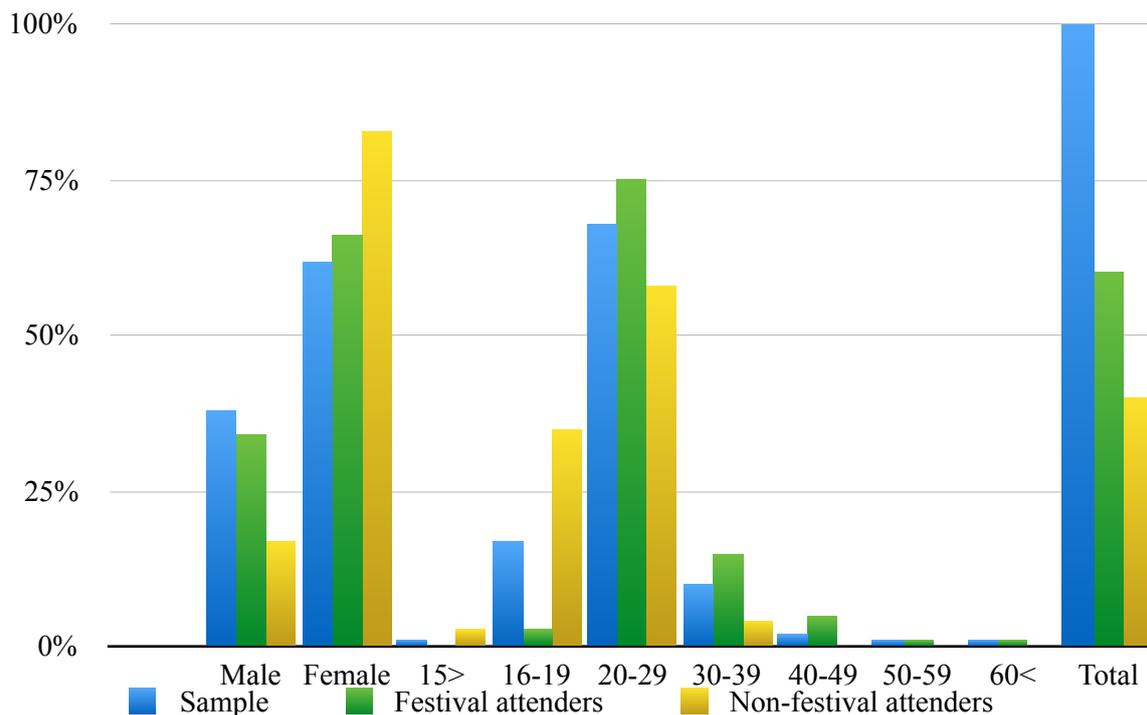
The first two assumptions can both be verified looking at how the data of this research was collected, specifically at the structure of the survey. The third was verified through a test of homogeneity variance in SPSS, whose results will be illustrated in the Findings chapter.

4. Findings

4.1 Overview of survey respondents

A total of 164 responses was collected, 60% of which declared to have attended at least one theatre performance during an arts/theatre festivals. As the Chart 1 shows, the sample appears to be composed predominantly of females, with 62%. In regard to this aspect, this sample can be considered as quite representative of the general population of theatre performances attenders in the Netherlands, as the data summarized by the latest *Het Culturele Leven* (SCP, 2018) on the participation to traditional performing arts in the Netherlands shows similar percentages. The sample also shows a predominance of people aged between 20 and 29 years old, with a percentage of 68%. Arts and theatre festivals in the Netherlands most likely still appeal largely to younger age groups, as various reports signal a peak in attendance to these events for people aged below 34

Chart 1. Survey respondents demographics



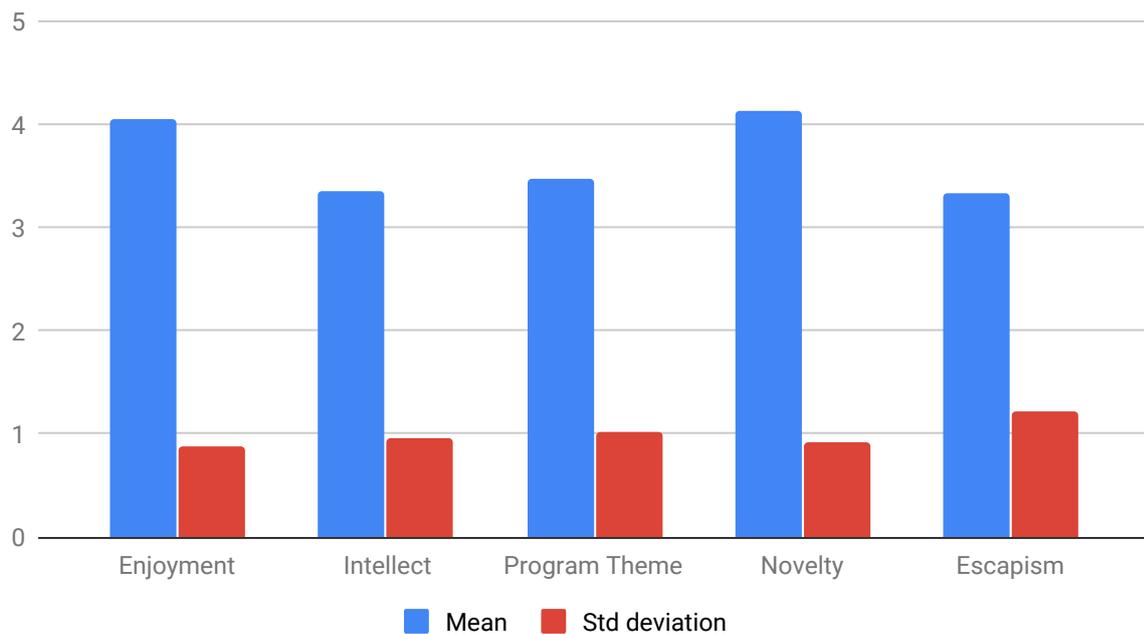
years old (NEA, 2018; SCP, 2018) and 67% of the respondents who have attended a theatre performance in this context is between 20 and 29 years old. On the other hand, however, also 57% of those who have not attended a theatre performance in a festival context, but who declared to visit theatre at least occasionally, is from this age group, which once again results to be the highest percentage among the age groups identified for this research. However, many attendance surveys report that this age group traditionally shows the lowest percentages of participation to theatre and the performing arts, while the groups above 50 years old show the highest (NEA, 2018; Torreggiani, 2016; SCP, 2018). Although these data could provide an interesting starting point for future research on possible new attendance trends in relation to specific age groups, for this research it is not possible to state that they are representative of the wider population of people attending theatre performances in different contexts or just of the population more used to fill out surveys through web links. The present results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

The results of the analysis run on data will now be presented and discussed in relation with the relevant literature and the research question and hypothesis. In order to investigate the effect of relievers of risk associated with the three independent constructs identified (Experience, Socialization, Comfort) some descriptive statistics and the statistically significant results of the Spearman's rho bivariate analysis will be provided. Then, a comparison between the groups of festival attenders and non-festival attenders will follow, explained through some descriptive statistics and the results of the Mann-Whitney U test.

4.2 Relievers of satisfaction risk

Now, the influence of the relievers of the satisfaction risk associated with the theatre experience provided by the festival setting will be explored. When confronted with a list of reasons to attend a theatre performance during an arts/theatre festival to be rated from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), respondents who have attended at least one in such a context rated them as follows:

Chart 2. Descriptive statistics Experience construct



According to the respondents, Enjoyment does play an important role when deciding to attend a performance. In addition, the Spearman's rho bivariate analysis between the responses to this question and the ones to the question about the improved perception of theatre after attending a performance at a festival shows positive and significant correlations between Enjoyment and an improved perception of risk (Table 12, Appendix B). In particular, it is worthwhile to highlight how Enjoyment positively correlates with the items about spending time and money at the theatre, so with the perceived value associated with the experience. These first results, therefore, confirm the studies by Kolb (1997), Taylor et al. (2000), O'Toole et al. (2014) about how the prospect of enjoying a performance plays a decisive role in deciding whether to attend or not. Experiencing enjoyment, even in a different context than the regular theatre one, does have an influence on the perception of theatre as a risky activity, changing it into one that is value for consumers' money.

It is then interesting to see how the variables Novelty and Program Theme, which are often mentioned in the literature on festival, show high ratings as well in the descriptive statistics table above. In particular, Novelty being the highest rated variable reflects the characterization of festivals as “safe” spaces where to experiment with something new given their foregrounding principle (Bennett & Woodward, 2014; Schoenmakers, 2007). Furthermore, a positive correlation of Novelty with a better perception of theatre is confirmed by the Spearman’s rho bivariate analysis: at the accepted statistical significance level of $p=0,05$, Novelty positively correlates with the items regarding an increased enjoyment of theatre and increased attendance. From these data, it can be inferred that even the festival visitors who attended a theatre performance just because encouraged by the environment to experiment with something new and not because being particularly passionate about theatre, consequently appreciate this art form even outside the festival context as a mean to accomplish the needs and wants exemplified by the construct of experience, first of all enjoyment. The Novelty aspect of festivals can therefore lower the perception of Satisfaction risk associated with theatre.

Furthermore, the Program theme variable’s rather high rating is to be considered in relation with the importance of themes in festivals. First because, in order to showcase these themes, various interdisciplinary activities are often made available to the public: the high rating of this variable, therefore, represents the visitors’ will to attend a theatre performance in a festival setting because offering an integration to these other activities. Second, since a thematic framework usually helps consumers in evaluating more performances together, increasing the likelihood that the subsequent ones will be appreciated (Cremona, 2007; Sauter, 2007; Schoenmakers, 2007; Botha et al., 2012), a high rating to the variable Program Theme may lead to a desire to attend various similar performances, which ultimately increases attendance also in other contexts. Hence, once again the context of festivals and their characteristics are providing a motivation for visitors to engage with activities they would not normally consider, which then in the case of theatre leads to increased consumption also outside this specific setting.

On the other hand, Escapism, also frequently mentioned in festival literature (e.g. in Iso-Ahola, 1980, 1983; Li & Petrick, 2006; Davis, 2008; Martin, 2014), is not found to positively correlate with the perception of theatre at a statistically significant level in the bivariate analysis. Events and art in general are often regarded as means to escape the daily life (Getz, 2012; Morgan et al., 2010; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Volo, 2010), so it is possible that respondents do not strictly connect the escapism aspect with festivals and did not consider it when deciding to attend a performance in such a context specifically. A similar reasoning can be applied to Intellect, since a cognitive component is

mentioned as something people value when attending most events, including theatre events (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Eversmann, 2004; ITC et al., 2005; Brown & Novak, 2007; Radbourne et al., 2009; Boerner et al., 2010; O’Toole et al., 2014).

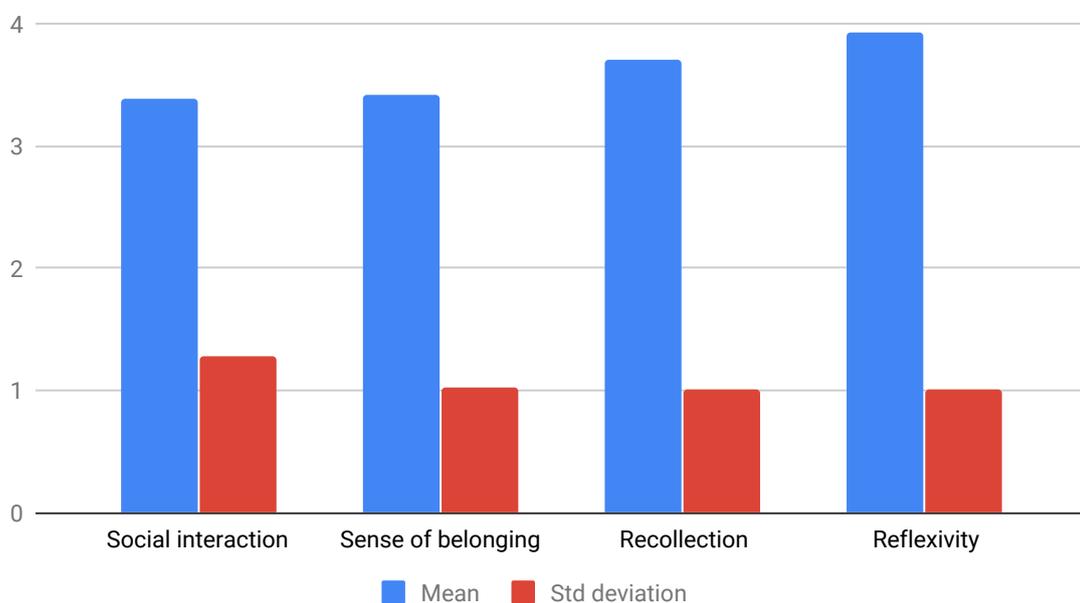
In conclusion, the variables connected with two of the principal characteristics of festivals, Novelty and Program Theme, are found to be factors in the decision to attend theatre performances in such a context and to have some positive effect on the perception of theatre as a risky activity overall, even for those visitors who see theatre as a risky activity because out of their comfort zone (Radbourne et al., 2009, p. 24), because they provide them with a motivation to attend. In regard to the other variables that were initially connected to the construct of Experience, which could relieve Satisfaction risk, it is worthy to recollect the results of the factor analysis which revealed that the variables could be associated with two distinct constructs instead of one.

Therefore, H1, regarding the relievers of risk provided by the festival format having a positive influence on overall risk associated with theatre, can be confirmed only partially: some specific dimensions of the festival format are functioning as relievers of Satisfaction risk associated with theatre performances and so ultimately positively correlate with overall perception of theatre as a risky activity; however, the identified construct of Experience was proved to be in need of a better definition in order to find more such dimensions with this effect and so cannot be regarded as a relevant reliever of risk overall.

4.3 Relievers of social risk

An analysis similar to the one employed to investigate the possible relievers of Satisfaction risk provided by the festival format will now be applied to the ones relieving the Social risk component.

Chart 3. Descriptive statistics Socialization construct



According to these descriptive statistics, all the variables initially connected with the construct of Socialization and deemed as relievers of Social Risk are rated rather high by respondents when they were asked about what they appreciated the most about attending the performance during an arts/theatre festival. The highest ratings assigned to Recollection and Reflexivity, which are both referred to the after-performance phase, scored the highest, are in accordance with the importance of ex-post confirmation of consumption choices to lower the perceived level of risk described by Bauer (1960).

On the other hand, although Sense of belonging and Social interaction were assigned lower ratings, the Social interaction variable showed statistically relevant correlations with the items exemplifying increased enjoyment of theatre (Table 13, Appendix B), confirming the importance of the collective engagement (as defined by Radbourne et al., 2009) in the evaluation of the theatre experience and as a factor determining future attendance. Therefore, based on these data, the prospects of immediately assessing the perception others have of us after one particular consumption choice, the choice to attend a specific performance, through the Socialization dimensions and of assessing the experience together do lower the perception of Social risk and are considered when deciding to see the performance during an arts/theatre festival.

However, out of all the variables initially associated with the construct of Socialization, only Reflexivity appears to be correlating positively and consistently with an improved overall perception of theatre as a risky activity after participation to a festival and this variable was identified as a separate component through the factor analysis explained in a previous chapter. Reflexivity cannot therefore be regarded as a reliever of the Social risk associated with theatre specifically. It may be part of other dimensions identified to characterize the theatre experience, like the cognitive one which is proven by many to be a main factor in the creation and evaluation of theatre experiences for audiences (e.g. Eversmann, 2004; Boerner et al., 2010), since it is formulated as the prospect to be able to discuss the performance just seen with others. In this way, the positive correlation with a better perception of risk evidenced by the bivariate analysis could be explained. However, exactly in what other ways, not related to the Social risk component, it may have an influence on it is beyond the scope of this research but could be further explored in the future.

As per the other variables, Radbourne et al. (2009) underscore how the collective engagement of a live performance represents an explicit measure of value for the audience and so helps also as a reliever of the overall perception of risk. Since many other authors find it to be a factor that heightens the theatre experience and conceptualize it in their frameworks (e.g. Jacobs, 2000;

Eversmann, 2004; ITC et al., 2005; Brown & Novak, 2007), it could be expected that the Socialization construct, when present, may help relieve the Social risk component associated with theatre and then lead to a better perception overall. However, the data of this research shows respondents' appreciation for the variables related to this construct but no subsequent significant correlation with a better appreciation of theatre overall.

These results confirm the importance of the environment of events in the overall experience, as conceptualized by De Geus et al. (2016). Because of the characteristics of festivals explained above, arts and theatre festivals are inherently perceived and valued as communal spaces where communities are created and physical interaction is encouraged as part of the experience per se (Richards, 2017; White Hutchinson Leisure & learning Group, 2015; Cremona, 2007; Bennett & Woodward, 2014), which ultimately seems to be benefitting the theatre performance as a shared experience in ways that regular theaters, sometimes perceived as venues not suited for socialization (O'Toole et al., 2014), cannot. A clear distinction of the two contexts at exam and what kind of experiences take place there, more than the content of the performances itself, is probably what is leading to two very different degrees of Social risk and perceiving one in a context does not appear to be influencing the other.

Hence, based on these data, H2 regarding the influence of the relievers of Social risk provided by festivals on the overall perception of theatre as a risky activity cannot be confirmed. Despite the increasing number of arts and theatre festivals which may have to some extent an influence on the overall perception of risk related to theatre and lead to an increased attendance also to regular theaters, these more traditional venues and organizations will still need to reinvent the way they present their spaces and performances in order to appeal to those visitors who value socialization as much as a good performance.

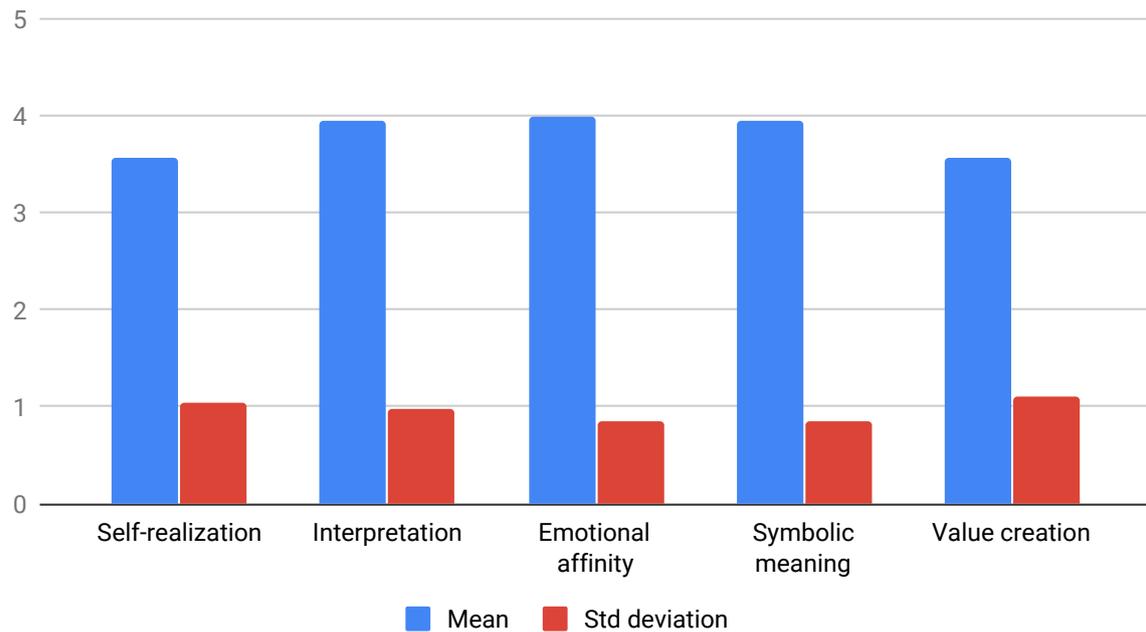
4.4 Relievers of psychological risk

The relievers of psychological risk provided by the festival context, exemplified by the construct of Comfort, will now be analyzed in order to confirm a possible influence on the overall perception of risk related to theatre.

When respondents were asked about their thoughts on theatre after having seen a performance in a festival context, they rated the variables as illustrated in Chart 4.

Once again, we see that all variables were rated rather high. In particular, the highest ratings of Symbolic Meaning, Emotional Affinity and Interpretation are aligned with Jacobs (2000), Radbourne et al. (2009) and O'Toole et al.'s (2014) studies showing what do people who do not

Chart 4. Descriptive statistics Comfort construct



attend theatre, or at least do not attend often, appreciate about seeing live performances of this kind after having properly experienced them.

The bivariate analysis (Table 14, Appendix B) shows that Value creation positively and significantly correlates with the items relating to an increased attendance to theatre and a better perception of the economic value of such an experience, but as the factor analysis revealed that this variable does not belong in the same component as the others, these correlations will not be considered in the process of confirming or rejecting the third hypothesis of this research, regarding the relievers of Psychological risk and their possible influence on the overall perception of theatre.

On the other hand, also the other variables show consistent correlations across the items associated with a better overall perception of the risk associated with theatre. Specifically, all the variables positively and significantly correlate with the item “I started attending theatre more”, showing that, in contrast with the previously analyzed construct of Socialization, once experienced at festivals, the Comfort construct can be associated with a theatre performance across different contexts, leading to an increased attendance beyond the festivals. This finding also confirms Radbourne’s (2007) argument that audiences will be loyal to theatre if they can fulfill their need for self-actualization (p. 3), which is possible when a sense of comfort is felt.

In addition, Interpretation and Self-realization display significant relationships also with the item “I feel more confident spending my time and money on theatre”, which indicates an increased value associated with theatre and so a lower Economic component of risk.

Hence, H3 is confirmed: the Comfort dimension of festivals helps visitors in feeling and subsequently associating such a dimension to theatre in general, regardless of the context, relieving the Psychological risk component and having an effect on overall perception of risk.

In this sense, in order to give attenders a better possibility to interpret the performance and appreciate it in relation to one's personal values and life, emphasizing the Comfort dimension of live theatre performances seems to be a better strategy than the one suggested by Crealey (2003, p. 32) and conceptualized by Radbourne et al. (2009) in their framework about providing information on the plays before attendance. Although providing information not only on the content of performances, but also maybe on some practical aspects of visiting theatre venues may help decrease the perceived level of risk (as evidenced in Research Surveys of Great Britain, 1994; Taylor et al., 2001; Tajtáková & Arias-Aranda, 2008; O'Toole et al., 2014), the ever increasing importance of the consumers as co-creators of value in an event experience should not be underestimated: as it was seen, part of events' appeal is this possibility consumers see to contribute to them in the value-creation process (Richards, 2017) and the quality perceived in a theatre experience is reportedly enhanced when audiences feel they somehow contributed to it as opposed to just "sit there and be quiet" (Radbourne et a., 2009, p. 26). As some visitors report a feeling of anxiety when it comes to theatre because they feel there is something specific about a theatre performance that needs to be "figured out" (Jacobs, 2000, p. 139), feeling comfortable may help them create their own value in the performance better than having more information about it, thereby lowering the Psychological components and consequently the overall perception of risk. Emphasizing a feeling of comfort and prospect of co-creation of value may help attract both the audiences that attend festivals and so have come to appreciate these aspects and those who do not but feel the anxiety evidenced by Jacobs (2000) and see theatre venues as spaces that suit well only some people because of their specific codes of conduct and content displayed (O'Toole et a., 2014).

Lastly, the relationships between the variables associated with the Comfort construct and the increased attendance and better perception of the economic value of a theatre performance also suggest a strong influence of the Psychological risk component on the overall perception of theatre as a risky activity when compared with the almost non-existent ones of the Socialization construct and the limited ones of the Experience construct. As Chéron and Ritchie (1982) put forward, the components of risk associated with leisure activities are not independent of one another, so it is possible that a very low Psychological risk component could compensate for a still present Social risk component in the decision to attend theatre.

4.5 Comparison of festival attenders and non-festival attenders

Chart 5. Festival attenders' items rankings

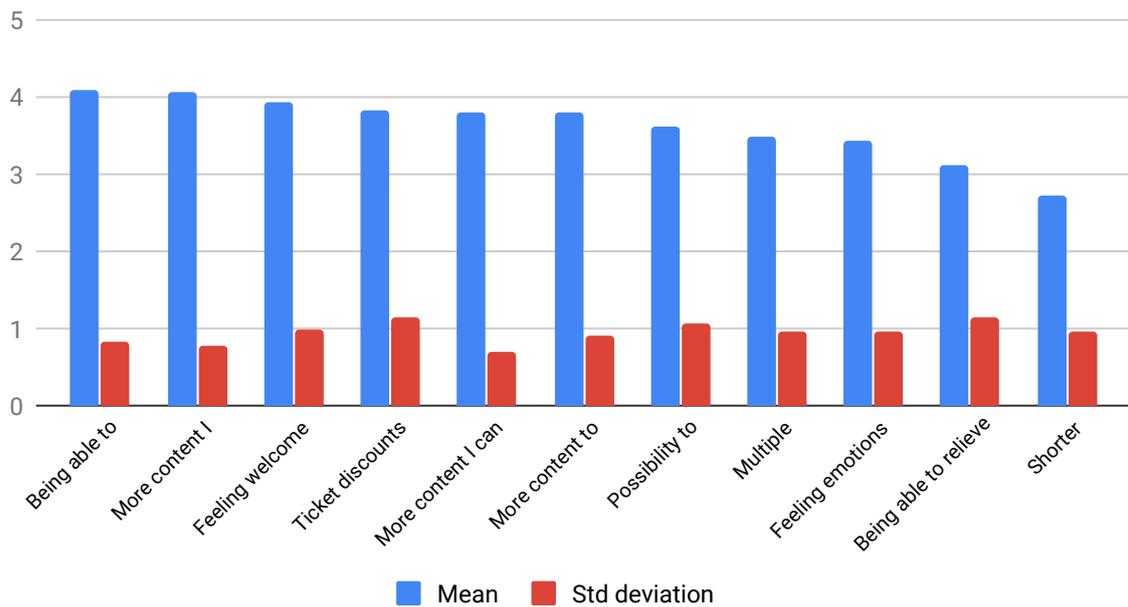
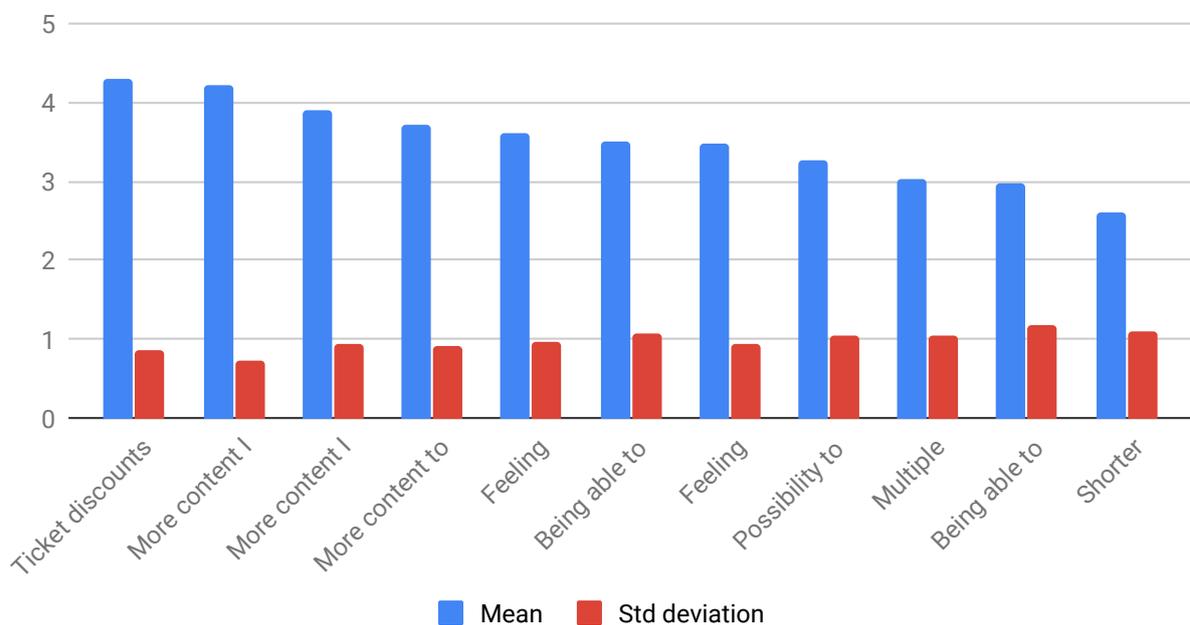


Chart 6. Non-festival attenders' items rankings



Finally, the results of the comparison of the groups of festival attenders and non-festival attenders will be presented and analyzed in order to identify differences in the type of relievers that each group values and looks for when deciding to attend a theatre performance. If present, these

differences would further confirm two distinct perceptions of risk in theatre according to whether respondents attended or not festivals.

In the survey, it was asked to rate some factors that would make respondents attend theatre more. The rankings assigned to each of the items of Q10 of the survey were divided by group and were ordered from the highest to the lowest mean value, summarized in Charts 5 and 6.

At a first glance, the two groups appear to be evaluating differently the factors that could relieve their perception of risk, as the items are ranked in different orders by the two groups. In particular, these tables highlight how festival attenders consider other factors above Ticket discounts when assessing the overall perceived value of a performance and so in their decision to attend theatre more, while Ticket discounts results as the main factor that could make non-festival attenders attend more. In addition, while the group of non-festival attenders put all the items regarding the content of the performance on top of the ranking, the group of festival attenders regarded more highly some items that concern the context rather than the content. It can be inferred that after attending festivals, visitors look more for reassurances about the context of the performance as they now probably value all the multiple dimensions of an event experience (De Geus et al., 2016). The non-festival attenders may not yet see theatre in this way and look for reassurances about the content instead, as they perceive the negative risk of a confrontation derived from seeing specific challenging content (Radbourne et al., 2009, p. 20), which would impact their perception of the Satisfaction component and prompting them to firstly look for relievers associated with it and maybe just perceive a higher risk overall. Because of this, they also articulate the risk they perceive in terms of value for their time and money, as found also by Radbourne et al. (2009, p. 24) and probably see Ticket discounts as a good compromise for the risk they feel they are taking with their resources. This is further confirmation of the fact that festival attenders perceive the risk associated with theatre and its components differently than those who do not attend.

It can also be seen that not only these rankings are different, but also the values assigned to each item by the two groups are different. To establish whether these differences in values are significant and so could be interpreted in this analysis, a test of homogeneity variance in SPSS was conducted in order to then run a Mann-Whitney U test. The null hypothesis to be confirmed or rejected by the test of homogeneity was that the distributions of the two groups are not similar. Table 15, in Appendix B, reports the results of this first test. In particular, the values based on Median and based on Median and with adjusted df will be considered as relevant to a non-parametric test like the Mann-Whitney U one.

According to the results reported in Table 15 (Appendix B), at the chosen level of statistical significance $p=0,05$, it is not possible to reject the assumption of different distributions for the items “More content I could enjoy” and “More content to challenge me intellectually”. It is possible to reject the null hypothesis for the rest of the items, meaning that the distributions of the two groups are sufficiently similar in relation to most of the items of the question at exam in order for a Mann-Whitney U test to be run and interpreted.

This second test was therefore conducted on the two groups in order to establish whether the differences of scoring highlighted in the descriptive statistics table above are statistically significant. In particular, the mean ranks generated will be considered. At the chosen level of statistical significance $p=0,05$, it is possible to state that the different mean ranks values associated with the two groups are relevant in regard to the items “Multiple performances revolving around a theme”, “Possibility to socialize at the venue”, “Feeling welcome and belonging at the venue”, “Being able to discuss ideas with others” and “Ticket discounts”. Table 16, generated by SPSS, summarizing the statistically relevant results of this test is as follows:

Table 16. Mann-Whitney U Test for festival attenders and non-festival attenders

Ranks			
	Have you ever attended theatre performances at an arts/theatre festival?	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Multiple performances revolving around a theme	Yes	85,42	7602,50
	No	63,90	4025,50
Possibility to socialize at the venue	Yes	83,56	7437,00
	No	66,52	4191,00
Feeling welcome and belonging at the venue	Yes	83,99	7475,50
	No	65,91	4152,50
Being able to discuss ideas with others	Yes	86,95	7738,50
	No	61,74	3889,50
Ticket discounts	Yes	70,76	6298,00
	No	84,60	5330,00

The first striking characteristic of this table is that the Ticket discounts item is the only one showing higher mean ranks for the non-festival attenders than for the festival attenders. This means that not only the non-festival attenders consider it an incentive to increase attendance over the other variables, but also regard it more highly than how the other group does.

As in the previous paragraphs it was shown how attending festivals affects some components of risk associated with theatre, from this result of the Mann-Whitney U test and the previously reported rankings assigned to Ticket discounts by the two groups, it is plausible to assume that festival attenders and non-festival attenders see different economic value in a theatre performance. This means that festival attenders do not need to rely as much on Ticket discounts to increase their attendance, while, as it was already mentioned, non-festival attenders need them as a compromise for the risk they feel they are taking. A connection with Cox' (1967) and Lutz and Reilly's (1973) studies can be made: as the level of (satisfaction) risk is perceived as high, non-festival attenders seem to rely more on a strategy of lowering the resources at stake as opposed to relying on previous experience to assess the likelihood that the outcome of the experience will be positive.

In addition, it is worthwhile to consider again that 68% of the festival attenders group and 57% of the non-festival attenders group are aged between 20 and 29 years old, either students or at the start of their careers: regarding the price-elasticity of this segment of the population, this research seems to be going in the same direction as Kolb's (1997) and Taylor et al.'s (2000), meaning that also for this lower-income group the amount of resources needed to partake in the theatre experience is considered in relation to other factors, specifically to those that will lower the level of risk. However, the present results do not allow for any certain affirmations about the effect of attending arts/theatre festivals on younger audiences specifically, which would need further research to be confirmed.

On the other hand, when confronted with the other relievers of risk, the statistically significant values all show higher rankings assigned by the festival attenders group. The first of these items is "Multiple performances revolving around a theme". Being themes an important characteristic of festivals that was mentioned throughout this paper, festival attenders can be considered to be more familiar with a thematic programming involving multiple performances or even interdisciplinary activities, which lowers the level of perceived risk as found by Chéron and Ritchie (1982). Furthermore, because of this familiarity they probably also tend to appreciate the overall framework provided by those themes, in accordance with Schoenmakers (2007). Both these considerations would explain the higher importance given by festival attenders to this item.

The remaining items that were assigned higher rankings by the festival attendees all pertain to the Socialization construct. While a relationship between the Social risk relievers of a festival and a better perception of theatre as a risky activity was not confirmed in this research, the data examined in this paragraph, both through the descriptive statistics and the Mann-Whitney U test, shows that those who attend festivals do appear to be looking for the Socialization construct more than the ones who do not attend festivals. Hence, it could be stated that, after attending arts/theatre festivals, the Socialization dimension of a theatre event is still seen as lacking when attending it in regular theatre venues, but more valued by those who experienced it in another context and so plays a role in the process of assigning a level of risk to theatre and deciding to attend, as found by Radbourne et al. (2009).

In conclusion, the fourth hypothesis stating that the two groups would eventually look for different risk relievers can be confirmed, which in turn provides further evidence for an influence of arts/theatre festivals on the perception of theatre as a risky activity.

5. Conclusions

The main topic of this research is the perception some people have of theatre as a risky activity as a reason not to attend. Specifically, this research tries to answer the question of to what extent does the experience in arts/theatre festivals affect this perception, since festivals are very popular today and may be perceived as safe environments where to experiment.

In order to test how well the relievers provided by this context could work in respect to the specific components of risk associated with theatre, namely Satisfaction, Social, Psychological and Economic, a quantitative analysis was chosen and a survey with people attending live performances in various contexts conducted.

In general, it can be stated that participation to festivals does affect the perception of theatre as a risky activity and, consequently, leads to an increased attendance. In particular, it was shown that the Satisfaction risk associated with theatre can be relieved through specific dimensions of the festival experience; the Social risk is still associated with the theatre experience outside of the festival context, although the variables related to the Socialization construct are valued and sought regardless of the context of the performance; the Psychological risk related to a theatre event is relieved after attending a performance at an arts/theatre festival because a dimension of Comfort is then associated with any theatre performance.

For all these reasons, the perceived economic value is assessed in relation to all the other dimensions of the theatre experience risk, eventually lowering the perception of Economic risk and increasing attendance.

The strategy of lowering the level of risk through referring to previous experience (Lutz & Reilly, 1973) in the “safe environment” of festivals (Bennett and Woodward, 2014) proves to be an effective one as it leads to a better perception of theatre overall.

As this study follows the expansion of the risk theory to the leisure activities initiated by Chéron and Ritchie (1982), its main contribution is probably an increased understanding of which categories of risk are most often associated with theatre. Festivals can help in breaking down the initial perception of theatre, but once an interest is manifested, the organizations in the field need to maintain it and, in doing so, having a clear picture of what do visitors expect of or worry about the overall theatre experience is key.

The notions uncovered about how to enhance the visitor’s theatre experience considering its various dimensions could be employed to attract not only those people who attend festivals and so are familiar with a certain format to present the performing arts, but also to attract those people who do not attend theatre very often but could potentially start once they see how it could fulfill their needs for entertainment, cognitive engagement and socialization. Eventually, applying these results may help theatre organizations to achieve their audience diversification strategies in their most basic definition of attracting people from different demographics and backgrounds who all have their own motivations and expectations about theatre. Doing so does not mean constructing a likeable performance in a nice environment that may just please everyone (a concern expressed also by Eversmann, 2004) and eventually pose a solution for financial issues, but rather to put into practice Reason’s (2004) argument of the audience’s engagement with theatre as needed to complete the overall experience and the performance itself. Once again, this study would like to pose the attention on the importance of the audience to theatre and so prompt theatre professionals to put more effort into understanding performances from this point of view.

Finally, an established relationship between attending festivals and the perception of risk in theatre can provide some useful insight for policy makers looking to increase the overall appreciation for theatre or the performing arts in general. Various aspects of the popularity of festivals were brought together and analyzed from the point of view of the theory of risk and it was found that they could constitute a resource for the field not only because presenting the performing arts, theatre specifically, in a new, maybe more accessible format, but also because emphasizing some of the best features of these art forms that may not be readily understood by non-frequent

attenders. Therefore, policy makers may want to invest on arts and theatre festivals more as a tool for taste formation strategies for the society.

6. Limitations and further research

The main limitations of this study regard the data collection and sampling. As already mentioned, the sample is not sufficiently balanced across the various age groups. While today, for all the factors mentioned in this study, it cannot be excluded that the overall population of live performances attenders is in fact changing, which would render the present sample a more trustworthy representation, the present demographics are most likely a result of the data collection techniques employed. As there were time limitations, the number of festivals and theatre events that were happening in the period of the data collection was rather restricted, limiting the choice of events for the offline data collection. Therefore, while the two festivals that posted the survey online appeal to varied audiences and could reach them through Facebook and Twitter, two of the three events where the survey was distributed offline were associated with university contexts, which led to specific segments of the population. For these reasons, the present results should be interpreted with caution and should be confirmed by further research with a bigger sample whose data is collected in a more structured way across a longer period of time and through more, different festivals and events.

It is also possible that the people who attended theatre performances at arts/theatre festivals did so because already familiar with and passionate about theatre, which was not explicitly accounted for in the survey, while non-festival attenders simply do not attend and appreciate theatre as much. In this case, the festival attenders' perception of a higher economic value would be independent of their participation to festivals but stemming from this familiarity with theatre instead (Chéron & Ritchie, 1982) and would render the present data inappropriate to investigate a possible influence of participation to festivals on the Economic risk component. Therefore, a better definition of the reasons why the festival was attended in the first place would be useful in identifying the specific effect of participation to festivals on the Economic component and possibly even the overall perception. Nevertheless, the results of this research do seem to point in the direction of some effect, so further research could focus on establishing what components of the perception of risk change the most rather than on establishing the mere existence of this effect.

Finally, a limitation that was already addressed in this research is the use of Chéron and Ritchie's (1982) identified components of risk, as they relate to leisure activities in general and not to theatre performances specifically and admit of using a faulty sample. Although other studies on the theatre

experience and attendance that recognize, either explicitly or implicitly, risk as an integral part of theatre were used to better define the constructs related to the components of risk selected, they mostly address the various dimensions of the theatre experience in relation to ex-post audience appreciation and not specifically to the formation of the ex-ante perception of risk. The analysis of the constructs in fact proved the need for a better definition through a more precise conceptualization of the components of risk related specifically to theatre.

As per additional further research, a relationship between not only the single components of risk and the overall perception of risk in theatre, but also among the various components as well was hinted at, as also Chéron and Ritchie (1982) mention an interdependence among them. It could therefore be useful to investigate how some components' perception changes as others are perceived or not. For example, a better defined relationship between the Social and Psychological components, which were identified as the first two characterizing the leisure activities by Chéron and Ritchie (1982), could be investigated in relation to theatre events and cultural ones in general, as in the present research it was interesting to see how while the Social risk was still perceived by respondents, the Psychological risk was relieved and increased attendance ensued nevertheless.

A methodology that could be useful in these further researches could be an experiment: researchers could collect the motivations to attend an arts/theatre festival beforehand in order to define whether attendance is prompted by an already existing passion for theatre; they could then collect the impressions on theatre before attending a performance in such a context and then compare them with the ones after the performance, in order to establish a change in the perception as a direct consequence of attendance. How different demographics react to experiencing theatre at festivals could also be explored.

Finally, in order to further the theory on risk related to theatre performances, this analysis started from festivals as there are many and very popular today, but an analysis of the influence of various contexts may be useful in understanding how the components of risk are perceived in each one, to then be compared again with the perception of theatre in regular venues during the normal programs.

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Appendix A

Survey - Experience Theatre Festival (English version)

Start of Block: Introduction

Q1: Hello and thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey. The aim of this questionnaire is to record your impressions on experiencing theatre at festivals. Time needed to completion is approximately 5 minutes. For any comments or observations, please feel free to email Sara Cardi Cigoli at 499637sc@student.eur.nl, or the research supervisor, Dr Lenia Marques at marques@eshcc.eur.nl.

Q2: Without considering arts and theatre festivals, how often do you attend theatre?

Never (1)

2-3 times per year (2)

4-7 times per year (3)

7-12 per year (4)

More than 12 times per year (5)

Q3: What are your main reasons to attend theatre (outside arts and theatre festivals)?

Interested in a particular play/event (1)

My family and/or friends (2)

School/work event (3)

Ticket discounts (4)

Visiting the city (5)

Other _____ (6)

Q4: Have you ever attended theatre performances at an arts/theatre festival?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Display This Question: If Q4 = Yes

Q5: How many have you attended?

1-2 (1)

3-4 (2)

5+ (3)

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Block 1-Subjective experience

Display This Question: If Q4 = Yes

Q6: Think of the last theatre performance you attended at an arts/theatre festival. Please rate from 1 to 5 the following statements regarding the reasons for you to attend that performance.

1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
------------------------	------------------------	------------------------------------	---------------------	---------------------

Q6_1 I knew I
would enjoy
myself

Q6_2 I wanted
to use my
intellect

Q6_3 The
performance
was an
integration to
other thematic
activities at
the festival

Q6_4 To
experience
something
new

Q6_5 It
provided me
with an escape
from reality

End of Block: Block 1-Subjective experience

Start of Block: Block 2-Socialization

Display This Question: If Q4 = Yes

Q7: Think of the last theatre performance you attended at a festival. Please rate from 1 to 5 the following statements regarding what you appreciated about attending that performance at an arts/

theatre festival.

1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
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Q7_1 I was able to socialize

Q7_2 I felt a sense of belonging

Q7_3 I was able to relive it later (talk about it with friends and show pictures)

Q7_4 I reflected on ideas and discussed them with others

End of Block: Block 2-Socialization

Start of Block: Block 3-Self-realization

Display This Question: If Q4 = Yes

Q8: Think of the last theatre performance you attended at a festival. Please rate from 1 to 5 the following statements regarding what you think about theatre.

1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
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Q8_1 It makes me aware of my own values

Q8_2 I can identify with what some performances represent

Q8_3 It makes
different
people feel
similar
emotions

Q8_4 It allows
me to explain/
interpret
things for
myself

Q8_5 I feel
like my true
self when
attending so I
feel
comfortable

End of Block: Block 3-Self-realization

Start of Block: Block 4-Theatre festivals and theatre

Display This Question: If Q4 = Yes

Q9: Please rate the following statements from 1 to 5. Ever since you started attending theatre festivals.

1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
------------------------	------------------------	------------------------------------	---------------------	---------------------

Q9_1 I find
myself
enjoying
theatre more
than before

Q9_2 I still do
not
particularly
enjoy theatre
(RV)

Q9_3 I feel
more
confident
spending my
time and
money on
theatre

Q9_4 I still think I am risking to waste my time and money if attending theatre (RV)

Q9_5 I started attending theatre more

Q9_6 In general, I feel more comfortable in theaters than before

Q9_7 I enjoy theatre festivals but not theatre in traditional venues (RV)

Q9_8 I have always been a fan of theatre so festivals do not influence my appreciation for it (RV)

Display This Question: If Q4 = No

Q19: Please rate from 1 to 5 the following statements about what could make you want to attend (more) theatre performances at arts/theatre festivals.

1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
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Q19_1 More content I could enjoy

Q19_2 More
content to
challenge me
intellectually

Q19_3
Multiple
performances
revolving
around a
theme

Q19_4
Possibility to
socialize at the
venue

Q19_5 Feeling
welcome and
belonging at
the venue

Q19_6 Being
able to relive
it later with
friends
through
pictures

Q19_7 Being
able to discuss
ideas with
others

Q19_8 More
content I can
identify with

Q19_9 Feeling
emotions
similar to
other people

Q19_10 Ticket
discounts

Q19_11
Shorter
performances

Q10: Please rate from 1 to 5 the following statements about what could make you attend theatre more often.

	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Neither Agree nor Disagree	4-Somewhat Agree	5-Strongly Agree
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Q10_1 More
content I
could enjoy

Q10_2 More
content to
challenge me
intellectually

Q10_3
Multiple
performances
revolving
around a
theme

Q10_4
Possibility to
socialize at the
venue

Q10_5 Feeling
welcome and
belonging at
the venue

Q10_6 Being
able to relive
it later with
friends
through
pictures

Q10_7 Being
able to discuss
ideas with
others

Q10_8 More
content I can
identify with

Q10_9 Feeling
emotions
similar to
other people

Q10_10 Ticket
discounts

Q10_11
Shorter
performances

End of Block: Block 4-Theatre festivals and theatre

Start of Block: Block 7 - General

Q11: You are

Male (1)

Female (2)

Prefer not to say (3)

Q12: Please indicate your age group...

15 or younger

16 - 19

20 - 29

30 - 39

40 - 49

50 - 59

60 or over

Q13: What is your highest level of educational qualification?

I've never been to school (1)

Primary school (2)

Secondary school (3)

Technical/ Further education (4)

Bachelor's degree (5)

Master's degree (6)

Doctorate's degree (7)

Q14: What is your current status of employment?

Working full-time (1)

Working part-time (2)

Self-employed (3)

Unemployed but looking for work (4)

Unemployed but not looking for work (5)

Retired (6)

Student (7)

End of Block: Block 7 - General

Start of Block: Block 8 - Final comments

Q15: Please share any observations / comments.

Thank you for participating!

End of Block: Block 8 - Final comments

Survey - Experience Theatre Festival (Dutch version)

Start of Block: Introduction

Q1: Hallo en bedankt dat je de tijd hebt genomen om te reageren op deze enquête. Het doel van deze vragenlijst is om jouw indrukken van theaterervaring op festivals vast te leggen. De tijd die nodig is voor de voltooiing is ongeveer 5 minuten. Voor opmerkingen of opmerkingen kun je een e-mail sturen naar Sara Cardi Cigoli op 499637sc@student.eur.nl of de onderzoeksleider, dr. Lenia Marques via marques@eshcc.eur.nl.

Q2: Uitgezonderd van een bezoek aan kunst- en theaterfestivals, Hoe vaak bezoek je theater?

Nooit (1)

2-3 keer per jaar (2)

4-7 keer per jaar (3)

7-12 per jaar (4)

Meer dan 12 keer per jaar (6)

Q3: Wat zijn jouw belangrijkste redenen om het theater te bezoeken (los van kunst- en theaterfestivals)?

Interesse in een bepaald(e) voorstelling/evenement (1)

Mijn familie en / of vrienden (2)

School / uitje met werk (3)

Kortingen of aanbiedingen voor tickets (4)

Een bezoek aan de stad (5)

Anders _____(6)

Q4: Heb je ooit theateruitvoeringen bijgewoond op een kunst- / theaterfestival?

Ja (1)

Nee (2)

Display This Question: If Q4 = Yes

Q5: Hoeveel heb je bezocht?

1-2 (1)

3-4 (2)

5+ (3)

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Block 1-Subjective experience

Display This Question: If Q4 = Yes

Q6: Denk aan de laatste theatervoorstelling die je op een kunst- / theaterfestival hebt bijgewoond.

Beoordeel de volgende uitspraken op een schaal van 1 tot 5 over de redenen voor jou om die uitvoering bij te wonen.

1-Helemaal
mee oneens
(1)

2-Een beetje
mee oneens
(2)

3-Neutraal (3)

4-Een beetje
mee eens (4)

5 - Volledig
mee eens (5)

Q6_1 Ik wist
dat ik het leuk
zou vinden

Q6_2 Ik wilde
mijn intellect
gebruiken

Q6_3 De
voorstelling
was een
integratie met
andere
thematische
activiteiten op
het festival

Q6_4 Om iets
nieuws te
ervaren

Q6_5 Het
bood me de
kans om te
ontsnappen
aan de realiteit

End of Block: Block 1-Subjective experience

Start of Block: Block 2-Socialization

Display This Question: If Q4 = Yes

Q7: Denk aan de laatste theatervoorstelling die je op een festival hebt bijgewoond. Beoordeel de volgende uitspraken op een schaal van 1 tot 5 over wat je op prijs stelde tijdens je deelname aan die voorstelling op een kunst- / theaterfestival .

1-Helemaal mee oneens (1)	2-Een beetje mee oneens (2)	3-Neutraal (3)	4-Een beetje mee eens (4)	5 - Volledig mee eens (5)
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Q7_1 Ik was
in staat om te
socialiseren

Q7_2 Ik
voelde een
gevoel van
verbondenheid

Q7_3 Ik heb
het later
kunnen
herbeleven
(tijdens
gesprekken
met vrienden
door middel
van foto's)

Q7_4 Ik dacht
na over ideeën
en besprak ze
met anderen

End of Block: Block 2-Socialization

Start of Block: Block 3-Self-realization

Display This Question: If Q4 = Yes

Q8: Denk aan de laatste theatervoorstelling die je op een festival hebt bijgewoond. Beoordeel de volgende uitspraken op een schaal van 1 tot 5 over wat jij van theater vindt.

1-Helemaal mee oneens (1)	2-Een beetje mee oneens (2)	3-Neutraal (3)	4-Een beetje mee eens (4)	5 - Volledig mee eens (5)
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Q8_1 Het
maakt me
bewust van
mijn eigen
waarden

Q8_2 Ik kan
me
identificeren
met wat
sommige
uitvoeringen
vertegenwoor
digen

Q8_3
Hierdoor
voelen
verschillende
mensen
vergelijkbare
emoties

Q8_4 Het stelt
me in staat om
dingen voor
mezelf te
verklaren/
interpreteren

Q8_5 Ik voel
me als mijn
ware zelf
tijdens het
bijwonen, dus
ik voel me op
mijn gemak

End of Block: Block 3-Self-realization

Start of Block: Block 4-Theatre festivals and theatre

Display This Question: If Q4 = Yes

Q9: Beoordeel de volgende verklaringen van 1 tot 5. Sindsdien ben je begonnen met het bezoeken van theaterfestivals .

1-Helemaal
mee oneens
(1)

2-Een beetje
mee oneens
(2)

3-Neutraal (3)

4-Een beetje
mee eens (4)

5 - Volledig
mee eens (5)

Q9_1 Ik merk
dat ik meer
dan vroeger
van het theater
geniet

Q9_2 Ik
geniet nog
steeds niet
echt van
theater (RV)

Q9_3 Ik voel
me zekerder
wanneer ik
geld en tijd
bested aan
theater

Q9_4 Ik denk
nog steeds dat
ik riskeer mijn
tijd en geld te
verspillen als
ik naar het
theater ga
(RV)

Q9_5 Ik ga nu
vaker naar het
theater

Q9_6 Over het
algemeen voel
ik me meer op
mijn gemak in
theaters dan
vroeger

Q9_7 Ik
geniet van
theaterfestival
s maar niet
van theater op
traditionele
locaties (RV)

Q9_8 Ik ben
altijd een fan
geweest van
theater, dus
festivals
hebben geen
invloed op
mijn
waardering
ervoor (RV)

Display This Question: If Q4 = No

Q19: Beoordeel van 1 tot 5 de volgende uitspraken over wat je zou kunnen laten deelnemen aan
(meer) theatervoorstellingen op kunst- / theaterfestivals.

1-Helemaal
mee oneens
(1)

2-Een beetje
mee oneens
(2)

3-Neutraal (3)

4-Een beetje
mee eens (4)

5 - Volledig
mee eens (5)

Q19_1 Meer
inhoud waar
ik van zou
kunnen
genieten

Q19_2 Meer
inhoud om mij
intellectueel
uit te dagen

Q19_3
Meerdere
uitvoeringen
rond een
thema

Q19_4
Mogelijkheid
om te
socializen op
de locatie

Q19_5 Je
welkom
voelen en erbij
horen

Q19_6 Het
kunnen
herbelev
met vrienden
door middel
van foto's

Q19_7 Ideeën
met anderen
kunnen
bespreken

Q19_8 Meer
inhoud
waarmee ik
me kan
identificeren

Q19_9
Gevoelens
voelen die
vergelijkbaar
zijn met
andere mensen

Q19_10
Kortingen of
aanbiedingen
voor tickets

Q19_11
Kortere
uitvoeringen

Q10: Beoordeel van 1 tot 5 de volgende uitspraken over wat je vaker naar het theater zou kunnen laten gaan .

1-Helemaal mee oneens (1)	2-Een beetje mee oneens (2)	3-Neutraal (3)	4-Een beetje mee eens (4)	5 - Volledig mee eens (5)
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Q10_1 Meer
inhoud waar ik
van zou
kunnen
genieten

Q10_2 Meer
inhoud om mij
intellectueel
uit te dagen

Q10_3
Meerdere
uitvoeringen
rond een
thema

Q10_4
Mogelijkheid
om te
socialiseren
op de locatie

Q10_5 Je
welkom
voelen en erbij
horen

Q10_6 Het
kunnen
herbeleven
met vrienden
door middel
van foto's

Q10_7 Ideeën
met anderen
kunnen
bespreken

Q10_8 Meer
inhoud
waarmee ik
me kan
identificeren

Q10_9
Gevoelens
voelen die
vergelijkbaar
zijn met
andere
mensen

Q10_10 Prijs
kortingen

Q10_11
Kortere
uitvoeringen

End of Block: Block 4-Theatre festivals and theatre

Start of Block: Block 7 - General

Q11: Je bent

Man (1)

Vrouw (2)

Zeg ik liever niet (3)

Q12: Geef uw leeftijdsgroep aan ...

15 of jonger (1)

16 - 19 (2)

20 - 29 (3)

30 - 39 (4)

40 - 49 (5)

50 - 59 (6)

60 of ouder (7)

Q13: Wat is je hoogste opleidingsniveau? (selecteer er een alstublieft)

Ik ben nog nooit naar school geweest (1)

Lagere school (2)

Middelbare school (3)

Technical / Verdere opleiding (4)

Bachelor diploma (5)

Master diploma (6)

Doctoraat (7)

Q14: Wat is uw huidige status van baan?

Voltijds werken (1)

Part-time werken (2)

Eigen baas (3)

Werklozen maar op zoek naar werk (4)

Werklozen maar niet op zoek naar werk (5)

Gepensioneerd (6)

Student (7)

End of Block: Block 7 - General

Start of Block: Block 8 - final comments

Q15: Deel alle opmerkingen / opmerkingen.

Q16: Bedankt voor het meedoen!

End of Block: Block 8 - final comments

Appendix B

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett’s Test for the Experience construct

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,665
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	59,790
	df	10
	Sig.	,000

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett’s Test for the Socialization construct

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,564
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	66,350
	df	6
	Sig.	,000

Table 5. KMO and Bartlett’s Test for the Comfort construct

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,766
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	77,293
	df	10
	Sig.	,000

Table 6. Exploratory factor analysis for the Experience construct

Total Variance Explained					
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance
1	1,981	39,624	39,624	1,981	39,624
2	1,146	22,924	62,549	1,146	22,924
3	,868	17,356	79,905		
4	,517	10,349	90,253		
5	,487	9,747	100,000		

Table 7. Component matrix for the Experience construct

Component Matrix ^a		
	Component	
	1	2
Enjoyment	,798	,121
Intellect	-,037	-,739
Proram theme	,807	,055
Novelty	-,147	,760
Escapism	,819	-,070

Table 8. Exploratory factor analysis for the Socialization construct

Total Variance Explained					
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance
1	1,892	47,299	47,299	1,892	47,299
2	1,000	25,007	72,306	1,000	25,007
3	,805	20,115	92,421		
4	,303	7,579	100,000		

Table 9. Component matrix for the Socialization construct

Component Matrix ^a		
	Component	
	1	2
Social interaction	,892	,052
Sense of belonging	,860	-,057
Recollection	,539	,431
Reflexivity	-,255	,899

Table 10. Exploratory factor analysis for the Comfort construct

Total Variance Explained					
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance
1	2,312	46,237	46,237	2,312	46,237
2	1,000	20,008	66,245	1,000	20,008
3	,624	12,478	78,723		

4	,580	11,601	90,324		
5	,484	9,676	100,000		

Table 11. Component matrix for the Comfort construct

Component Matrix ^a		
	Component	
	1	2
Value creation	,065	,996
Symbolic meaning	,774	,009
Emotional affinity	,778	,007
Interpretation	,740	-,013
Self realization	,745	-,092

Table 12. Spearman's rho bivariate analysis between the Experience construct and the theatre perception

Correlations					
		I find myself enjoying theatre more than before	I still do not particularly enjoy theatre (RV)	I feel more confident spending my time and money on theatre	I still think I am risking to waste my tim and money if attending theatre (RV)
Enjoyment	Correlation Coefficient	,034	,265*	,242*	,221*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,375	,006	,011	,019
	N	89	89	89	89
Intellect	Correlation Coefficient	,266*	,154	,426*	,302*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,006	,075	,000	,002
	N	89	89	89	89
Program theme	Correlation Coefficient	,024	-,109	-,043	-,032
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,411	,155	,343	,384
	N	89	89	89	89
Novelty	Correlation Coefficient	,265*	-,006	-,093	,045
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,006	,478	,194	,338
	N	89	89	89	89

Escapism	Correlation Coefficient	-,021	,286*	,046	,123
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,424	,003	,334	,126
	N	89	89	89	89

Correlations

		I started attending theatre more	In general, I feel more comfortable in theaters than before	I enjoy theatre festivals but not theatre in traditional venues (RV)	I have always been a fan of theatre so festivals do not influence my appreciation for it (RV)
Enjoyment	Correlation Coefficient	,071	-,009	,185*	-,134
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,255	,466	,041	,105
	N	89	89	89	89
Intellect	Correlation Coefficient	,425*	,420*	,039	-,081
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,000	,000	,360	,224
	N	89	89	89	89
Program theme	Correlation Coefficient	,159	,168	,069	-,121
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,068	,058	,260	,129
	N	89	89	89	89
Novelty	Correlation Coefficient	,226*	,117	-,030	,167
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,017	,138	,389	,059
	N	89	89	89	89
Escapism	Correlation Coefficient	,068	,073	,119	-,227*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,263	,249	,133	,016
	N	89	89	89	89

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table 13. Spearman's rho bivariate analysis between the Socialization construct and the theatre perception

Correlations				
		I find myself enjoying theatre more than before	I still do not particularly enjoy theatre (RV)	I feel more confident spending my time and money on theatre
Social interaction	Correlation Coefficient	,198*	,178*	,034
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,031	,048	,375
	N	89	89	89
Sense of belonging	Correlation Coefficient	,098	,198*	,035
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,182	,032	,371
	N	89	89	89
Recollection	Correlation Coefficient	,117	,154	-,059
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,137	,075	,293
	N	89	89	89
Reflexivity	Correlation Coefficient	,286**	,342**	,152

Correlations				
		I still think I am risking to waste my tim and money if attending theatre (RV)	I started attending theatre more	In general, I feel more comfortable in theaters than before
Social interaction	Correlation Coefficient	,220*	,138	,132
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,019	,098	,109
	N	89	89	89
Sense of belonging	Correlation Coefficient	,138	,120	,027
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,098	,131	,400
	N	89	89	89
Recollection	Correlation Coefficient	,115	-,059	-,010
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,142	,290	,461
	N	89	89	89
Reflexivity	Correlation Coefficient	,402**	,271**	,037
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,000	,005	,365
	N	89	89	89

Correlations			
		I enjoy theatre festivals but not theatre in traditional venues (RV)	I have always been a fan of theatre so festivals do not influence my appreciation for it (RV)
Social interaction	Correlation Coefficient	,035	,000
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,372	,499
	N	89	89
Sense of belonging	Correlation Coefficient	-,012	-,141
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,457	,094
	N	89	89
Recollection	Correlation Coefficient	,216*	-,043
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,021	,344
	N	89	89
Reflexivity	Correlation Coefficient	,332**	-,208*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,001	,025
	N	89	89

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table 14. Spearman's rho bivariate analysis between the Comfort construct and the theatre perception

Correlations				
		I find myself enjoying theatre more than before	I still do not particularly enjoy theatre (RV)	I feel more confident spending my time and money on theatre
Value creation	Correlation Coefficient	,163	,126	,166
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,064	,120	,060
	N	89	89	89
Symbolic meaning	Correlation Coefficient	,372**	,253**	,083
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,000	,008	,220
	N	89	89	89
Emotional affinity	Correlation Coefficient	,097	,215*	,150

	Sig. (1-tailed)	,183	,021	,081
	N	89	89	89
Interpretation	Correlation Coefficient	,051	,033	,226*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,318	,378	,017
	N	89	89	89
Self realization	Correlation Coefficient	,213*	,264**	,204*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,022	,006	,028
	N	89	89	89

Correlations

		I still think I am risking to waste my tim and money if attending theatre (RV)	I started attending theatre more	In general, I feel more comfortable in theaters than before	I enjoy theatre festivals but not thatre in traditional venues (RV)
Value creation	Correlation Coefficient	,183*	,254**	,142	,179*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,043	,008	,092	,047
	N	89	89	89	89
Symbolic meaning	Correlation Coefficient	,162	,285**	,166	,135
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,064	,003	,061	,104
	N	89	89	89	89
Emotional affinity	Correlation Coefficient	,014	,244*	,046	,094
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,449	,011	,333	,190
	N	89	89	89	89
Interpretation	Correlation Coefficient	,132	,269**	,140	,170
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,109	,005	,095	,056
	N	89	89	89	89
Self realization	Correlation Coefficient	,271**	,377**	,241*	,247**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,005	,000	,011	,010
	N	89	89	89	89

Correlations

		I have always been a fan of theatre so festivals do not influence my appreciation for it (RV)
Value creation	Correlation Coefficient	-,159
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,069
	N	89
Symbolic meaning	Correlation Coefficient	-,086
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,211
	N	89
Emotional affinity	Correlation Coefficient	-,225*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,017
	N	89
Interpretation	Correlation Coefficient	-,181*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,045
	N	89
Self realization	Correlation Coefficient	-,285**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,003
	N	89

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table 15. Test of homogeneity of variance

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
More content I could enjoy	Based on Mean	19,958	1	150	,000
	Based on Median	4,603	1	150	,034
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	4,603	1	88,689	,035
	Based on trimmed mean	9,136	1	150	,003
More content to challenge me intellectually	Based on Mean	13,172	1	150	,000
	Based on Median	3,110	1	150	,080
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3,110	1	94,472	,081
	Based on trimmed mean	4,362	1	150	,038

Multiple performances revolving around a theme	Based on Mean	6,612	1	150	,011
	Based on Median	1,636	1	150	,203
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,636	1	121,477	,203
	Based on trimmed mean	2,324	1	150	,129
Possibility to socialize at the venue	Based on Mean	12,909	1	150	,000
	Based on Median	3,254	1	150	,073
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3,254	1	95,226	,074
	Based on trimmed mean	4,177	1	150	,043
Feeling welcome and belonging at the venue	Based on Mean	13,092	1	150	,000
	Based on Median	3,262	1	150	,073
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3,262	1	94,552	,074
	Based on trimmed mean	4,333	1	150	,039
Being able to relive it later with friends through pictures	Based on Mean	13,063	1	150	,000
	Based on Median	3,200	1	150	,076
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3,200	1	94,531	,077
	Based on trimmed mean	4,129	1	150	,044
Being able to discuss ideas with others	Based on Mean	6,617	1	150	,011
	Based on Median	1,797	1	150	,182
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,797	1	120,683	,183
	Based on trimmed mean	2,505	1	150	,116
More content I can identify with	Based on Mean	13,483	1	150	,000
	Based on Median	3,433	1	150	,066
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3,433	1	94,600	,067
	Based on trimmed mean	4,624	1	150	,033
Feeling emotions similar to other people	Based on Mean	13,124	1	150	,000

	Based on Median	3,214	1	150	,075
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3,214	1	95,198	,076
	Based on trimmed mean	4,221	1	150	,042
Ticket discounts	Based on Mean	12,782	1	150	,000
	Based on Median	3,082	1	150	,081
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3,082	1	94,536	,082
	Based on trimmed mean	4,248	1	150	,041
Shorter performances	Based on Mean	19,795	1	150	,000
	Based on Median	4,772	1	150	,030
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	4,772	1	89,288	,032
	Based on trimmed mean	8,732	1	150	,004