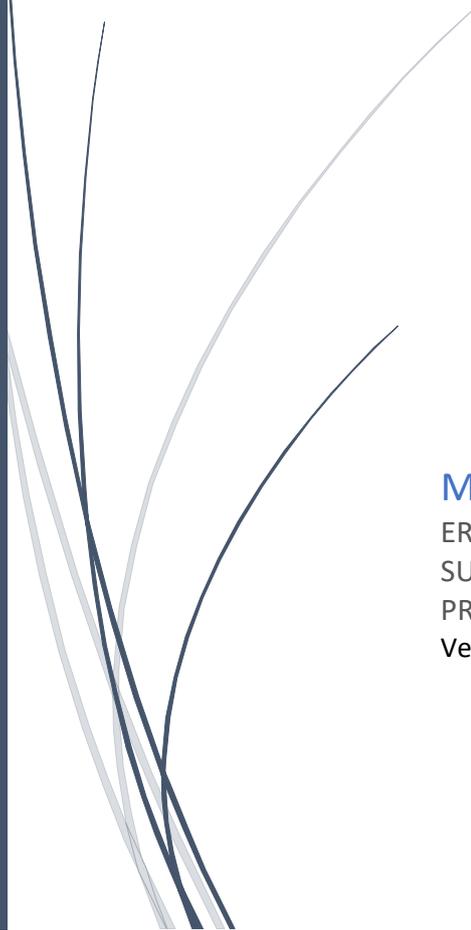14-6-2019

Into the Pit

The Added Value of Music Venues on our Music Experience in the Digital Era

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INTO THE PIT

ABSTRACT

This master thesis researches what the added value of a music venue is for the music experience of their customers in times of digitization and digitalization. Using a qualitative research method in the form of semi-structured interviews, eleven respondents who have recently visited concerts in a Dutch music venue before are interviewed about their music experience in general, their music experience at a live concert in a music venue and the role of that music venue in their live music experience. The interviews are analyzed using a combination of thematic analysis and a narrative analysis, as deeper motives, experiences and thoughts of interviewees are elicited. The aim of this research is to give more insight in the *how* of people's live music consumption, whereas past research was more focused on the *what.* The research shows that motivations for attending concerts in today's digital era are still comparable to those found in previous research. However, it does show a trend towards the atmosphere and the overall experience as top motives, being more important than before. Factors that are shown to be greatly valued by contemporary concert visitors, are *Show, Sound-quality, Crowd energy, Artist's engagement with the crowd* and *Beleving* (experience). The added value of music venues lays in the seemingly simple provision of a spatial dimension and making the experience as comfortable as possible for their customers. Music venues provide a place where artist and audience can come together and co-experience the concert, with the best viewpoints, sound-quality and programming activities possible. Comfort comes in terms of stage-visibility, optimal waiting times for toilets and bars and other factors. The rise of digitization does not seem to negatively influence people's attendance-rate for concerts. The music venue is a key component in bringing every piece together to form an overwhelming and memorable experience for their customers, more so

than a festival or living-room concert does. This research suggests that although sound and light might be reproducible outside a music venue, concerts are unique happenings and consist of factors that are technologically impossible to digitally reproduce, such as the atmosphere, the energy of the crowd, mega-production show elements, the co-experience as an audience with a real, tangible artist and the artist's engagement with the audience. These factors make the concert-setting unique in its own. If anything, the role of the music venue has only become more important in making the value of visiting a live-concert in their hall as unique and overwhelming as possible, as a counteract to increasing digitization of music. The interviews elicit interesting suggestions from concert visitors for ways of how music venues can add value to the overall experience by their audience that is visiting a concert.

PREFACE

As might have met the eye when presented this work, the frontpage says 'version 2.0'. This paper is a revised and improved version of my unfortunately failed attempt one year ago for a master's thesis. The work was okay, but not worthy a for a master's thesis, as it was too superficial, contained poor analyses and skipped some seemingly undeniable theories. This work looks to improve on those and more points, in order to make it hopefully sufficient enough for someone considered a Master of Arts & Culture.

I would like to thank Dr. Niels van Poecke and Prof. Dr. Stijn Reijnders, as they provided me with extensive feedback on my first version and pointed me in the right direction for the improvement of this paper. Secondly, I want to thank Dr. Evert Bisschop Boele for withstanding my initial silence concerned my progress and for supervising me in the process of this paper. I also thank him and Dr. Koen van Eijck in advance for the assessment of this work.

I want to thank my respondents for taking part in this research and for the honestly great time I had interviewing them. Conducting this research was a great experience which not only taught me a lot about the subject, but also about interviewing people in general. Lastly, I want to thank Gebouw-T, the local music venue in my hometown of Bergen op Zoom, which supported my initial attempt for this year's paper on research into their unpopularity amongst the younger audience. Due to circumstances, I had to unfortunately cancel that subject, but I thank them for their cooperation.

Enjoy reading my research!

- Damien de Wit, Bergen op Zoom, June 14 2019.

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INTRODUCTION

In times of digitalization and improving technologies, listening to music from our couch is easier and qualitatively better than it has ever been before. The quality of sound-systems is unmatched nowadays and accessibility of music via digital platforms like Spotify and iTunes is there for everyone and it is as approachable as it is convenient. Still, concerts and festivals are very popular to visit (Statista, 2018; CBS, 2018). What reasons do customers have to visit a live-concert? What does a music venue add to the individual's experience of (live-) music? How can music-venues build sustainable relationships with their visitors? What factors play a role in choosing whether and which music venue to visit?

Clearly, this research paper revolves around an industry where nearly everyone has got some kind of affection with: The music industry. After writing my bachelor's thesis in 2017 on a quantitative research into digital customer relations within Dutch music venues, a number of different, interesting and related research topics surfaced. Consequently, my master's thesis is on a related topic, again focused on the relationship between digitization, digitalization and music venues. I am particularly interested in the value of a music venue for the customer in his experience of the phenomenon that is music, which is therefore the main focus of this research.

This thesis is written around the following main research question: What is – in times of digitization and digitalization – the added value of a music venue for the music experience of their customers? This question contains a number of concepts that I elaborate on in the next chapter, such as *Digitization, Digitalization, Value, (Music) Experience* and *Music venue.* From the theory I derived the following sub-question, supporting my main question: What are

main motives for people to still attend live-concerts in the current digital era? I justify this sub-question at the end of the theory-chapter.

For the gathering of data, I figured that a qualitative method would render more satiable results than a quantitative method. To answer the research question as precise and elaborate as possible, I decided to conduct interviews, as these provide an opportunity to find the desired deeper meanings and motivations of respondents. It also allows me to be flexible in my approach of a respondent by formulating relevant questions on the spot, based on my respondent's answers (Bryman, 2012, p. 35-36). This is required, as the key variable in my research question is the *Music experience of customers*. People's experiences cannot be accurately grasped through a survey or content analysis and simply quantifying it would limit my research. A more elaborate description of the methodology of my research is found in the Method-chapter.

The scientific relevance of this research is to provide an insight in what makes the experience of the 'liveness' of a concert so special that people still want to visit them in today's digital era. More specifically, it provides insight in what the contribution of music venues themselves is in this phenomenon and what particular characteristics of those venues are so appealing. As for societal benefits, this research lays out opportunities for music venues in how they can potentially attract a bigger audience and what value they can add to the experience of music of their customers. It gives insight into how different parties involved in the liveness in the music-industry, in particular (Dutch) music venues, could make their policy more effective in reaching a potentially bigger audience. Furthermore, perhaps academically more interesting, results can be used to gain insight in what value it is exactly that live-performances in music venues add to the lives of individuals in their overall consumption and experience of music.

I start with the construction of a theoretical framework through a literature review, elaborating on multiple sources with relevant scientific information on digitization, digitalization, the live-music business including audience experiences and the connection of these concepts. After that, I formulate my research questions once again and I set out my expectations and hypotheses, based on the literature. Thereafter, I describe the method I used for gathering my data, including academic justification of the method, a thorough description and justification of the data I collected as well as operationalization of the main concepts. After that, I thematically present my results and at the end, all information comes

together in the conclusion, in which I answer my research questions and provide a discussion on research implications and future research-suggestions. This paper concludes with a list of references, followed by two appendices – The interview guide (A) and a list of the (anonymous) respondents (B).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I provide an outline/review of the literature that is relevant for my research focus. All of the following sources build up towards my research question and lead to the deduction of my hypotheses, which I formulate later in this chapter. In the introduction I already pointed out that my research question – "What is – in times of digitization and digitalization – the added value of a music venue for the music experience of their customers?" - contains five important concepts: *Music venue, Digitization, Digitalization, Value* and *(Music) Experience.*

Defining what a music venue is may sound self-explanatory, but there is a certain, particular conception that I want to make use of. Mainly, there is no perfect word in the English vocabulary that grasps what I mean. In Dutch, we have the word 'Poppodium'*,* which perfectly describes what a music venue is in this research. The meaning of the English 'music venue' is a bit wider. I decided to go for the following definition for this thesis: A music venue is a building where live music concerts take place (Ensie, 2016). More specifically, in distinguishing the 'Poppodium' from for example a theatre or opera hall, there usually is an offer of a wide mixture of genres on the program and there is the ability for the audience to attend events while standing instead of sitting.

Digitization is closely linked to the concept of digitalization, but those are two different terms. Digitization is defined as the process of turning something in analog form into a digital form, making it widely available on multiple platforms and accessible at whatever time (Prause, 2016). Digitalization on the other hand is the adaptation of digital technologies to change business-models, thus providing new production- and revenue opportunities. The close interconnection between these two terms becomes clear in the analysis of my results, as I often use them in the same context. Also, the focus is mainly on *Digitization,* whereas *Digitalization* is less relevant for the purpose of this research.

Interconnectedness of terms also comes forward with *Value* and *(Music) Experience*. Although entire books are written about either concept, they are closely related in this research. As I talk about music, the type of value and experience here is cultural value and cultural experience. Famous cultural economist David Throsby defines the human experience

within culture as an expression of aspects of people's behavior, as demonstrated in their activities and belief systems (Throsby, 1999). Something has cultural value if it contributes to these shared elements of human experience. Cultural value, here, is not expressed in numbers like it does with monetary or economic value. An artwork can have one economic value; the price that has to be payed in order to become the owner of it. The same artwork can have multiple cultural values, as the same artwork likely has a different meaning to one person than it has to the other. Value in this research is expressed in what it does to people's expression of their individual belief systems. How important does one find the phenomenon? What does it mean to them? How do they qualify, value it? And to add the unavoidable cultural theoretical basis of Pierre Bourdieu (1984): How do they appreciate it, in terms of taste?

FROM RECORD STORES TO APPS

There is not a single person on this planet or at least in our contemporary Western society that can say that music plays no role whatsoever in his or her life without lying. Music is everywhere: At home, in most public spaces, at work, in the gym and so on. It is no surprise that the phenomenon is an incredibly multi-faced concept that has numerous different functions in life and meanings to us people and individuals. Unsurprisingly too is the vast amount of academics that have conducted research on this topic on different occasions and in different fields. In the field in which I am active, the sociological field, Tia DeNora is well-known for her contribution to research on the topic of music. In her work *Music in Everyday Life*, DeNora (2000) argues that music creates aesthetic and affective agency in people's lives. Music provides people with material with which they exercise agentive control over their mood, convey meaning and even establish their identities.

Like many other age-old phenomena, music underwent the process of digitization as well, as everything we find on the internet is in digital form. This did not exist in the 1960's when The Beatles - to name an artist at the top of popular music-charts back then - were still active. Consumers were 'limited' to the purchase of physical copies of the music. Nowadays, platforms like Spotify and iTunes provide easy access for consumers to listen to basically any type of music whenever and wherever they want.

Digitization, most importantly through the coming and rise of the internet, has made

physical music increasingly irrelevant and forced incumbent music companies to review their existing business-model in order to survive (Wikström, 2014). Where the music industry initially acted hard and disgraceful towards online distribution, granted which mainly manifested itself through online piracy, it has become a huge and unmissable part of the daily music market. 20 years ago, buying a record was done with care and owning it gave a real sense of identity and ownership, just as it does for souvenirs or books (Wikström, 2014). In music, the institution of *ownership*¸ however, has become less relevant.

Wikström does point out that with this development, the industry of live music grew. This is all a matter of control, as live music is easier to control than recorded music. A band that has a high demand, can increase their number of concerts or ticket prices. It is Live Nation nowadays, an American live music company, that is the biggest company in the entire music industry, whereas it used to be record labels at the top of the corporate music world before the rise of the internet (Wikström, 2014).

An interesting trend that came with digitization and the rise of social media, is the context-focused model in music. This model explains a two-way street between artists and consumers, as opposed to the one-way street of an artist making a record and providing that to the consumer. This model involves audiences in the creative writing process of a record and allows them to 'do things' with music (Wikström, 2014). British artist Imogen Heap for example made an entire record full of songs of which the building block consisted of sounds, images and videos that were uploaded by her fans.

THE LIFE IN LIVE

For my research it is relevant to know why people still visit concerts in the current digital era. Egermann et al. (2011) found that the listening to music in a social context does influence one's emotional experience of music. They found that listening to music solitary was more arousing, likely due to the lack of feedback and concentration on the music whilst in group setting. They do however recognize that they studied people in a laboratory set-up and these results are unlikely to hold when investigating an actual live-concert situation. A majority of strong experiences of music - or SEMs as the researchers call it - by listening to it are experienced in live-concert settings as opposed to home-like situations (Lamont, 2009). In Lamont's research, participants said concerts released them from stress and worked as a

moment of relaxation. Concerts were described as "some kind of a ritual, the sharing of a holy moment" (Lamont, 2009, p. 255). This implies that visiting concerts can create transcendental feelings with a person and something that is unlikely to occur when experiencing music on their own.

Now what is the role of the music venue itself? First, it adds a spatial dimension to the experience of live-concerts for their audience. A live-music experience can for example take place on a festival or in your own living room, but these settings are very different from that of a music venue. Self-explanatory, the entire ambiance, the scope of the social and the quality of the live-performance in a music venue is very different from that in your living-room or on the street in a city. Live-performances in music venues focus on a certain artist that people buy tickets for. The like-mindedness of the audience is very present here, whereas festivals are often a celebration of differences; different genres at the same time, different ethnicities, different cultural identities etcetera (Ronström, Malm, & Lundberg, 2001). These differences to some extent surface in music venues as well, but diversity is a much larger phenomenon in a festival-setting. Furthermore, music festivals are often multi-day events, revolving around a large number of (different) artists and often takes place on multiple nearby stages. Bowen & Daniels (2005) have shown that the music itself on festivals has a slightly smaller importance and makes mainly place for the social. Bowen and Daniels identified these four different motivations for visiting festivals: (1) socialization, (2) enrichment (over music), (3) music matters and (4) loving it all. This distinction of live music on festivals compared to live music in music venues is significant enough to distinguish and clearly point out the focus of this research: Live-performances in music venues.

Dr. Marijke de Valck, who works in the Humanities department for Utrecht University, did a research on film-festivals and she implemented the value of festivals to people's experience of a movie. This theory is likely to apply to the music industry as well in some way, as film festivals - just like concerts to some extent - are media events and draw audiences to a certain type of entertainment culture (De Valck, 2007, p. 211). Concerts in music venues form the tangible link between music and the audience. This setting provides opportunity to enrich the audience with so-called pre-programming activities, like support acts – genre-similar artists that play prior to the artist, the headliner where the event is focused on - or bar events so people can meet up and discover new artists together, like a social gathering. This attracts larger interest groups and it adds to the overall cultural value of such an event, giving the

main attraction of the event a head start and making the overall experience more diversified than the live-performance alone (De Valck, 2007, p. 212).

An important concept for my research is 'liveness'. Recorded music and live music in general are in a mutual excluding relationship with one another. Self-explanatory, live music is generally characterized by the absence of recordings and recorded music is characterized by the absence of the live (Auslander, 2008, p. 3). The arrival of recordings also took away the element of surprise. If you put a cd in your cd-player and listen to it, you know what is going to happen, as opposed to the possibility of surprises in live-performances. Auslander investigated the concept of liveness as he had the feeling that the presence and importance of liveness in modern culture is decreasing. The standard and historic definition of live-music – a music performance in which the performers and audience are both physically and temporarily co-present to one another – does not hold anymore (Auslander, 2008, p. 60). Broadcast technologies and recordings of live-performances made this definition obsolete and new interpretations of liveness were searched after. So Auslander added that live performances are also defined as unrecorded.

Even though reproduction happens frequently in live-performances in the modern age - especially in the field of electronic music -, it still can arouse the feeling of a live-experience. The uniqueness of a live-experience remains present in the atmosphere, the artistic performance and within social interaction (Holt, 2010). Especially the social – the physical co-presence of performers and audience – affects one's experience of the live. Other affecting aspects here are the energy of other people, other people's emotional expressions and environmental factors such as visuals and even smells.

Much research has been done on people's motives for attending live concerts. Lingel & Naaman (2011) showed that people value the staging, especially at large-scale 'mainstream' concerts. Staging is the entirety of all the planning, designing and modifying a stage to make it suit the performance. For more small-scale, indie concerts, concert goers value the intimate setting of a concert and it not being too artificial.

Kruger & Saayman (2012) found five main motives for people to attend a live performance, in this case of Swedish pop-act Roxette. They identified (1) artist affiliation and unique experience, (2) socialization and event novelty, (3) fun and group affiliation, (4) enjoyment and entertainment and (5) nostalgia. I do believe this research is generalizable, as Roxette is a big name within popular music and not just some random artist. Nostalgia might

sound as an odd motive among people visiting more contemporary artists, but there are numerous artists that remind people of older artists, like Airbourne being reminding of the old AC/DC or The Kik sounding much like The Beatles. This could raise feelings of nostalgia with audiences. The results are, however, expected to be different for the motives of people attending a multi-day festival for example. A regular concert takes place on one day, lasts around three to four hours and takes place on one specific location and stage. The event is mostly focused around one specific artist (Kruger & Saayman, 2012).

People's motivations for attending live concerts can also be found in their mode of consumption. Today's era of digitization and resultingly the constant improvement of accessibility of music goes hand in hand with the rise of the omnivore - people who like and engage in a wide range of cultural activities (Jarness, 2015). Theories about the omnivore already go years back and Jarness adds a new light to the theory. He argues that researchers should no longer look at *what* it is that consumers like and engage in, but *how* they do this. If two different people attend an opera performance, it does not mean that they have similar taste, but it rather indicates *how* – based on their motives – they appropriate certain goods (Jarness, 2015).

Enhanced use of the internet leads to an enhanced range of musical tastes. According to Van Eijck & Majorana (2013, p. 85) this is a sequacious effect of the contemporary state of music as a commodity that is so easily accessible and exchangeable, just as opinions and information about it. The researchers here support Jarness in his opinion that research into the modes of consumption within music should be more exploratory and more focused on individual motives in order to understand modern age music consumption.

In support of the social relevance of this research, the relationship with the customer is of crucial importance to a shop (Molenaar, 2015, p. 163). Not only shops benefit from good customer relations though, any business does and so does a music venue. It is key in understanding customer preferences and motivations and in growing bigger as a business. In order to generate more success as a business, music venues should pay close attention to customer-motives for why they visit a music-venue and what the music venue can contribute to their overall experience. Of course, this theory makes sense in itself and should be of no surprise to any business, but especially in the current age of digitalization and digitization, knowing customer-motives has become crucial for business-sustainability. Neglecting this

data almost certainly results in (financial) setback.

APPLICATION

As a conclusion to this chapter, I collect the most important theories above and relate them to my own research. I also justify the choice of my sub-question and why I think it contributes to reaching my main goal. Again, my main research question is: What is – in times of digitization and digitalization – the added value of a music venue for the music experience of their customers?

One contribution of music venues in live-performances is the provision of a spatial setting in which the audience and performers can interact, based on the research by De Valck. Contrary to festivals, street-performances or living room concerts, music venues provide a unique setting for like-minded people to experience something more than only listening to songs. The absence of such a setting would negate the uniqueness that is a live-concert in a music venue. Music venues offer an opportunity to experience music with other people, so it offers the social aspect which translates itself not only through direct communication between audience-members, but also in the crowd-energy and overall atmosphere created. If I would be the only one who had bought a ticket for a concert, my experience would differ greatly. In times of digitization, music venues still offer the uniqueness that is a live music experience. An atmosphere or energy created inside such a music venue cannot be digitized. Of course, it can be simulated through footage of some sort, but nothing digital compares to the real, physical attending of a concert. The added value offered by music venues could also be in the production side (lightshow, sound experience), in added services like pre-programming activities or maybe even in the attractive, creative design of the venue, adding up to the overall aesthetic experience of customers – think of Paradiso in Amsterdam, which is located inside an old church or the futuristic external design of Luxor Live in Arnhem.

The sub-question to support my main research question is: What are main motives for people to still attend live-concerts in the current era of digitization? As already shown, much research has been done on this particular subject and I only covered the tip of the iceberg. As my main question involves identifying the role of the music venue itself, I anticipate that role might only become clear if I know why it is that people visit them. Therefore, answering this sub-question I expect is a big part of the answer to my main research question and it potentially provides a setting in which the music venue plays an identifiable role. I

hypothesize, going from my own experiences and the literature above, that one reason to (still) visit live-concerts, is the atmosphere or the vibe at such concerts. Yes, listening to music at home is of great quality today, but the atmosphere and the social context of being part of a live-audience cannot be digitally grasped. It is also harder to catch the performance-related intention of the artist, like the adrenaline-pumped live-energy of acts like Rage Against the Machine or the intimate, tender, yet huge performance of Coldplay. This co-experience of energy between artist and audience I expect is unique to an actual live-concert setting and will not be present in home-music listening.

Another reason to visit live-concerts might be more related to the production-side of an event. Sound is pretty much reproducible at home – aside from music venue-acoustics which are unlikely to be present in home-situations - but reproducing the lightshow might be a different story. Also, I expect that the social motivation of going to concerts still holds, as well as the entertainment and enjoyment motive. I do expect 'the social' to really stand out here, though. More than it has in previous, older research.

METHOD

This chapter describes in detail what research design I used for my research. Academic justification of my choice of method happens in particular through the literature provided by Alan Bryman, via his widely acknowledged work *Social Research Methods* (2012). I, amongst many others, consider this work thorough, significant and solid enough to be a standalone source of which I extract information concerning research methods from. Therefore, I find it unnecessary and potentially confusing to include other sources on methodologies and analysis approaches. I provide an argumentation on why I choose interviews as my way to collect data, but I also go in detail about specific questions and why I included them in the interview guide (found in Appendix A). I also thoroughly operationalize the main concepts I particularly want to collect data on, like *Music experience* and *Motivations for attending concerts*.

As I already made clear in the introduction of the thesis, I used interviews as my method for collecting data. I felt that following the main question 'What is – in times of digitization and digitalization – the added value of a music venue for the music experience of their customers?', only one methodological approach was suitable, since I am looking to say something about people's individual (live) music experience. For a strong and credible answer to this phenomenon and to be fully able to make statements about one's experience, I needed deeper meanings of answers instead of just a thematical sum-up of tangible words. Individual motivations, thoughts and argumentations are mostly non-quantifiable, so a quantitative approach like a simple door-to-door questionnaire would not have sufficed my purpose. A qualitative method in the form of interviews allowed me to benefit the research on the spot, with which I mean I could react on respondents' answers by asking improvised, situational follow-up questions to get the most out of the interview (Bryman, 2012, p. 35-36). It also allows for space for my respondents to elaborate extensively on certain subjects by asking open questions.

Bryman (2012, p. 36) describes that qualitative research is about emphasizing words, rather than the quantification in the collection and analysis of data. In particular, he describes interviews as an effective way to gain information on respondents' attitudes, norms, beliefs and values, as the interviewer can elicit from the interviewee (Bryman, 2012, p. 209). This

argument specifically instigated me to commit to interviews for this research for potentially the most satiable results.

Bryman (2012, p. 212-213) more specifically distinguishes between several types of interviews. For my research, I used semi-structured interviews, described by Bryman as a structured interview – writing down all questions and sticking to the order and context of them-, but with some latitude for the interviewer to ask further, unwritten questions in response to significant replies (Bryman, 2012, p. 210-212). As this semi-structure allowed me to stray from the planned path when needed, I was able to go a little deeper into the individual thought processes of my interviewees. Fully structured interviews stick to the questions that are planned and written down, with minimal space for – in this case – much needed improvisation and often forcing respondents towards more or less fixed answers. However, knowing myself, I reckoned that I would benefit from a structure for my interview to be fully able to approach every respondent in a similar way and of course, to not forget certain questions. This is the reason why I used semi-structured interviews over the stricter, structured interviews, but also over completely unstructured interviews, in which I would only have a list of topics (Bryman, 2012, p. 213). So, I did make a guideline which I used a bit loosely and with room for latitude, as found in Appendix A. I anticipated the fact that one respondent is not the other and that improvised questions based on respondents' answers could help me in generating better results.

Following the master thesis standards set by my university, I interviewed a total of eleven people, five of whom I know personally and six I randomly selected via concert-event pages on Facebook. One condition was that respondents recently – in the last 2 years – visited at least one live-performance in a Dutch music venue. Therefore, I expected that my research results would not be biased by the fact that I personally know some of my respondents. Fortunately, it indeed turned out to be of no influence on the results, as they did not give me particularly different results than the others did. As I live in a very musical environment, it was convenient for me to select a few people from my direct social circle. I even figured it could potentially be beneficial, as I expected peers to be more relaxed around me and open in their answers compared to strangers. Though, I stuck to five familiar respondents to prevent making it too one-sided. The way I selected the six other people happened through Facebook. I went to three different event-pages of different concerts at music venues in The Netherlands: Men on Wire, an Indie pop band in Gebouw-T, Bergen op

Zoom (1), Machine Head, an American heavy metal band at Poppodium 013, Tilburg (2) and Katy Perry, the well-known pop-artist in Ziggo Dome, Amsterdam (3). I deliberately choose three totally different genres and scopes of performances, as Gebouw-T is a small, local venue; 013 is already a bigger, more regional/national venue and the Ziggo Dome is the biggest music venue in The Netherlands, also well-known outside the national borders. I approached a random attendee via Facebook Messenger and asked whether they would be open to participate in my research. Three people visited Men on Wire, two people visited Machine Head and the last one went to Katy Perry.

All interviews took place between May 4 and June 3, 2018. I recorded the interviews via a recording device installed on my laptop and turned the files into typed-out transcripts afterwards. Most interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. Nine interviews were held in Dutch, two were held in English and all quotes I used in my results chapter are my translation of the Dutch answers I got, as fair and literal as possible.

THE INTERVIEW

My interview consists of thematic parts, building up from generic questions about listening to music to more specific questions related to individual's experience of (live-) music. I divided the interview in three clear parts: *Music-Experience: General (1), Music-Experience: The Live-Concert (2) and Music-Experience: The Location (3)*. My interview solely consists of open questions, allowing space for respondents to answer elaborately.

Most importantly, in order to answer my research questions, I needed information on past concert experiences of my respondents and how they feel like the music venue adds to this experience. Instead of diving in that content immediately, it felt right to form a base for that, so I decided to start with a couple of general questions about music. Next to forming a building block for the rest of the interview, it provided opportunities for me to draw conclusions from these statistics, as people who never listen to music at home could experience concerts differently than people who do. For this part of the interview, I asked respondents how many hours they listen to music per day or per week and where they usually do this, for example on the road or in the shower. I also asked my respondents which genre or type of music they prefer and whether this preference is context-dependent, as people might prefer more aggressive forms of music while working-out, for example. For the

last question of this part, I asked respondents what music means to them in a broad sense. This was a great opportunity for them to open up about their feelings about music or when they listen to music and it is likely to open up doors for follow-up questions as well.

The second part of the interview is about live music and visiting a concert in a music venue. Adding to the base formed in the first phase of the interview, I started off with asking how many concerts in a music venue my respondents visit per month or per year on average. After that, I asked a question I think was probably the most important of the interview and which could already provide me with information about my respondents' music experience and even the added value of a music venue; I asked them to tell me about the best live-performance in a music venue they have ever visited and why. It invited my respondents to open up about their feelings during a live-experience that was so special, they remember it as their best ever. I intended to discover what factors played the foremost role in constructing this unique memory and why these were less or not present at other occasions. This intention came back in other questions where I for example invited respondents to think about factors of a performance that influence the 'greatness' of going to a concert, the greatness of their music experience. It also returned in my question on their 'concert-high'; What is it that gives my respondents the adrenaline rush during a concert? What is it that pumps them up, so to say.

I asked my respondents about their motivations for attending concerts. Fortunately, I got to ask this question individually and face to face, which potentially leads to less generic answers like in the research by Kruger & Saayman (2012) or Bowen & Daniels (2005), but it could give me more insight in the whole individual thought process that precedes the decision whether to go to a concert, as actively supported by more contemporary theories from Jarness (2015) and Van Eijck & Majorana (2013). Consequently, I asked my respondents what 'type' of attendee they are. Are they more of a silent observer, enjoying the music close to the bar or socializing with peers? Do they prefer being in the front rows, blending with the die-hard fans and going crazy? This gave more insight in what Jarness called the *how* of consuming music. I expected that respondents might have trouble with questions about their attendance motives, because a simple 'I like the music' was not something I was going to be satisfied with. Going from my theory, I decided to give some suggestions to my respondents if they have trouble in explaining why it is that they go to a concert. Examples are the release of stress, the witnessing and sharing of a transcendental moment (Lamont, 2009; Kruger &

Saayman, 2012), the overall whole of production-elements (Lingel & Naaman, 2011), socialization (Kruger & Saayman, 2012), artist affiliation or simply having fun (Kruger & Saayman, 2012) etcetera.

Going more into the concept of 'liveness', I asked my respondents whether they prefer to listen to music at home or in the form of a live-performance in a music venue and why. As stated in my theoretical framework, a majority of strong experiences of music (SEM's) by listening to it are experienced in live concert settings as opposed to homelike situations (Lamont, 2009). Also, recorded music and live music are in a mutual excluding relationship with one another. Live music is generally characterized by the absence of recordings and recorded music is characterized by the absence of the live (Auslander, 2008, p. 3). I expected to find this pattern with my respondents as well.

A question that I found particularly fun and interesting to ask, was whether my respondents would still attend a concert if they knew they would be the only one present, so the only one who bought a ticket and the only audience member in the hall. Answers could possibly imply a preference for the social and the atmosphere of a concert or that this is not weighty at all. This could point out to what extend the music actually is a decisive factor when going to a live-performance.

The first questions where the concepts of *Digitization* and *Digitalization* were going to play a role, was when I asked respondents whether they would still attend concerts if they would have a sound-system at home of the best possible quality, alongside holographic projectors and lightning set-ups, so imitating a live-performance set-up in their own living room. Again, answers could show preferences for the social and the additional concert-atmosphere or for experiencing an artist and its music in real life, for example. Another question I asked was when I invited respondents to tell me whether watching a concert-registration on digital platforms like for example YouTube evokes feelings that are in some way comparable or contradictory to the feelings they have when they physically attend an actual concert. Of course, first and foremost, these questions were aimed at surfacing what the influence of the digital era is on respondents' concert visits and how digitalization is influencing individuals' view on live-concerts.

The third and last part of the interview involved eight questions about the tangible location, so the (Dutch) music venues where live-concerts take place. Linking back to the decision-making process of going to a concert or not, I directly asked respondents whether

they think that music venue itself plays a role and why. A situation could have occurred where an artist they desperately wanted to see performs in a music venue with which my respondents might have had bad experiences before. I also asked respondents which music venues they generally come to for concerts and whether they could point out which factors play a role here, like the overall booked genre or the travel-distance.

Next, I wanted to more specifically know what the role of the music venue was in my respondents' story about their best concert-experience ever. Did the venue contribute in any way here, except for just providing the spatial dimension for this experience? Here I aimed to elaborate on what I earlier mentioned as probably the most important question of the interview and dig even deeper into how this memorable night came to be and in what context it all took place. The music venue can contribute with a high-quality sound system, intriguing lightning set-up and craftmanship or the provision of a social space where people can come together before and after the show, to name a few examples (De Valck, 2007). I also specifically asked my interviewees whether they can tell me to what extent a good sound quality and lightshow quality is important to them. Subsequently, I asked them how important the artist's visibility is for them, so how well the stage and the artist can be seen from the audience's perspective, as this could influence the feeling of inclusion – being part of something.

As I anticipated that logistic reasons could be of significant influence in a decision-making process of going to a concert or not, I asked my interviewees which factors they consider and find of importance in the case that an artist plays in multiple venues during the same tour. Perhaps the distance to the music venue is playing a role here or the public transport conditions of the city the venue is located in; how well the music venue is connected to (public) transportation. To rule out this one seemingly self-evident outcome, I prepared a scenario for my respondents. I let them imagine that an artist performs in two venues that are of equal distance from their house and of equal convenience to reach. Then I asked them which factors they think would be decisive here and what conditions and considerations they bear in mind. With this, I aimed for gathering additional data on specific music venue-related factors that play a role in individual's decision-making process.

I also decided to implement a question focused on music venue-related practical inconveniences that occur during the visit of a concert, to identify possible areas that music venues could pay attention to in their developmental plan. Again, I was prepared to help my

respondents when they would have trouble coming up with inputs by noting down some examples, like the availability and accessibility of bars, prices of food and drinks, availability and degree of hygiene of sanitation, the ability and price to store personal belongings like jackets, the possibility to buy earplugs, the kindness and degree of customer orientation from personnel, etcetera. Additionally, I invited my respondents to tell me about other inconveniences they experience in the whole process of going to a concert, like the before-mentioned travel (in)convenience, -time and -costs, the comfort of the purchase of a ticket and so on.

To close off my interview on an open note, I asked my respondents whether they could come up with any suggestions as to how music venues, as a business, could improve the quality of individuals' live music-experience and add value to their customer's presence during events. I was prepared to help the interviewees out when necessary by naming examples like additional services or goodies, but the intention was to leave this question as open as possible and give my respondent sufficient room to let their fantasies flow and potentially come up with some creative, brilliant and boundary-breaking ideas, hopefully helping music venues in their future.

MAKING SENSE

Finding a suiting and existing approach for analyzing my data systematically proved to be quite the challenge. How do I asses which methodology is most satiable when I want to make strong statements about individuals' experiences with something? I only had eleven interviews to extract data from so coding and categorizing data like in the commonly used approach of grounded theory (Bryman, 2012, p. 567) seemed not suiting to my research. Also, I felt like this would too much disparage my data to concepts that would fail to cover what I liked to say about my data. I was looking for people's motives, experiences and reasons and those can differ greatly per individual, so thematical categorization at first seemed no option for me. I was sure I could narrow it down a little, but not as much as is usually the case with the most prominent qualitative analysis tool, grounded theory.

In finding a method that would limit this chance of data-fragmentation, I came across the option of the Narrative Analysis for my data-analysis. This type of analysis shifts the focus from *what* has actually happened to *how* do people make sense of what happened (Bryman,

2012, p. 582). The words people utter are of secondary importance here, as it is more about the way those words are uttered, the emotions that go along with it and how people make sense of it. For most of the 'key' questions in my interview, I invited respondents to 'tell me something about…' and the openness of such questions was likely to elicit a (short) story about an experience - a narrative. This type of analysis thus is more commonly used in larger scope interviews where people are invited to tell stories about certain, impactful episodes in their lives, but the use of its core idea is way broader and therefore was very suitable for me. It fitted my idea of making sense of my data most effectively.

Mishler (1986) also argues that narrative analyses can be used in a broader sense than just for episodes of stories, stating it relates not just to the life span, but also to accounts relating to episodes and, moreover, the interconnection between them. I asked a handful of questions on a similar topic, like my interviewee's best live music experience in a music venue ever, and it was interesting to analyze the responses here.

Narrative Analyses can also go in the direction of a thematic analysis – extracting key themes from collected data – but like the grounded theory approach, this approach alone would make the results too fragmented again. So, what I decided to do, is using a mix of two types of analyses. I start my results chapter with the more thematic approach, in which I mostly focus on the things that are said as opposed to *how* it is said. Later in the chapter I focus more on the ground definition of the narrative analysis and apply this to the most open parts my interview.

Accordingly, my analysis is a coherent whole in which I make sense and interpret the answer of my interviewees. I compared and contrasted answers considering background information like gender and age, but also my respondents' information on general music listening practices. I also interpreted answers in relation to my research questions and my hypotheses. As for the lay-out of my analysis, I mostly stick to the three-part structure I also applied in my interview. I made use of quotes to clarify certain aspects like the narrative analysis of answers and in-depth meaning-making.

RESULTS

In this chapter I present the results of my analysis of the interview transcripts. Additionally, I interpret the results in relation to my main research question and my sub-question. Also, I link the answers to theory here and there. I go into links with my hypotheses in the next chapter. The structure of this chapter is thematically and in line with that of my interview. This means that I start with presenting results on my questions on music in general, followed by results on answers I got on the topic of visiting live concerts and thereafter I present results on the music venue and its role in the visit of a concert. Until here, it is a shallow, thematic presentation of the answers I got, without too much analysis. In the subsequent sub-chapter *Analysis*, is where I will apply my narrative analysis-strategy on the data and go deeper into the meaning of certain answers, looking past the tangible. Of course, not every question in my interview is relevant for my research so I do not go into every single question. The same goes for answers, as I got useful, but also futile answers. In these presentations, I also link results to general statistics of my respondents, where possible, to see if there are any patterns in their music- and concert-related behavior when it comes to for example age or gender. As noted before, most of my interviews were held in Dutch. Therefore, when I make use of quotes in the presentation of results, I translate my respondent's words as literal and honest as possible. As pointed out in the previous chapter, I use a narrative analysis for my interviews and resultingly, the presentation of my results is in story form as well.

First, I want to be clear about my respondents' choice of words, as a certain concept surfaced in my interviews that is particularly significant in their answers and explanations. In Dutch, we have a clear distinction between *Ervaring* and *Beleving*. In English, there is really only one word for both of them and that is *Experience*. The literal translation of *Experience* in Dutch is indeed *Ervaring* and the meaning of these words is the same. *Beleving*, however, is a much deeper concept as it not only tells something about what you experienced, but is more about what someone feels, what senses were stimulated and how someone interprets the experience. Just using the word *Experience* would be too superficial when I translate quotes. I therefore decided to keep the Dutch word *Beleving* present in English translations of my respondents' answers.

Last, but not least; when I quote respondents, I note their gender and age. I respect

the anonymity of my respondents and will therefore not mention their names. For my own administration, I named them '1' to '11', but this seemed odd to me to use descriptively in a research paper. Therefore, I for example say: "A 40-year old male respondent said…", just to clear that up.

GENERAL

My questions on the music-experience in general formed the base of my interview. As expected, there is not much to say about general statistics and links to one's favorite music-genre here. This is completely personal. Also, all my respondents had this preference despite the context or situation they were in, although a few pointed out they very occasionally prefer listening to other music in certain situations. A 32-year old male respondent expressed a strong preference for modern dance music, but "in producing, I also get a lot of inspiration from classical music, for example".

My question on what music means to my respondents in a broad sense, so how music makes them feel, elicit answers that were both personal, but also very much in line with each other. Nine of my respondents told me, with different words, that music is a way for them to find rest or relaxation, in line with findings by Holt (2010). A 20-year old female used the interesting words "listening to music, for me, is a moment to turn the world off, have nothing on my mind for a bit". Two of them used the word "Uitlaatklep", which freely translated is an *Exhaust valve*, a way of getting rid of sensations like stress or anxiety. The two respondents that did not use rest or relaxation as an answer, both males of 32 and 23 respectively, regarded music more as a part of either their work or as a "pastime. It's nice on the background, but it does not do much for me personally".

THE LIVE CONCERT

My first question for this part of the interview was how many concerts in music venues my respondents visit on a yearly base. I expected this to be personal as well, but I noticed a clear trend related to gender, whereas five out of my six male respondents go to four concerts or more a year and only two out of five female respondents. As I only have eleven total respondents, I do not feel like I can make solid, statistical claims and generalizations based on

this outcome, but I found it noteworthy.

Motivations and reasons for attending concerts ranged greatly among my interviewees and again, generally differed by genre. Although it sometimes depends on the artist, all five female respondents named socializing, atmosphere or conviviality as an important motive. A 17-year old female said the "atmosphere is the most important, dancing with other people, losing my mind and stuff". "Tasting the atmosphere and feeling the *gezelligheid* (conviviality) at an event" was an important reason too for another 20-year old female. As for male respondents, I found that the billed artist is the main motive to attend a concert for five of them. "I go to see the artist (…) that is the most important (…) Atmosphere and going crazy is fun, but that is not the reason that I go. That is purely to see the artist", according to an 18-year old male respondent. Most male respondents do make mention of atmosphere and partying, but it is secondary to seeing the artist they specifically bought a ticket for. One respondent, a 25-year old male, had a unique motivation by answering "I think it is mostly escapism. Thing is, at concerts I often feel like I'm in an entirely different world, forgetting about everything that is going on in my life and although I am mostly very energized and eccentric on concerts, it is also a way of relaxation. Just, emptying the tank so to say". He was the one exception among males that did not mention the artist as foremost attendance-motivation. In line with this are my respondents' answers to whether they would describe themselves as a silent observer or as someone who goes nuts at a concert. None of my female respondents would say they are a silent observer, whereas four out of six men did. A 19-year old female respondent told me "I like to dance so I'm guessing I'm more of the going nuts type (…) I feel like a child again, dancing gives a sense of freedom".

In this light, I was right about the generalizability of the research by Kruger & Saayman (2012), who pointed out artist affiliation, socialization, fun and group affiliation and enjoyment/entertainment as the four top motives for attending concerts and these all come back in some sense in the answers my respondents gave me. Kruger and Saayman also pointed out nostalgia as fifth and final common motivation, but that has not come forward in my research.

My respondents named a lot of different, unique and diverse factors that contribute to the 'greatness' of a live concert experience. The most commonly named factors are *Show* (named by eight out of eleven respondents), *Sound-quality, Crowd energy, Artist's engagement with the crowd* and *Beleving*. Only two respondents also named *Company* - the

people they attend a concert with - as an important factor. A 55-year old male respondent named his first time seeing Iron Maiden as his greatest concert-experience ever, because "they play with so much energy (...) they put on an incredible show and they still do nowadays. It was a whole *Beleving*". A 17-year old female told something about her best experience and this was more about the atmosphere. "That atmosphere (...) the whole crowd went totally insane. I have never danced as hard as I did back then (...) when the beat drops and everybody goes completely loco [Spanish for crazy, but common in youth-street language], that is what pumps me up the most during a concert".

On the concept of digitalization, in the form of sound-systems of unmatched quality nowadays and holographic projectors that basically could reproduce a concert-environment in one's living room, I asked my respondents if they would attend concerts less often if they would have access to this technology at home. They were unanimous in that a real concert setting cannot be reproduced at home in terms of the whole atmosphere, the social or show-elements that would be missing. "A concert is more of an 'esperienza' as we say, so an experience. You can reproduce a lot a home but the energy at a concert, the atmosphere, I'm sure you can't", according to a 25-year old male respondent. A 20-year old female said she "loved the whole *Beleving* around a concert, so the anticipation, the waiting, buying a ticket, going there and you do not have that at home". "You cannot technically reproduce a feeling, it is incomparable", said a 26-year old female respondent. A last quote here is coming from a 41-year old man, who said "going to a concert is also being away from home, not being locked in your daily life situation". Respondents thus did acknowledge the technology, but not one of them would attend concerts less regularly. Them pointing this out, is in line with the statement by Holt (2010), that a live-experience is unique in its atmosphere, artistic performance and social interactions and that uniqueness cannot be reproduced.

Concerts are also digitized nowadays in the form of online livestreams or concert registrations on platforms like YouTube. I asked my respondents whether watching those evokes similar or different feelings and to some extent, they did. Five of my respondents, of which three females, mentioned that they often watch footage of a concert they have been to themselves as sort of re-experience. "It can evoke memories and I sometimes recall the feeling I had back then", according to a 26-year old female respondent. Ten of my respondents did not say it felt the same as going to an actual concert, only one enthusiastic 17-year female, my youngest respondent, said watching concert footage "gives me the

energy of that crowd as well, yes (…) Sometimes I even go dance to it at home".

At this point, it is safe for me to say that Auslander's research on 'liveness' does not hold for my research. He stated that the presence and importance of liveness in modern culture is decreasing. The standard and historic definition of live-music – a music performance in which the performers and audience are both physically and temporarily co-present to one another – does not hold (Auslander, 2008, p.60). In my research it became clear, however, that in modern culture and with the arrival of new technologies and ways of experiencing culture, nothing compares to the experience that is a live-concert in a music venue.

THE LOCATION

In this last part I aimed to identify the role of the music venue in the experience of music while visiting a concert. Ten of my respondents said that the actual venue itself does not play any role in their decision-making process whether to go to a concert or not. A 26-year old female respondent said that the music venue in itself "[does not] specifically play a role, no. The artist is most important in that decision and to me it does not matter if they play in a hall that is too small or too warm or something". A 41-year old male respondent said "No [it does not play role], the artist is leading and if they would play in a venue with which I have lesser experiences, I would still go". The one respondent that did think the music venue plays a role in this process, is a 32-year old male that works as an event manager and is producer in his spare time: "I regularly come in different venues so I know where for example the sound-quality is good and what the production-possibilities are (…) I take that into account, yes". For regular concert-visitors, the music venue in itself seems to not matter as much. Or as a 19-year old female respondent puts it: "That would be so awesome, are you kidding?! It does not matter no (…) As long as I can see the artist and hear him play", answering my question if she would still go see Ed Sheeran if he would play in a stinky, warm garage.

As I expected, a factor that turned out to be of a certain influence in this process however, is the travelling to the music venue. Distance ("Distance is important for sure, yes. It often occurs that artists play in both Amsterdam and the next day in Tilburg. 9 out of 10 times I would choose Tilburg" – 41-year old male respondent from Halsteren), cost ("I have to be able to go there of course (…) I do not work (…) I cannot afford anything"- 17-year old female respondent) and convenience ("I do not have a car so I'm dependent of the public transport

(…) Not every venue is easily accessible via public transport" – 25-year old male respondent) were three commonly named factors here.

Because I anticipated that travelling distance matters, I asked interviewees what factors they would consider if they had to choose between two venues that are of equal distance from their house. Six of my respondents thought in a practical sense and told me that their agenda would come into play in that case. A 55-year old male respondent said: "Then I look purely at what suits me better, so which day it is and how I can combine [a visit] with work for example". A 25-year old male respondent said: "I'm guessing the date of the concerts would be different since they cannot play at both venues simultaneously (…) I would then go for the concert that suits my agenda best. I prefer the weekends of course". Three respondents expressed that liveliness of a city would be decisive factors. "I prefer coming in Rotterdam over Tilburg for example, that is of similar distance. Next to 013, I find Tilburg pretty boring. Rotterdam is much livelier", finds a 26-year old female respondent.

Respondents came up with a lot of diverse answers when I asked them about practical factors they do not like about visiting a concert, i.e., waiting times (for toilets, parking lots etc.), paying to store your coat or bag, leaving the hall for the toilets or a drink, prices for drinks, confusing navigation and paying for sanitation. A 25-year old male respondent has a catching way to put this in words: "Another thing I despise is paying for toilets, but that's something in general. I think it's bullshit. These are human needs, I do not pay to breath either, do I".

I also examined the importance of the production of a concert for my respondents. This included sounds, lights and stage-visibility. Most respondents did not attach much value to good lightning, but nine of my respondents claimed to value good sound-quality. An 18-year old male respondent said he attaches "much value to it, yes. Good sound-quality adds to the experience (…) Sound has to be good". Stage-visibility is also important to some respondents. A 26-year old female respondent said: "The stage has to be visible, yes, for everybody and from every corner of the hall". A 20-year old female respondent adds: "I like it when I am able to make photo's, without breaking my toes or punching someone in the head accidentally. I'm relatively short".

I explored other factors as well by asking what the role of the music venue specifically was in my respondents' best concert experience ever. In line with the theory by Marijke de Valck (2007), a lot of answers here pointed towards the venue's provision of a spatial

dimension and the provision of pre-programming activities, which add to the overall experience. Also, as previously theorized by Lingel & Naaman (2011), attendants value the staging at big, mainstream concerts. Out of my respondents, five mentioned their favorite concert took place in a big venue and they all pointed out the huge-production and show that came with it. A 26-year old female respondent, who mentioned a concert by Greenday in Ahoy, a big venue in Rotterdam, summarizes it effectively: "It was mainly due to the greatness. Of course, they do have the space for a mega-production like that over there and that was really overwhelming". A 36-year old female respondent also praised the visibility of the stage during her visit to Metallica: "The hall was really pretty. We were sitting on the stands and we could see all of it very well. The stage was in the middle of the hall so that contributed as well". Size does not only matter when the venues are large and suited for huge productions, but also smaller venues were valued by their creation of intimacy and a possibility to connect effectively with the artist. As a 20-year old female respondent puts it: "I really felt as one with the band, because it was so intimate and small. I have been to the Ziggo Dome before and that was very different. That feels less intense or something". The spatial dimension also clearly comes forward in the answer I got from an 18-year old male interviewee: "Well, they [music venue] booked the band I guess haha", providing a platform for him to see an artist he really wanted to see.

I wrapped up my interview by asking respondents whether they have any suggestions for music venues – as a business - to add to the overall experience of their customers and although many respondents struggled with this question, I elicited some really interesting ideas. Three respondents (all female) valued the provision of merchandising and would like to see more venues doing this: "I love goodiebags! With Ed Sheeran we got a goodiebag with a wristband and a poster and some flyers in it and I thought that was pretty cool", according to a 19-year old respondent. Three other respondents (all male) think music venues could benefit from providing a space for the audience to come together before or after an event, like a lounge bar or café. A 25-year old interviewee said the following about it: "What I like is when the venue has like a big lounge bar, sort of a café where people can chill and relax after a concert. Often the concert ends and everybody is like meh, let's go home I guess. Because often, people want to 'cooldown' so to say or just, talk some more with a nice beer, chilling on a couch or something". Some venues have this opportunity and this is valued. Also, Marijke de Valck suggested this already in her research, stating that events could also enrich

the audience with so-called pre-programming activities, like support acts or bar events so people can meet up. This attracts larger interest groups and it adds to the overall cultural value of such an event (De Valck, 2007, p. 212). Again, her research seems to apply to live music events very well.

To me personally, the most interesting suggestions came from two female respondents. A 26-year old, who works for a music venue herself, said that music venues should be more active in combining their business with popular, modern technologies like augmented or virtual reality. "We could give interactive guided tours with for example augmented reality, to try and connect more people to a music venue as an institution. Then they come back later for an event and they're like yeah, I was here and I know this and that". She admitted that realization of this would be easier if music venues would work more closely with other cultural institutions. Another interesting suggestion came from a 36-year old, who suggested the idea of music venues watching amusement parks in their customer binding: "Maybe just like in amusement parks, when you can buy your own customized photo frame and that you can order photos of the event after it's over, of the artist for example or of yourself. That is something I would find really fun, yes".

ANALYSIS

Following the thematically listing of results as above, I use this separate sub-chapter to make a deeper analysis of the collected data, making interpretations beyond the tangible outcomes. Here, the narrative analysis comes more into play and I apply this method on the more open questions and elaborate answers I elicited in order to makes sense of one's experience with a live-performance in a Dutch music venue.

For this section I look beyond the words and pay attention to intonation, body-language and other non-verbal aspects that tell me something about my respondent and its answer. As I already anticipated beforehand, one particular question in my interview – Can you tell me something about the best concert you have ever visited and why was this the case? – by far produced the most spontaneous, open and elaborate answers of the interview and I analyze some of those answers now.

My first respondent, a 19-year old female respondent, responded pretty monotone and shallow to the questions up until this point, but when she opened up about her

experience with Ed Sheeran, it seemed as if she came to life. Her eyes filled with joy, the smile on her face grew and she used her hands more elaborately in telling her story. "All these thousands of people singing along and lifting their phones and lighters was just, I think I had goose bumps the entire show" were words uttered in a state of ecstasy, while she rubbed her arm as if she had goosebumps again and slightly raising her voice. "The overall sound (…) and show were amazing. I think not every venue can realize something similar. It was all so great and overwhelming", along with her enthusiasm indicates she strongly values the spatial dimension provided by the music venue, allowing for this "overwhelming" show to take place along with thousands of other likeminded fans. This point comes forward with multiple respondents, as a 26-year old female respondent also told me of being so overwhelmed by the greatness of a hall, show and all the other people, while a big smile surfaced on her face and acting like she is this little girl in a big, big world. Her biggest joy surfaced when she told about Greenday's front man Billy Joel touching her air guitar. She came across with the joy of a child with candy while telling this.

A similar state of ecstasy was identifiable with a 25-year old male respondent, who told me about his very first experience with the phenomenon of a mosh-pit, a collective, violent-looking way of dancing to primarily hard rock music. Calling it "really memorable" and stating he felt really "pumped-up", he swung his arms around as if he was in the middle of a pit and a kind of determined smile appeared on his face. Being a fan of this phenomenon myself, I could very well identify with this smile. A smile that says "I like all these people here that act like they're violently pushing me around", while they mostly just use this as a release of adrenaline.

A 55-year old male respondent could not get over how "amazing" he found it when he saw Bruce Dickinson and the other members of Iron Maiden energetically flying over the stage during on of their performances. He broke out laughing specifically around this part of the interview, using the word amazing at least three times to describe his experience with this one subject. I could really tell that this moment, which happened in the 80's for him, made a memorable impact and telling this story almost 40 years later with the same child-like enjoyment and excitement, says a lot.

Abovementioned examples are only a couple out of the data I collected, as the enjoyment of the atmosphere, the artist's performance, the overwhelming feeling of the experience are all subjects that, based on *how* my respondents told me about those

moments, come back multiple times. Specifically interpreting the intonation in which these stories were told to me, there is one word that comes forward in particular: *Overwhelming*. A large number of my respondents talks about being overwhelmed by either the setting of the live-performance – the size of the venue for example -, the tangible show as given by the artist, the number of likeminded people around them or the atmosphere, to name a few. This feeling of being overwhelmed was noticeable very clearly through the non-verbal way in which the verbal was transferred to me. Whether it was through a raised voice, gestures, a twinkle in one's eyes or a prominent smile, it all pointed towards a unique, overwhelming and joyful experience.

ASSESSMENT

To close this chapter, I assess my hypotheses based on the results of my research, starting with my sub-question: What are main motives for people to still attend live-concerts in the current era of digitization?

I went from own experiences and theory and hypothesized three main motives for still attending concerts. Above all, I thought the social would stand out. Although some respondents did point out the social aspect as a reason to go to concerts, it did not surface as much as I expected. So, I consider this hypothesis as semi-confirmed. The second-most important reason I hypothesized was Atmosphere. This surfaced way more often than the social did, so I can confirm this one. On a more theory-related note, I hypothesized that listening to music might be of great quality today, but you cannot grasp the *Beleving* and the co-experience of artist and audience. That is a specific atmosphere. Pretty much all my interviewees agreed on this and noted that technology is very good, but it is not able to reproduce the uniqueness of a concert in your living-room. There is way more going on there than merely the sound- or light-production.

The main question of my research is: What is – in times of digitization and digitalization – the added value of a music venue for the music experience of their customers? Through the narrative analysis, it clearly came forward that the provision of a spatial dimension is of great importance to the experience of music venue customers. Where I hypothesized this was important because it could bring people together and only provide more of a social setting, the results show that this spatial dimension offers much more than

just that. A music venue can provide a setting for a memorable, overwhelming show to happen, giving goosebumps to people and putting smiles on faces. Of course, a lot depends on the artist but the venue itself has a huge share in providing the right sound, the right stage, the right field of vision for audience members and the right setting and all these factors contribute to how customers value their experience of such a happening.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I provide the conclusion of my research. I answer my research questions more elaborately, starting with answering my sub-question and then answering the lead-question of this thesis. This chapter makes clear that all the previous information provided necessary steps towards an answer to my research question. After answering my research questions, I address some theoretical implications of my research findings. I also add a discussion part in which I address issues I had with the research and I make suggestions for future research.

I start with answering my research sub-question: What are main motives for people to still attend live-concerts in the current era of digitization? There are two main motives that really stood out amongst my respondents: Artist affiliation (1) and Atmosphere (2). These two motives were mentioned by most of my respondents, with Artist affiliation generally being the most important for male interviewees, and Atmosphere for female interviewees. More motives I found that occurred less frequently were Socialization, Escapism, Conviviality, Entertainment and Relaxation.

My main research question is: What is – in times of digitization and digitalization – the added value of a music venue for the music experience of their customers? The foremost and most straightforward reason why music venues are important in the music experience of their customers – also in times of digitization -, is that they provide a spatial dimension to this experience. They provide an optimized hall in which people can come see their favorite artists, dance with friends and have a good time, no matter what their attendance-motivations are. This importance occurred with the rise of music venues, holds today in times of rapid technologies and digitization of the world and is likely to still hold in the years to come. We have museums to fully experience art, amusement parks to fully experience the adrenaline-rush of thrill rides and we have music venues to fully experience a music concert. Except for the social dimension, music venues have a huge share in contributing to the overwhelmingness of an experience. They are most responsible for bringing together all the pieces – from artist to audience and from sound to floor - and form the concert into a memorable, valuable experience for their audience. Digitization brought to the world that

technical aspects of a concert are reproducible, but it will leave the customer with an incomparable experience as opposed to live concerts in music venues, which are about a lot more than just the outstanding sound-quality. The atmosphere, the energy of the crowd, mega-production show elements, the co-experience as an audience with a real, tangible artist and the artist's engagement with the audience are all factors that my respondents find important and those cannot be digitally reproduced. These factors make an actual live concert-situation unique on its own. I argue that with digitization and digitalization, the experience that is a live-performance in a music venue has become more of a standalone phenomenon, and so is listening to music in other settings. Listening to music at home or going to a concert are nowadays two more differentiated subjects.

Another part of the added value a music venue provides their customers, is in the comfort of the visit. How more comfortable their visit to the concert is, the more they can be engaged with the show. Comfort here as a variety of meanings. Music venues can optimize waiting times for toilets and bars, find a way to make jacket- or bag- storage free, same for sanitation (for example include these costs in the ticket price), make a practical lay-out (no long walks to toilets or bars) and keep the hall itself suitable for people of any length or mobility. As production-quality came up as an important factor for my respondents, added value can also be in the hall's acoustics or the already mentioned quality of the sound system and light system. Finally, stage-visibility also adds to the experience of my interviewees. Being able to see the artist perform makes for a more engaging experience.

During my research, I came across some theoretical implications. First, despite the scope of my research, I can solidly state that my findings substantiate the research by Kruger and Saayman on concert attendance-motives. The thematical motives I found, were for a big part in line with their findings. My findings also substantiate the theories by De Valck on the provision of a spatial dimension to customers' event-experience, Lingel and Naaman's theory on customer's valuation of the staging at big, mainstream concerts on the one side and intimacy of smaller stages on the other side and lastly, my findings substantiate the theory by Lamont who argued that people have stronger experiences of music in live situations as opposed to home-situations. One theory did not hold at all in my research and that is the one by Auslander who argued that the presence and importance of liveness in modern culture is decreasing. Repeating, in my research it became clear, however, that in modern culture - and the arrival of new technologies and ways of experiencing culture – nothing compares to the

experience that is a live-concert. Liveness is just as important as it has ever been and I do not see that changing anytime soon. If anything, the role of the music venue has only become more important in making the value of visiting a live-concert in their hall as unique and overwhelming as possible, as a counteract to increasing digitization of music.

DISCUSSION

With my research in the rearview mirror and new insights gained, I want to discuss several non-theoretical implications here and do suggestions based on my experience. First of all, this was my first-ever qualitative research and thus my first time conducting qualitative interviews on this scale. I must say it was a great experience meeting people, talking to them and seeing all those different personalities with their own ideas, backgrounds and stories to tell. Although a number of eleven respondents is theoretically sufficient for a master thesis, I do not feel I can make strong claims that are widely generalizable or viable. I feel like I need a lot more respondents in order to do that. I do see a problem with that in terms of analysis, though. In hindsight, my choice for a combination of the narrative analysis with a more thematical analysis is one I still stand for, but it was certainly not easy with so much different content. More respondents would make this even harder and if that is the case, I would suggest relying more on the thematic analysis and less on the narrative analysis. Grounded analysis, for this type of research, is not going to work in any case, at least not for me. Despite my seemingly low number of eleven respondents, the method of my data analysis provided me with results I am very satisfied with and it kept my research personal and focused on the individual, which was the aim of my research.

The next implication is my method, or rather my choice of respondents. There were two respondents that gave me unique answers (the 18-year old male and 17-year old girl – the two youngest), but it was a real struggle to ask them fitting questions or getting answers and especially those interviews left me with the feeling I could have done more with it. Maybe it is my inexperience, maybe they were simply too young. Since I have the feeling with more interviews that I could and should have come up with more follow-up questions here and there, I blame it on my inexperience. I certainly learned a lot and getting good at anything is an ongoing process.

Now I want to do some suggestions for future research. First, it would be interesting

to – to some extent – reproduce the research done by Marijke van der Valck. She researched film-festivals and I was more than right about her theory being applicable to the concert industry as well, but still a similar, standalone research into music-events would be very viable. Also, an extension of my research would be very interesting. I suggest a greater focus on the music-venue and interviewing people who work there. This would probably entail multiple researches, as attendance-motives are still of great importance to research, especially in the light of theories by Jarness (2015) and Van Eijck & Majorana (2013) that suggest these motives and modern music consumption should be researched more exploratory and more focused on individual motives in order to understand it. Connecting such a research with a research on music venues in particular could be a potential groundbreaker. As for digitization and digitalization, research can be more focused on what it could contribute to music venues as a business.

Another interesting topic would be to dive more into the importance of overwhelmingness to the extent to which people value live-performances in music venues. The experience being overwhelming to music venue customers is a subject that surfaced especially in the non-verbal analysis of my data. It would be interesting to see to what extent this phenomenon of *The Overwhelming Experience* plays a role in the modern live-music industry.

What also could be interesting is diving more into the topic of digitization of the music-industry in general. Could for example the recent revival of the popularity of vinyl be of influence on live-performance experiences? What about the endlessly increasing popularity of cover bands and tribute-acts to (often passed away) famous artists?

As for many phenomena, businesses and practices, digitization opposes a threat at first, but it really is not. Digitization brings new opportunities to embrace and often opens unexpected, previously hidden doors.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

MUSIC-EXPERIENCE: GENERAL

- How many hours do you listen to music per day/week, and where? At home? On the road?

- What kind of music do you prefer and can you explain why? Are there occasions where you prefer one genre over another? Explain. (*Optional add*: For example, while working-out or in the train?)

- Can you tell me what music means to you in a broad sense? How does music make you feel or what do you 'use' music-listening for?

MUSIC-EXPERIENCE: THE LIVE-CONCERT

- How often do you visit concerts in a music venue (specifically: Poppodium) per month or per year?

- Can you tell me about the best concert you have ever visited? Can you explain why this was the case?

- Can you point out some motivations/reasons why you attend concerts? (*Optional add*: For example, simply because the artist is amazing, to hang out with friends etc.?)

- Can you tell me whether you prefer listening to music at home or at a concert? Why?

- Can you tell me which factors, during an artist's performance, influence the way in which you experience it? What factors influence the 'greatness' of the whole

experience?

- If you know you would be the only person that bought a ticket for a certain concert, would you still go? Why (not)?

- Are you more of a silent observer at a concert or are you always in the front, going nuts?

- Can you tell me what pumps you up at a concert? What gives you an adrenaline-rush or what makes you love these occasions so much? Because of which feelings?

- Can you tell me why you still visit concerts, even in times of incredible technology bringing music in the best possible quality to your living room? Would owning an unimaginably great sound-system with holographic projectors make you attend concerts less often?

- Can you tell me if visiting a concert or watching a concert-registration on for example YouTube evokes similar/different feelings for you?

MUSIC-EXPERIENCE: THE LOCATION

- In your decision-making in going to a concert or not, does the music venue itself play a role in some sort? Why?

- You told me about your best live-concert experience ever. Can you tell me what the role of the venue itself was here (in terms of convenience for example)?

- Which venues do you generally visit for concerts and why? Does this preference depend on the artist/genre?

- When an artist plays in multiple venues on a tour, can you tell me what factors you consider and which factors are important in deciding to which venue you go?

- Imagine that an artist performs in two venues that are of similar distance from your house and of similar ease to reach via traffic, what factors do you think will be decisive?

- Can you point out some things you do not like about visiting a concert, when it comes to practical factors? Think of the offer in drinks and foods, the prices for that, the ability (and price) to store your jacket and other belongings, the availability/cleanness (and sometimes even price) of sanitation, number and accessibility of bars, the possibility to buy ear-plugs, kindness of personnel, travel convenience and -time etc.

- Can you tell me how important the quality of the sound-system is for you? What about the lights and the visibility of stage and artist from the floor?

- Do you perhaps have any ideas how a business like a music venue could add to the overall experience of people attending a concert? In terms of services or goodies?

APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF RESPONDENTS

RESPONDENT	GENDER (M/F)	AGE	PLACE OF RESIDENCE	EDUCATION LEVEL	OCCUPATION
1	F	19	Schiedam/ London	University	Student
2	F	20	Tilburg	MBO	Student
3	M	25	Rotterdam/ Florence	University	Student
4	F	26	Bergen op Zoom	HBO	Management Assistant at Gebouw-T (music venue)
5	M	41	Halsteren	MBO	Copyshop Director
6	M	55	Bergen op Zoom	HBO	Flight Engineer
7	M	18	Bergen op Zoom	MBO	Student
8	M	22	Oosterhout	HBO	Biologist
9	F	36	Roosendaal	University	High School Teacher
10	F	17	Bergen op Zoom	MBO	Student
11	M	32	Utrecht	University	Event Manager