

**The resilience of the live music industry**  
An insight into visitor motivations

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## ABSTRACT

*The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the creative industries, including the live music industry. The restrictions included in the pandemic lockdowns have made it unable to visit live music for a prolonged period of time, despite its increasing popularity in the preceding decade. This has resulted in significant financial losses for all parties involved in the live music industry, including musicians, venues, and concert organizers. Therefore, it is important that the live music industry shows resilience, especially since touring makes up the main part of income for most artists in the popular music sphere. During the spring of 2022, most COVID restrictions were lifted and live concerts could again return with a record number of concerts planned during the year. However, as live music is audience-centred, it is important to consider how the pandemic has affected demand for the live music industry. The present work provides an insight into how the pandemic has affected visitor motivations of popular live music attendees by answering the question: What is the effect of the COVID pandemic on the visitor motivations of pop concert attendees? To examine this question, a quantitative survey method was applied after the omicron lockdown utilizing the Live Music Motivation Scale (LMMS). This data of the post-omicron lockdown concert attendees (n = 421) was then compared to the motivational data of pre-COVID visitors (n = 749) from the research of Mulder and Hitters (2021), that developed and also employed the LMMS. Both studies used a comparable sample of the Dutch population of popular concert visitors. Overall, motivations to attend concerts have significantly increased compared to before the pandemic. The results highlight that concert visitors show increased willingness to collectively experience, discover and escape after the COVID lockdown. Also, being there is of greater importance to young concert visitors (aged between 18 and 25 years old) after the lockdown compared to before the pandemic. Furthermore, a comparison of age groups shows that togetherness and being there are more important motivations to visit concerts for youths than for older visitors. These results may benefit industry professionals like pop venue directors, music marketers and concert organizers, who can use these insights to gain a better overview of how the pandemic has affected demand, and to design concert programs and steer effective marketing communication. The increase in popular concert visitors' motivations can be considered an indicator of the resilience of the live music industry, as it demonstrates a strong, even higher than before the pandemic, willingness to experience live music again.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Live Music, Visitor Motivations, COVID-19 Pandemic, Concerts, Music Industry*

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## Preface

“The resilience of the live music industry: an insight into visitor motivations” was written to fulfil the graduation requirements of the Master Media & Creative Industries program at Erasmus University. I was engaged in writing this thesis from December 2021 to June 2022.

This work is the result of my desire to contribute to the recovery of the live music industry. As the pandemic has severely affected the industry, it seemed important to get an understanding of the effect of the pandemic on motivations of live music visitors. This information can namely help in getting an overview of the resilience and future of the live music industry, as well as support industry professionals in their undertakings.

This study would have been impossible without the aid and support of others. First of all, I sincerely want to thank my supervisor Dr. Erik Hitters for his enthusiasm, guidance, and support during the running of this project. I would like to express my gratitude to Martijn Mulder for the help with distributing the survey and for the insightful comments and suggestions regarding the analysis. I am also grateful to both Dr. Erik Hitters and Martijn Mulder for providing me with their pre-pandemic data of concert visitors. In addition, I wish to thank Dr. Yijing Wang for the feedback on the proposal and conceptual model. Also, I would like to offer my special thanks to Rob van der Zwaan for distributing the questionnaire through the Podiuminfo channels. Finally, many thanks to all the respondents for taking the time to fill in the survey and enabling this project to be possible.

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## 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the live music industry for a prolonged period of time. The coronavirus has posed severe challenges for actors in the creative industries as regulations have closed cultural sectors, causing financial devastation (Betzler et al., 2021). While the pandemic has negatively affected consumer spending for the total music industry, the impact on the live sector is most significant (Denk et al., 2022). Artists had to cancel live shows since governments introduced social distancing rules to prevent the spread of the virus. The consequence is that musicians had to face a significant decline of income as they were unable to perform, intensified with the corresponding lack of merchandise income at live shows (Denk et al., 2022; Rendell, 2021). Some may have introduced online streams as a substitute to live shows to still offer fans a musical experience and to make up for the reduced income (Gu et al., 2021). Many artists were not solely affected in terms of financial difficulties, but also reported an increase in loneliness and anxiety (Spiro et al., 2021). Furthermore, Rendell (2021) expresses worries about the reduced available spaces for musicians and fans after the pandemic since concert venues may have to be closed down permanently.

The Dutch event industry has suffered a loss of 11 billion euros in total due to the pandemic (VVEM, 2021), including a 92 million loss for Dutch pop venues (VNPF, 2021). Also, as a result of the pandemic and its regulations, pop venues in the Netherlands reported an 80% decrease in the number of visits to music venues and 23.000 less live performances compared to the previous year, as well as the dismissal of 22% of the employees within the sector (VNPF, 2021). On a global scale, the impact of the pandemic on the music industry is demonstrated in the 2020 results of Live Nation, which showed a decline of 84% in concert revenue, 88% in ticketing revenue and 65% in sponsorship revenue compared to the previous year (Live Nation Entertainment, 2021). Hence, it can be concluded that the COVID pandemic has had severe consequences for the live music industry.

Nevertheless, Live Nation does show optimism for the resilience of the live music industry in 2022, with a record amount of concerts planned as almost twice as many major artists are touring compared to other years (Live Nation Entertainment, 2021, 2022b). The company has even recorded a record-breaking operating income in the first quarter of 2022, with significant increases in ticket sales compared to before the pandemic and further indicators pointing towards a record concert attendance in 2022 (Live Nation Entertainment, 2022a).

Yet, the impact of the pandemic on the music industry is extremely significant since in the preceding decades most musicians have come to rely on live performances to sustain their careers (Brown & Knox, 2017; Wilkström, 2020). Digitalization has profoundly affected the creative and cultural industries (Nordgård, 2017; Towse & Hernández, 2020) and the arrival of peer-to-peer file sharing and Spotify have resulted in the emergence of a new digital music streaming industry (Remneland Wikhamn & Knights, 2016). During these early years of digitalization with the entry of Napster and a prominent role for music piracy, recorded music revenues declined dramatically (Mortimer et al., 2012; RIAA, 2021). Revenues from recorded music declined due to both illegal downloading and new streaming platforms (Marshall, 2015). However, from 2016 onwards the increasing income brought in by paid music streaming subscriptions made revenues of the recorded music industry grow again for the first time in the millennium, almost matching the all-time total revenue peak in 2020 (RIAA, 2021). The study of Wlömert and Papies (2016) also illustrates that streaming services have positively affected total revenue of the recorded music industry, even though they have also cannibalized sales from CD's, Vinyl's and download purchases. The positive effect can mainly be ascribed to individuals who adopted a paid subscription model and individuals who previously were inactive music buyers but now contribute to industry revenue by adopting an ad-supported account.

However, this insight from RIAA (2021) and Wlömert and Papies (2016) does not automatically imply that every musician benefits from the increased recorded music revenue. Due to royalty payout systems which favor larger artists and major record labels, unequal power relations between smaller artists and streaming services, as well as the enormous increase in total market supply (Galuszka, 2015; Marshall, 2015; Sun, 2019b), only a small amount of musicians is able to earn a significant amount of income from recorded music (Ingham, 2021; Marshall, 2015; Nordgård, 2017; Sinnreich, 2016). This further contributes to an industry in which a small percentage of the artists accounts for the majority of the income. Krueger (2019) explains this superstar market to be the result of digitalization and new technologies. Because of early innovations like vinyl's, CD's and later streaming, artists were able to reach international audiences. This much larger reach due to these new technologies have enabled artists to profit from economies of scale, which together with uniqueness of the artists and their music provides the basis for this superstar market (Krueger, 2019). Moreover, in further explaining how this superstar market works, Krueger (2019) describes music listening to mostly be a social phenomenon. People like to listen to music their friends and family are also listening to because it strengthens family ties and friend connections and thus

provides additional value to the listened music, meaning that the musical taste of individuals is influenced by friends and family, next to experts (e.g., personalized playlists) and radio. Hence, since people's musical behaviour is affected by the musical consumption of others, a snowball effect is created which makes the popular songs even more popular and strengthens this superstar market (Krueger, 2019). Thus, most musicians are not able to achieve success in the recorded music industry and likewise have to make a living from performances in pubs, clubs and venues (Wilkström, 2020). As a result, revenue models have shifted from physical record sales to live performances, resulting in a significant growth of the live music industry (Brennan, 2015; Holt, 2010; Mulder et al., 2021; Sun, 2019a).

Correspondingly, the world's leading live music organization Live Nation reported its ninth consecutive year of growth in 2019 (Live Nation Entertainment, 2020). The epitome of the industry's growth is characterized by Ed Sheeran's 'Divide Tour' (2017-2019), as the tour of the British singer has become the highest-grossing tour with the most visitors in the history of live music (Gensler & Allen, 2019). The Dutch live industry showed an increase of 57% in total amount of gigs between 2008 and 2019, with more artists playing venues and festivals than ever before (Mulder, 2021). This shift in artists' business model is characterized by Krueger (2005) as the 'Bowie Theory', referring to the advice of David Bowie to incorporate live concerts as the core business model to generate revenue, since recorded music will be turned into 'running water'. In a similar line, Holt (2010) claims that records are now primarily seen as a publicity tool for attracting visitors to live performances. The study of Naveed et al. (2017) shows a co-evolution of the rise in music streaming and the rise of live music, and they suggest that the increase in music consumption via streaming services might have contributed to the increasing popularity of live music. Mulder (2021) also indicates that the rise of streaming income for Dutch artists is in conjunction with an increasing number of live performances. In addition, Mulder (2021) implies that the easy accessibility to music on streaming services has increased the desire for consumers to attend live performances. Hence, these studies show that the streaming industry and live industry are closely related.

As live music has become more central to business models of musicians and recorded music revenues have decreased, concert ticket prices have also increased (Brown & Knox, 2017; Holt, 2010). A study from Pollstar shows that average ticket prices have increased nearly 23% in a four-year time period from 2015 till 2019 (Gensler, 2019). This increase in ticket prices serves to compensate for the decline in recorded music revenue as well as the increasing expenses to organize events since demand for amusement and experiences keep increasing (Krueger, 2019). Because of the increase in live music popularity and easy

accessibility to recorded music on streaming services, consumers also report to spend more money on live music than on recorded music (Behr et al., 2020). Nevertheless, Brown and Knox (2017) claim that ticket prices are not taken into account when people are deciding whether to attend a concert, which suggests that live music has something special to offer to attenders regardless of increased prices.

It remains to be seen whether the live music industry shows resilience after the (financial) devastation the pandemic has caused. This is of significant importance due to the increasing dependency of musicians on live music. Khlystova et al. (2022) claim that “the resilience of the creative industries is important for their ability to survive, sustain their level of operations or workforce, and adapt in order to grow” (p. 1204), and ask for further research into the effect of the pandemic on demand in the music industry. Mulder and Hitters (2021) also call for research on the effects of the lockdown on motivations for visiting live music (p. 371). Thus, these authors indicate that new knowledge is required into the effect of the pandemic on demand for the live music industry. The current study aims to fulfil this gap by providing insight into the motivations of popular concert visitors after the COVID lockdown driven by the omicron variant. Also, the live music industry is a relatively under-researched area within academic music research (Brown & Knox, 2017; Doğantan-Dack, 2012; Kulczynski et al., 2016; Mulder & Hitters, 2021), even though the growing importance of the industry requires more knowledge and understanding. Additionally, even though multiple studies into the motivations of music visitors have been conducted (Brown & Knox, 2017; Kruger & Saayman, 2015; Kulczynski et al., 2016; Mulder & Hitters, 2021; Perkins, 2012), the current study will be the first to explore visitor motivations of concert visitors in times of the pandemic, and thus contributes to a better understanding of the resilience of the live music industry. The research question central to the current study can be formulated as: *What is the effect of the COVID pandemic on the visitor motivations of pop concert attendees?*

Importantly, multiple studies illustrate that demographic variables partly explain differences in motivations for visiting live music and should therefore be taken into account in further motivation research (Kruger & Saayman, 2015; Pilcher & Eade, 2016; Uysal et al., 1993). Additionally, Kulczynski et al. (2016) ask for more research into whether and how demographic variables – most importantly age - impact motivations for live popular concerts. Therefore, the current research will also examine the influence of age on motivations to attend live concerts.



Collis (2017) implies that entertainment is audience-centred, as it tends to identify audience values, tastes, and desires in order to design products catered to them. Based on an analysis of the industrial, academia and psychological approach to entertainment, McKee et al. (2014) even propose the term ‘audience-centred commercial culture’ to define entertainment. Hence, professionals within the entertainment industry invest many resources into understanding audiences to steer marketing communication (Collis, 2017). In a similar line, research which contributes to a better understanding of consumer motivations in the popular music sphere is important to the design of product offerings, monitoring of satisfaction and effective marketing to audiences (Crompton & McKay, 1997). For instance, insight into visitor motivations can help digital marketers to design more spreadable media texts (Jenkins et al., 2013), which in turn leads to more exposure and consumption for the artists or venue. Therefore, industry professionals such as pop venue directors, music marketers and concert organizers benefit from more insight into the motivations of concert visitors to gain a better overview of the effect of the pandemic and adapt their business models in order to survive and grow.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. Visitor motivations**

Chandler and Munday (2020) define motivation as “the physico-mental forces hypothesized to direct individual behaviour” and distinguish between intrinsic motivations derived from the individual and extrinsic motivation derived from external factors. Motivations are indeed considered fundamental to the behaviour of individuals (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Snepenger et al., 2006) and Murray (1964) defines a motive as “an internal factor that arouses, directs and integrates a person’s behavior” (p. 7). Hence, visiting a popular music concert is a directed action which is triggered by multiple motivations in order to fulfil a desired need (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Iso-Ahola, 1980).

### **2.2. Entertainment motivations**

To assess the motivations for visiting live music, it is important to first take a broader scope and consider the overall entertainment framework that the live music industry is part of. The entertainment industry consists of all services and activities in the fields of film, dance, opera, literary publishing, theatre, television and radio, fine art and music (Finsterwalder et al., 2012). According to Vorderer et al. (2006), entertainment engagement is characterized by an intrinsically motivated response to the endless entertainment opportunities. Central to these intrinsic motivations are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Hence, entertainment provides the opportunity to be in control, master and learn new skills in a self-chosen setting where the challenge is not too difficult, and to become closely related to others, and these elements are important drivers of entertainment participation (Vorderer et al., 2006).

Hennig-Thurau and Houston (2019) present seven motivational values which lead to entertainment consumption. Escapism, which relates to escaping something unpleasant or worrisome, is one of the most-named reasons for engagement in entertainment. Live entertainment can be visited with the idea of experiencing a change-of-pace from the everyday life, as this setting provides a different environment from the ones that people normally engage in. People also seek companionship and relationships within entertainment, a way to get emotionally involved. Especially live music allows for emotional relationship building with artists and other fans. For instance, music fans develop parasocial relationships with musicians (Kurtin et al., 2019), which is reinforced by digital platforms allowing for backstage and behind the scenes content of the artists. However, live music in particular

provides the opportunity for strengthening this parasocial relationship (Kurtin et al., 2019). The third motivational value touches upon the curiosity within human nature, often translated into discovery and exploration. People can use live entertainment to actively seek for something new and inspiring. The fourth motivational value, mastery-control, defines the autonomy that people experience when they engage in entertainment. People are in control of the decision which type of entertainment they want to engage in and can for instance choose themselves which music they want to listen to, or which concerts they want to visit. Mood-management and Sensory Arousal relates to the external stimulation that entertainment products provide, with the ability to regulate people's moods. Live entertainment can increase arousal levels and strengthen existing moods as it is often expected to bring people a good time and to stimulate a positive mood. People are also found to engage in entertainment to learn socially, for instance how others behave and respond to certain challenges, but also to learn about the self and being able to identify with others, which can be linked to the social aspect of live entertainment. Achievement is the last motivational value leading to entertainment consumption as depicted by Hennig-Thurau and Houston (2019). This is closely aligned to an active role of the self, with personal achievement and high competency as the end-result. Achievement is more likely to be applicable to for instance playing an instrument than to the experience of visiting live concerts.

### **2.3. Cultural consumption motivations**

Other studies have explored the motivations for cultural consumption and performing arts in general. Based on a literature review, Manolika et al. (2015) discovered that socialization, family togetherness, escapism, and novelty were among the most-cited motivations for attending a cultural activity in literature. They define socialization as the need for interacting with other people, meeting new people or to be with friends. Family togetherness illustrates the enhancement of family relationships through cultural participation. Escapism refers to the recovering from responsibilities by engaging in different activity and environment from everyday life. Lastly, novelty relates to the experience of new and unusual things. The study of de Rooij and Bastiaansen (2017) combined a qualitative and quantitative approach to examine motivations for visiting the performing arts, leading to seven different motivational factors. Cultural aesthetics, which was labelled as the core motivation of performing arts visitors, involved both artistic value and enjoyment of beauty. This concerned being emotionally touched and captivated by the performance. Having an enjoyable time in which one could escape daily life was signified in the cultural relaxation

factor. Cultural stimulation contained aspects related to actively experiencing performing arts through learning and the desire to be inspired. Social attraction refers to spending time with similar-minded people. The desire to spend time, bond and experience the performance together with friends and family is captured in the social bonding factor. Status-related motivational aspects such as distinguishing oneself from others and being valued for visiting performing arts are captured in the social distinction factor. Finally, social duty refers to visiting a performance for professional reasons or because a family member or friend performs on stage.

#### **2.4. Live music motivations**

Live music is found to be the favourite mode of music consumption (Brown & Krause, 2020) as well as the strongest musical experience (Lamont, 2011). Especially in times where music is abundantly available in digital format, individuals crave for music in live atmospheres (Jones, 2015).

Several studies have particularly focused at the difference between recorded music and live music to explain why live music is favoured. The study of Earl (2001), using a subjective personal introspection approach, noted several features of live music performances that recorded music is unable to offer. Hero worship, uninhibited behaviour, pure joy, experience of concert-specific music, sampling without commitment, ritual and social interaction were all found to be indicators of the preference for live music over recordings based on his own experiences. Radbourne et al. (2014) also note some factors which differentiate live music from recorded music and are likely to drive live music attendance. The possibility to become fully immersed in a performance, share the experience with other audience members and be in the proximity of the artists were valued as important quality measures of a live music show (Radbourne et al., 2014). Furthermore, Swarbrick et al. (2019) argue that the social sharing of the experience with others and live aspects such as unpredictability and connecting with the artists are important reasons for preferring live concerts over recorded music. Their study further shows that live music is better able to engage listeners than recorded music, especially when visitors have a pre-existing admiration for the performers. Kjus and Danielsen (2014) state that psychological, social, and perceptual features distinguish the live music experience from recorded music. Psychological features refer to the emotions and memories that live music evoke, social features refer to the participation in a social setting which is not solely limited to the performance itself but can extend before and after the concert, and perceptual features reflect the sensory impressions

including visuals and sound. These elements increasingly dedicate people to live performances, even when recorded music is abundantly available online (Kjus & Danielsen, 2014). Lastly, Brown and Knox (2017) state that live music is able to offer music listeners something more valuable which recorded music is unable to satisfy, namely a unique experience.

Multiple studies also focused on the comparison between recorded and live music in terms of health benefits (Bailey, 1983; Fancourt & Steptoe, 2018; Holmes et al., 2006; Shoda et al., 2016; Walworth, 2010; Wheeler, 1985). Live music releases tension, anxiety and improves moods in a more significant way than recorded music (Bailey, 1983; Shoda et al., 2016; Walworth, 2010). Holmes et al. (2006) revealed more positive engagement for live music in comparison to recorded music for people with dementia and Wheeler (1985) indicates that live music positively affects enjoyment, with the effect of recorded music on enjoyment being insignificant. Visiting concerts also protects people against cognitive decline as it benefits the memory and semantic fluency (Fancourt & Steptoe, 2018).

## **2.5. Motivations of live popular concert attendees**

Several studies have explicitly explored the motivations of live popular music concerts attendees (Brown & Knox, 2017; Kruger & Saayman, 2015; Kulczynski et al., 2016; Mulder & Hitters, 2021; Perkins, 2012). The current study adopts the definition of popular music from Mulder and Hitters (2021), who state that popular live music involves all music that can be found in general music charts and/or all music that can regularly be experienced live in a pop venue. This includes the genres: pop, rock, hip-hop, urban, singer-songwriter, metal, dance, electronic live music, and cross-overs between pop and for example soul, jazz or world music (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). Genres which are excluded from this definition are traditional jazz, traditional folk music, and classical music.

The study of Kulczynski et al. (2016) developed the first tool which is specifically aimed to measure the motivations of visitors to popular music concerts in a quantitative way, the Concert Attendance Motivation Scale (CAMS). Building on the CAMS of Kulczynski et al. (2016), a literature review, and empirical research, Mulder and Hitters (2021) developed the Live Music Motivation Scale (LMMS), which aimed to capture the general motivations for visiting both pop concerts and festivals. The LMMS includes six components: togetherness, discovery, escapism, being there, uniqueness, and music specific characteristics. These components will be examined in detail below.

### 2.5.1. Togetherness

Togetherness contains aspects of socialization, uninhibited behaviour, and event-specific characteristics (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). Being able to share the live music experience with others is found to be a key motivation in previous studies (Brown & Knox, 2017; Dearn & Price, 2016; Kulczynski et al., 2016; Perkins, 2012; Radbourne et al., 2014). The research of Radbourne et al. (2014) illustrates that being among other audience members and experiencing the live experience as a shared, communal audience experience is an important quality of live music. The study of Dearn and Price (2016) demonstrates that the decision to attend a concert is always influenced by social interactions, even for frequent visitors. Their study illustrates that the shared concert experience leads to a sense of community. The key to this community is the ability to discuss the concert with other visitors, which can carry on for months. Similar findings are described by Perkins (2012), who likewise denotes that interacting and socializing with alike people is often mentioned as reasons to attend a popular concert, next to the feeling of being a part a group with similar interests. Brown and Knox (2017) also depicts being able to socialize with others and to listen to music with similar-minded people to be one of the prominent motivations of visiting a concert. Being part of a group with similar music taste at concerts was described as being part of a community (Kulczynski et al., 2016), similar to the findings of Dearn and Price (2016). The study of Kulczynski et al. (2016) further indicates that people visit concerts to have a good time with friends and family or to support their partner or friends who didn't have anyone to go with.

Uninhibited behaviour, also captured in the togetherness motivation scale, refers to engaging in behaviour such as drinking, partying and dancing which might not be allowed in a 'normal' setting (Perkins, 2012). This same motivation is adopted by Kulczynski et al. (2016), who also discovered that participants sometimes regarded uninhibited behaviour to even be the sole motivation for visiting a concert. Their study further showed that uninhibited behaviour can be expressed through drinking, dancing, moshing, clothing choices and even temporary changes to the personality with the corresponding behaviour.

The event-specific characteristics refer to the likings of the atmosphere that the places in which live performances take place can offer. The atmosphere of live performances was found to be a motivation for visiting concerts as it significantly distinguishes between the recorded studio versions and live shows (Brown & Knox, 2017; Kulczynski et al., 2016; Pegg & Patterson, 2010; Perkins, 2012; Pilcher & Eade, 2016).

These three elements combined create the togetherness motivation component of the Live Music Motivation Scale (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). This component is because of its social prominence also referred to as the social motivation within the research of Mulder and Hitters (2021) and found to be a major motivational factor for both festivals and concertgoers.

### **2.5.2. Discovery**

Personal and artistic motivations are combined within the discovery component, consisting of items related to curiosity, enrichment, and discovery (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). As previously noted by Hennig-Thurau and Houston (2019), curiosity is often converted into discovery behaviour. The research of Willekens and Daenekindt (2020) into concertgoers of all genres likewise captures curiosity and discovery-elements into a discovery-centred motivational factor, similar to the discovery component of Mulder and Hitters (2021).

According to Earl (2001), curiosity of what will happen at the concert can be a motivator to attend. Also, the study of Bowen and Daniels (2005) shows that live music allows for personal enrichment. In a similar line, the research of Crompton and McKay (1997) demonstrates that personal enrichment can be a motivator for visiting live music and captured this element within the cultural exploration factor.

Iso-Ahola (1980) discusses the escape-seeking dichotomy and illustrates that leisure and recreational participating is motivated by the desire to acquire intrinsic rewards. However, to obtain these rewards one must find what activities or elements will provide this. Brown and Knox (2017) show that this seeking behaviour also relates to the visiting of live music. People are motivated to visit concerts to discover new things and these discovery purposes can include the seeking of new music, for instance through support acts, but also to seek elements of the live show which are new (Brown & Knox, 2017). Furthermore, the research of van der Hoeven and Hitters (2019) into the cultural and social values attributed to live music ecologies illustrates that live music allows for individuals to discover new music genres and styles. Even though the discovery component was more important to festivals compared to concerts, this motivational factor is of significant importance to all forms of live music (Mulder & Hitters, 2021).

### **2.5.3. Escapism**

The escapism component involves personal motivational factors, incorporating elements related to escaping everyday life and engaging in behaviour which is not allowed in

a normal social setting. This latter uninhibited behaviour element has been classified under the escapism component by Mulder and Hitters (2021) since it is a personal motivation, in contrary to the previous uninhibited behaviour element related to drinking, partying, and dancing which has been classified under the togetherness component due to its social nature.

Escapism behaviour refers to the activities one employs in order to escape unpleasant realities, distract oneself from certain circumstances, and to find oneself in a more desirable state than the current one (Hirschman, 1983). The study of Schäfer et al. (2013) indicates that music listening in general can help people to cope with worries and forget about reality. Multiple studies have discovered that visitors tend to go to festivals for escapism purposes (Duran & Hamarat, 2014; Lee et al., 2004; Pilcher & Eade, 2016; Scott, 1995; Vinnicombe & Sou, 2017). In terms of concerts, Kulczynski et al. (2016) show that participants visit concerts to change the pace of the regular and escape daily life with its corresponding responsibilities. According to Perkins (2012), such responsibilities can refer to for instance work and kids. In a similar line, Kruger and Saayman (2015) illustrate that concertgoers like to escape the tension of daily life. The study of Jenol and Pazil (2020) into K-pop fans also shows that concerts and fan events serve as a platform for escapism behaviour in terms of providing a preferred reality over everyday life. Mulder and Hitters (2021) discovered that this escapism motivation is slightly more important to festivals than to concerts, even though the difference is minor.

#### **2.5.4. Being There**

The being there component includes elements related to status and hero worship (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). This component combines both personal (status) and artistic (hero worship) motivations and shows that status enhancement is connected to the idea of presence and proximity to the performing artists (Mulder & Hitters, 2021).

The personal status-related element of this component demonstrates that one's status is enriched by visiting a live concert and seeing the artists perform in a live setting, which shows the value creation of live music (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). Concert attendance provide a certain coolness which visitors use to proudly talk about to others (Kulczynski et al., 2016; Perkins, 2012). This bragging is increasingly done in the form of sharing content about the concert on social media since these platforms provide the opportunity to express one's identity (Bennett, 2015; Bolander, 2017; Kulczynski et al., 2016; O'Donnell, 2018). For some, concert attendance is then also used as a way to increase one's status as a fan and to feel special in relation to non-visitors (Kulczynski et al., 2016; Perkins, 2012).



The artistic motivations of this component refer to being physically attracted to the performing artists and the ability to be in proximity of the artists at the concert (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). The study of Kulczynski et al. (2016) demonstrates that the physical attractiveness of an individual artist or member of the band motivated individuals to attend the concert. Being in physical proximity to the artists or band was also found to be an important motivation to visit in other studies (Brown & Knox, 2017; Kulczynski et al., 2016; Oakes, 2003; Perkins, 2012; Radbourne et al., 2014). The thrill of being in proximity to the performing artists cannot be achieved by listening to recordings, and therefore provides a reason to attend (Oakes, 2003). For some, the closeness to artists can provide a very emotional experience, with the associated benefit of being able to touch the artist or catch physical elements such as guitar picks or drumsticks (Brown & Knox, 2017; Kulczynski et al., 2016; Perkins, 2012; Radbourne et al., 2014). The being there motivational component was found to be more important to concert visitors than to festivalgoers (Mulder & Hitters, 2021).

#### **2.5.5. Uniqueness**

The unique experience of live concerts as well as the unpredictability of the show and desire to see the artists perform live at least once are captured in the uniqueness component (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). Concerts do provide unique experiences, which can only be experienced at a specific moment in time. The atmosphere, social interaction and artistic performance will provide these unique elements to live performances and these aspects will make sure that, despite of technological and industry-specific developments, concerts remain unique experiences (Holt, 2010). Hence, concerts provide a once-in-a-lifetime feeling which stimulates to attend the concert (Brown & Knox, 2017; Kruger & Saayman, 2012, 2015).

Also, the unknown aspects of live performances is a crucial motivation to visit live concerts (Brown & Knox, 2017) and Bennett (2012) circumscribes this excitement surrounding whether the artists will play rare or new songs into anticipation. Additionally, the wish to see that particular artist or band perform live was also discovered as a motivating factor for visiting concerts in previous studies (Kruger & Saayman, 2012, 2015; Kulczynski et al., 2016).

This setting-related motivational component was found to be more important to visiting concerts than to visiting festivals (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). They explain this by stating that the unique motivational component is primarily created by the performing artist, and artist-related motivations are in general more important to concertgoers than festival

visitors. Hence, this does not automatically suggest that the event setting is less important to festivals, as festivals and concert venues are more difficult to compare in terms of non-musical activities (Mulder & Hitters, 2021).

### **2.5.6. Music Specific Characteristics**

The last component, music specific characteristics, contains artistic motivations for visiting live music and relates to hearing different versions of recorded songs and hearing newly released or unreleased songs (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). The research of Perkins (2012) captures both these elements into the experience new and concert specific music dimension. This dimension encompasses the hearing of unreleased music and altered versions such as acoustic songs and covers which can only be experienced by visiting the concert. Kulczynski et al. (2016) describes this motivational factor as “the opportunity to hear music from a particular artist where attendance to the concert is the only means of experiencing some aspect of the artist’s performance” (p. 245). The study of Brown and Knox (2017) explicitly expresses that the dissimilarity of live versions to recorded music was found to be a key driver of concert attendance. They discovered that differentiation of live music in comparison to the recorded versions stimulates the interest in live shows and might even motivate fans to buy multiple tickets to the same tour. Lastly, this artistic motivational component was found to be more important to visiting concerts than to festivals (Mulder & Hitters, 2021). This finding is in line with Bowen and Daniels (2005), who claim that festival organizers should not rely upon the music or artists itself for attracting large crowds.

## **2.6. Motivations and COVID-19**

The research of Vandenberg et al. (2021) on online livestreamed concerts during the lockdown caused by COVID-19 indicates that participants missed the collective experience of physical events. Attenders of livestreams prominently outed their frustration about the lack of socialization opportunities in virtual format as it could not match the collective energy of physical events: “In grief of not being physically surrounded by fellow participants, livestream concerts are being compared to physical events and clearly disfavoured for not providing a similar collective experience” (p. 149). Virtual concerts were merely treated as recordings instead of live experiences as the missing of collectiveness restrained viewers from being fully immersed. In a similar line, music fans are likely to participate in virtual livestreams to satisfy missing social needs (Onderdijk et al., 2021; Swarbrick et al., 2021). Hence, music fans crave the ability to socialize and collectively experience concerts again

after a prolonged period of limited opportunities. This desire is expected to be converted into an increase of the togetherness motivation component after the lockdown.

*H1a: Togetherness is significantly more important for pop music concert attendees after the COVID lockdown compared to before the pandemic*

Socialization and the sense of belonging are of key importance during adolescence (Apaolaza et al., 2013; Ellis & Zarbatany, 2017; Tomova et al., 2021). While leisure is often used to socialize, the lockdown deprived young people from significant aspects of their social life (van Leeuwen et al., 2020; Walker et al., 2019). Young people prominently stated missing social contact during the lockdown and reported increased loneliness during this period (Luijten et al., 2021; Panchal et al., 2021). Thus, being able to engage in social events is of particular crucial importance to young adults and they crave the ability of going out to party and socialize again after the limits on social contact instigated by the lockdown (Joshi, 2021). Therefore, it is predicted that the togetherness component is of relative importance for young people.

*H1b: Togetherness is after the lockdown significantly more important to 18-25 years olds compared to 1) people aged between 26 and 35 years old, 2) people aged between 36 and 49 years old, 3) people aged between 50 and 59 years old, and 4) people aged 60 years and older*

Literature shows that music streaming leads to a substantial increase in the diversity of music consumption and has even become the leading music discovery method (Datta et al., 2018; Lindsay, 2016). During the lockdown there has been a significant increase in music listening on streaming platforms (BPI, 2021; Cabedo-Mas et al., 2021; Fink et al., 2021). The study of Denk et al. (2022) also shows that the pandemic has accelerated the continuous trend towards digitalization of the music industry due to increased premium streaming consumption and expenditures. Simultaneously, a co-evolution of streaming and live music consumption exists (Naveed et al., 2017), as music streaming positively affects live music attendance (Nguyen et al., 2014; Papiés & van Heerde, 2017). In a similar line, the research of Mortimer et al. (2012) on Napster and file-sharing clarifies that the easy accessibility to music via these ways facilitated a broader distribution of music, even though it displaced recorded album sales. The digital distribution of music has expanded the discovery of smaller artists and positively affected demand for their live shows (Mortimer et al., 2012). In addition, the study of Krause and Brown (2021) illustrates that listening to more hours of music is associated with live music and thus suggests that streaming services assist in accessing music in everyday life and Kawase and Obata (2016) show that being exposed to

liked music increases the desire to see it performed live. Aly-Tovar et al. (2020) also state that the discovery process on streaming services generates a positive effect on the demand for live music. Hence, the significant increase of recorded music consumption on streaming services during the lockdown and thus more discovery of music and artists is likely to be anticipated in an increasing desire to discover this new music and artist in live format.

*H2: Discovery is significantly more important for pop music concert attendees after the COVID lockdown compared to before the pandemic*

Multiple studies have discovered an increase in boredom and stress levels among individuals due to lockdowns of the pandemic (Boylan et al., 2021; Brodeur et al., 2021; Brooks et al., 2020; Forte et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Panchal et al., 2021). The prominent presence of the pandemic has made COVID-message fatigue an increasingly popular phenomenon (Ball & Wozniak, 2021; Guan et al., 2022), and people have increasingly reported escapism behaviour during the pandemic to deal with the increased psychological distress (Boursier et al., 2021; Fernandes et al., 2020; Lemenager et al., 2021; Wulf et al., 2021). Leisure is the most prominent way in which people can out this escapism behaviour (Walker et al., 2019), and music was then also perceived to reduce stress, facilitate relaxation and escape during the pandemic (Cabedo-Mas et al., 2021; Carlson et al., 2021; Ferreri et al., 2021; Fink et al., 2021; Vidas et al., 2021). However, people were assigned to indoor leisure behaviour and thus also unable to visit live music concerts because of the lockdowns. Hence, after a period of increased boredom and stress, as well as being unable to engage in outdoor leisure behaviour to escape this stress and boredom, it can be expected that the pandemic has increased the escapism motivations for popular music concerts.

*H3: Escapism is significantly more important for pop music concert attendees after the COVID lockdown compared to before the pandemic*

The period of adolescence is critical to identity formation (Shaw et al., 1995) and leisure provides the contextual freedom for youngsters to explore and define their identity (Haggard & Williams, 1992; Iwasaki et al., 2018; Layland et al., 2018). The most important motivations to consume music are indeed related to one's identity and values (Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009). Their study shows that individuals prefer music which is able to express one's own identity and values.

Live concerts allow for enveloping fan identity, both individually and communitas, with the artists or music being fundamental to the identity formation (Bennett, 2015). This explains that live music allows for individuals to develop an identity which can express one's difference from the masses, but this identity will also be formed, validated, and secured when

one's able to participate in the community it belongs to, like in the live music setting or in online fan groups. About live music, Bennett (2015) states that: "The off-screen, physically and temporally bounded live concert experience helps to ground fan identity" (p. 8) and that the live music component is fundamental to fan identity formation. Frith (2007) also claims that music is inherent to people's sense of self and live concerts allow for the social recognition of one's identity. On a practical level, live concert attendees increasingly use their phones to capture footage and share this on social media platforms where it serves to showcase as a living experience to further strengthen virtual identity and connect with other fans (Gündüz, 2017; Lingel & Naaman, 2012; Mallinder, 2015). Even though fans could still virtually express their appreciation for the artists or music during the lockdown, the closing of many leisure facilities, including pop venues, thus hindered youths to validate and secure one's identity through live music. Conversely, music is especially important in the identity formation of youths. Young adulthood is even found to be the formative phase for developing musical preferences (ter Bogt et al., 2011). Also, the study of Dilmperi et al. (2011) shows that attendance rates for live music summits among people between 15 and 30 years old and Bonneville-Roussy et al. (2013) demonstrate that young people attribute significantly more importance to music than older people and also listen more to music than middle-aged people.

The being there motivation component includes status enhancement elements which are related to identity formation (Kulczynski et al., 2016; Mulder & Hitters, 2021). Hence, having to deal for a prolonged period of time with no opportunities for enhancing one's status with the corresponding identity formation through live music, while this is especially important to youths, young concert visitors are expected to show an increase and relative importance of the being there component after the lockdown.

*H4a: Being there is significantly more important for young pop music concert attendees after the COVID lockdown compared to before the pandemic*

*H4b: Being there is after the lockdown significantly more important to 18-25 years olds compared to 1) people aged between 26 and 35 years old, 2) people aged between 36 and 49 years old, 3) people aged between 50 and 59 years old, and 4) people aged 60 years and older*

## 2.7. Conceptual Model

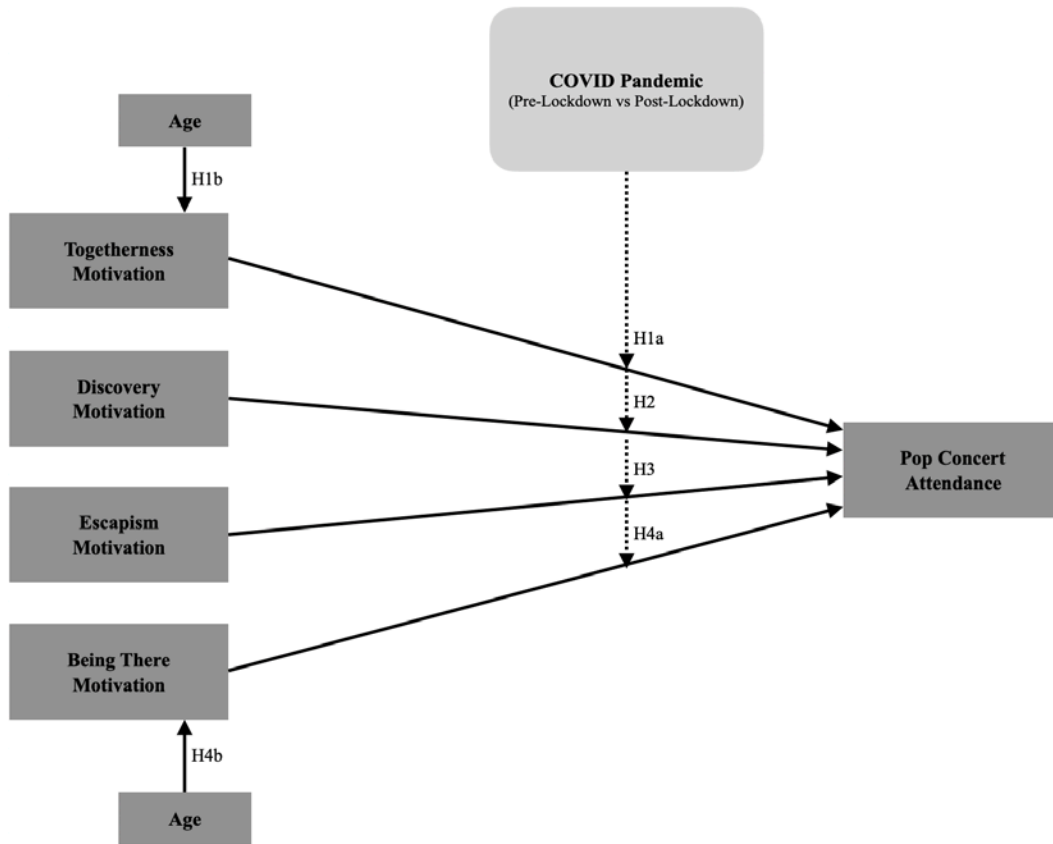


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Research Design

Surveys can be used for the examination of attitudes, descriptions, values, knowledge, opinions and facts (Matthews & Ross, 2010), in line with the objective of the present study to measure visitor motivations. Also, doing survey research provides a systematic and efficient method for gathering quantitative information from a relatively large sample taken from a population, allowing to generalize findings to the target population (Matthews & Ross, 2010; Nardi, 2018). This corresponds to the aim of the current study to generalize the findings to visitors of popular concerts in general. Besides, a quantitative survey method was found to be a representative tool for measuring visitor motivations across a variety of disciplines (Kruger & Viljoen, 2021; Kulczynski et al., 2016; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001; Pegg & Patterson, 2010; Sisneros-Kidd et al., 2021; Winter, 2011).

To be able to analyse whether motivations of pop concert visitors have changed due to the pandemic, the data from the study of Mulder and Hitters (2021) was made available to the current study. The study of Mulder and Hitters (2021) applied a quantitative survey method to examine the visitor motivations of popular concert visitors during December 2019, pre-COVID. The numerical values produced by a survey allow to compare differences between groups (Matthews & Ross, 2010; Rossi et al., 1983). Therefore, in order to address the differences in visitor motivations between the people attending concerts pre-COVID and the individuals visiting a concert after the COVID lockdown, as well as differences between various age groups, the current study likewise conducted a quantitative survey method using the same scale to measure motivations of popular concert visitors after the COVID lockdown in the Netherlands.

#### 3.2. Operationalization

The current study adopted the Live Music Motivation Scale (LMMS) from Mulder and Hitters (2021) to measure the motivations of popular concert visitors after the COVID lockdown since the same measurement scale as the pre-COVID study should be used to examine differences between the visitors. The LMMS scale is based on the classification of existing visitor motives in literature into four clusters: personal, artistic, social, and setting and the item question design is based on the Concert Attendance Motivation Scale of Kulczynski et al. (2016). Both the CAMS (Kulczynski et al., 2016, p. 251) and LMMS (Mulder & Hitters, 2021, p. 365) reported sufficient reliability and validity measures, making

the LMMS an appropriate measure for the current study. Furthermore, the study of Mulder and Hitters (2021) used a comparable sample to the current study, as both are samples of the Dutch population of popular concert visitors.

The LMMS includes 23 items, clustered into six components: togetherness, discovery, escapism, being there, uniqueness, and music specific characteristics. Questions were formulated on a 5-point Likert scale that asked participants to what extent they agree with the statements regarding motives for attendance (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The end of the questionnaire included demographical variables regarding age, gender, and level of education to be able to determine the degree of representativeness as well as to perform statistical analyses for the first and fourth hypothesis.

### **3.3. Data Collection**

An online questionnaire hosted on Qualtrics software was available from 1 April, 2022, until 8 May, 2022, and distributed through various live music channels. The survey was spread multiple times via the newsletter of Podiuminfo, as well as on their socials and as a news article on their website. Podiuminfo is a well-known music site in the Netherlands, where music enthusiasts can get an overview of the latest music-related news, upcoming performances, and reviews (Podiuminfo, n.d.). Furthermore, the survey was also circulated on some LinkedIn music groups and Dutch music forums MusicMeter and FestiLeaks to further reach music fans. Conveniently distributing the survey through these channels was likely to reach a broad range of individuals who already have an interest for live popular music and are therefore more likely to have visited a concert in the requested period. Additionally, strategic requests asking to fill in the questionnaire were placed on Twitter right after concerts ended using hashtags of the artist and venue. This distribution method proved to be effective in reaching individuals who had just visited a concert as concert visitors are likely to go to social media for social reflection on the concert. Also, as mentioned above, the sample reached through this sampling strategy is from the same population as the study of Mulder and Hitters (2021), namely popular concert visitors in the Netherlands, since the current research used similar distribution channels which further enhances the validity of the results. Moreover, a music-related incentive was connected to the survey to encourage participation: respondents had a chance to win one out of four Ticketmaster gift cards.

The data collection period followed multiple periods of lockdown and ongoing restrictions due to the coronavirus. The first lockdown in the Netherlands originated from



March 2020 (Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu, 2022). During the summer of 2020, some of these restrictions were lifted but a second covid wave during the end of the year resulted in a new lockdown in October 2020. This lockdown included a curfew and lasted till around spring 2021, in which restrictions were gradually lifted. Conversely, the new omicron variant again caused severe restrictions during the autumn and a new lockdown in the winter of 2021. It should be noted that the periods without a severe lockdown still included ongoing restrictions like social distancing which prevented live concerts, especially in 'regular' format, from happening for almost two years.

The current research followed the lockdown period driven by the omicron variant from 19 December, 2021, until 14 January, 2022. During this lockdown, only essential stores were allowed to open their doors while the leisure industry, including the hospitality, culture and sports sector had to close. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, relaxations of some restrictions were announced, but the heart of the creative industries (concert venues, museums, theatres, and cinemas) had to remain closed for an additional two weeks. From the end of January onwards, concert venues started opening again with some restrictions, including required seating, a closing time of 22:00 and a maximum amount of 1250 visitors. These restrictions were lifted on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, and the only restriction left for concert goers from this moment onwards was the obligation to possess a negative corona test when there were more than 500 people in the venue standing, provided that the individual was also standing. However, this last restriction was also lifted on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, returning fully back, practical wise, to the pre-COVID situation. Thus, from 25 February onwards people were again able to engage in social interaction with other visitors and uninhibited and party-like behaviour without restrictions and similar to the pre-COVID study. Therefore, participants of the current research must have visited a concert from the 25<sup>th</sup> of February onwards to minimize practical differences between the pre-COVID and current study. Correspondingly, the target population consists of all individuals who attended a popular live concert between 25 February, 2022, and the date the survey closed, 8 May, 2022, in the Netherlands. Respondents of the survey were asked whether they had visited a popular concert from 25 February, 2022, onwards. If this was not the case, respondents were not able to further fill in the questionnaire since the current study explicitly aims to measure the visitor motivations of popular concert visitors after the omicron COVID lockdown in order to compare the results to pre-COVID.

Lots of artists, both national and international, toured the Netherlands in the period between 25 February and May. This is important for the data comparison as the pre-COVID

study also collected data of people visiting concerts of both international and national artists. Furthermore, the present study exclusively focuses on popular concert visitors, in contrary to the study of Mulder and Hitters (2021) that includes both popular concerts and festivals. Because of the limited number of festivals happening between 25 February, 2022, and 8 May, 2022, it became unlikely to obtain a sufficient sample size of festival visitors for comparing their motivations to before the pandemic. Since Mulder and Hitters (2021) discovered significant differences in visitor motivations between concert and festival visitors, these visitors should be treated as distinct. Hence, the data of the current study was exclusively compared to the data of concert visitors from the Mulder and Hitters (2021) pre-COVID motivation study.

### **3.4. Analytical Strategy**

Validity refers to whether an instrument measures what it was supposed to measure and reliability means that a measure should consistently reflect the construct that it is measuring (Field, 2018). The LMMS is proved to be a valid and reliable measure of visitor motivations in the research of Mulder and Hitters (2021, p. 365). Also, the underlying structure of visitor motivations is already established in the research of Mulder and Hitters (2021). Hence, a reliability analysis was executed on each component in order to make sure that the items within one component sufficiently correlate. After these reliability analyses, the pre-COVID data of concert visitors' motivations from Mulder and Hitters (2021) was implemented into the dataset of the current study. To likewise ensure reliability standards within the combined sample, a new reliability analysis was performed on each motivational component. Afterwards, an index variable was created for each of the valid visitor motivation components.

The independent-sample t-test can be used to compare the means of two independent groups (Field, 2018; Gerald, 2018). Hypothesis H1a, H2, and H3 examine whether the togetherness, discovery and escapism motivation components are significantly higher after the COVID lockdown than before. As the pre-covid participants from the study of Mulder and Hitters (2021) and the post-lockdown participants from the current study are independent groups since different entities have been compared in different conditions, independent-sample t-tests were carried out to examine whether these motivation components are indeed significantly higher after the lockdown. Hypothesis H4a also examines whether the being there motivational component is significantly higher after the lockdown, but only if this is the case for young adults. Hence, the independent-sample t-test which was carried out to test this

specific hypothesis only included the people aged between 18 and 25 years old from both samples.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is the appropriate statistical method for comparing the means of more than two groups (Field, 2018; Kim, 2014). Hypotheses H1b and H4b assess whether there are differences between age groups in respectively the togetherness and being there motivation components after the omicron lockdown. Therefore, these hypotheses were tested by the means of an one-way ANOVA and did exclusively include the data retrieved from post-omicron lockdown concert visitors. The omnibus test result of an ANOVA does however only indicate whether at least one group differs from the other analysed groups (Abdi & Williams, 2010). Hence, pairwise comparisons were employed for each significant omnibus result to examine the pattern of difference between the means (Abdi & Williams, 2010; Field, 2018).

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 28.0 (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. In order to ensure objectivity of the data outcome, the general characteristics and research hypothesis of the sample, reliability analysis, independent t-test analysis, and ANOVA were applied according to Field (2018).

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Sample Description

The post-omicron lockdown survey initiated a gross response of 597 respondents. Two of the respondents did not agree to the survey consent form and 41 participants indicated they did not visit a live concert yet after the omicron lockdown. 25 respondents did not fill in any question, while 108 respondents did not finish the survey. This resulted in a total of 421 valid responses. The percentage of women is 58.9%, the male share is 39.7% and 1.4% identified as non-binary. Participants' average age was 33.94 years (SD = 13.60). The most named educational level was higher vocational (32.5%), followed by academic (30.1%), intermediate vocational (24.5%) and primary/secondary (12.9%).

In order to establish the degree of representativeness and examine differences in motivations for visiting popular live concerts, it is important that the obtained post-omicron lockdown sample is evenly distributed across gender, age and level of education compared to the pre-COVID sample. Table 1 demonstrates the sociodemographic results of the post-omicron lockdown participants, as well as the sociodemographic results of the pre-COVID study and the samples combined. Overall, the sample obtained in the post-omicron lockdown study is similarly distributed across gender and level of education compared to the pre-COVID study. For age groups, the post-omicron lockdown study is slightly overrepresented in the 18-25 category compared to the sample of the pre-COVID study.

**Table 1**

*Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants*

Characteristic	Pre-COVID study ( <i>n</i> = 749)		Post-omicron lockdown study ( <i>n</i> = 421)		Full sample ( <i>N</i> = 1170)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	486	65.1	244	58.9	730	62.9
Male	261	34.9	164	39.7	425	36.6
Non-Binary	0	0	6	1.4	6	0.5
<b>Age Groups</b>						
18-25	204	27.4	173	41.3	377	32.4
26-35	135	18.1	77	18.4	212	18.2
36-49	204	27.4	95	22.7	299	25.7
50-59	152	20.4	58	13.8	210	18.0
>60	50	6.7	16	3.8	66	5.7

**Education**

Primary / secondary	59	8.1	53	12.9	112	9.8
Intermediate vocational	210	29.0	101	24.5	311	27.4
Higher vocational	304	41.9	134	32.5	438	38.5
Academic	152	21.0	124	30.1	276	24.3

*Note.* Percentages are valid %. Respondents in the full sample ( $N = 1170$ ) were on average 36.74 years old ( $SD = 14.11$ ).

**4.2. Reliability Analyses**

To measure the internal consistency reliability of each component, a reliability analysis was performed on each motivational component in both the post-lockdown study as well as on the motivational components in the combined post-lockdown and pre-COVID sample. The results of the reliability analyses for the post omicron lockdown study and combined sample are displayed in Table 2. The togetherness, discovery, escapism, and being there motivational components all showed scores for internal reliability which are considered good or acceptable (Field, 2018). Nevertheless, the music specific and uniqueness components showed lower scores for Cronbach's Alpha, as expected based on the reliability results in the study of Mulder and Hitters (2021). For the music specific component, all individual corrected item-total correlations are above .30, which signifies enough correlation of the individual items with the total scale (Field, 2018). However, the reliability of the uniqueness and music-specific components remain questionable. Yet, the aim of the present study to investigate differences in visitor motivations does not include these components, making their reliability measure less relevant to this study as it does not affect the analyses.

**Table 2***Internal Reliability Coefficient Motivational Components*

Motivational Component	Post-Omicron Lockdown Study	Combined Sample
	$\alpha$	$\alpha$
Togetherness	.79	.82
Discovery	.74	.74
Escapism	.76	.77
Being There	.70	.68
Uniqueness	.52	.47
Music Specific	.62	.57

*Note.*  $n_{(\text{post-omicron lockdown})} = 421$  and  $N_{(\text{combined})} = 1170$ .

### 4.3. Hypothesis Testing

#### **H1a: Togetherness is significantly more important for pop music concert attendees after the COVID lockdown compared to before the pandemic**

An independent samples t-test was executed to test whether the togetherness motivation component is significantly higher for participants after the omicron lockdown than for participants before the COVID pandemic. As shown in Table 3, the independent samples t-test indicated that post omicron lockdown participants score significantly higher on the togetherness motivational component ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ) than pre-COVID participants ( $M = 2.83$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ),  $t(1168) = -13.41$ ,  $p < .001$ . Consequently, hypothesis H1a can be accepted.

#### **H1b: Togetherness is after the lockdown significantly more important to 18-25 years olds compared to 1) people aged between 26 and 35 years old, 2) people aged between 36 and 49 years old, 3) people aged between 50 and 59 years old, and 4) people aged 60 years and older**

Including only the respondents from the post-omicron obtained sample, respondents between 18 and 25 years old scored the highest on the togetherness motivation component ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ), while respondents older than 60 years were the least motivated to visit popular live concerts because of togetherness motivations ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ). The togetherness scores for the other age groups are displayed in Table 4.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to test hypothesis H1b with age groups as independent variable and togetherness as dependent variable (see Table 5). The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for age groups on the togetherness motivation,  $F(4, 414) = 10.38$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .09$ . Tukey post-hoc comparisons revealed that participants aged between 18 and 25 years scored significantly higher on the togetherness motivational component than participants aged between 36 and 49 years old ( $M_{\text{difference}} = 0.43$ ,  $p < .001$ , = H1b.2), participants aged between 50 and 59 years old ( $M_{\text{difference}} = 0.64$ ,  $p < .001$ , = H1b.3), and participants aged 60 years and older ( $M_{\text{difference}} = 0.88$ ,  $p < .001$ , = H1b.4). However, participants aged between 18 and 25 years did not significantly differ on the togetherness motivational component from participants aged between 26 and 35 years ( $p = .199$ ,  $\neq$  H1b.1). Thus, hypothesis H1b.1 needs to be rejected, while hypotheses H1b.2, H1b.3 and H1b.4 can be accepted.

**H2: Discovery is significantly more important for pop music concert attendees after the COVID lockdown compared to before the pandemic**

In order to see whether there is a difference in the discovery motivational component between participants after the omicron lockdown and participants before the COVID pandemic, an independent samples t-test was performed. On average, participants after the omicron lockdown scored higher on the discovery motivational component ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ) than pre-COVID participants ( $M = 2.84$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ). As shown in Table 3, this difference proved to be significant ( $t(1167) = -7.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Therefore, hypothesis H2 can be accepted.

**H3: Escapism is significantly more important for pop music concert attendees after the COVID lockdown compared to before the pandemic**

An independent samples t-test was conducted to test whether there is a difference in the escapism motivation component between participants after the omicron lockdown and participants before the COVID pandemic. As displayed in Table 3, the independent samples t-test showed that post-omicron lockdown participants score significantly higher on the escapism motivational component ( $M = 3.48$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ) than pre-COVID participants ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ),  $t(1168) = -12.44$ ,  $p < .001$ . Hence, hypothesis H3 can be accepted.

**H4a: Being there is significantly more important for young pop music concert attendees after the COVID lockdown compared to before the pandemic**

An independent samples t-test was executed to test whether the being there motivation component for participants aged between 18 and 25 years is significantly higher after the omicron lockdown than before the COVID pandemic. As shown in Table 3, the independent samples t-test indicated that young post-omicron lockdown participants score significantly higher on the being there motivational component ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ) than young pre-COVID participants ( $M = 2.94$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ),  $t(375) = -3.76$ ,  $p < .001$ . As a result, hypothesis H4a can be accepted.

**H4b: Being there is after the lockdown significantly more important to 18-25 years olds compared to 1) people aged between 26 and 35 years old, 2) people aged between 36 and 49 years old, 3) people aged between 50 and 59 years old, and 4) people aged 60 years and older**

Including only the respondents from the post-omicron obtained sample, respondents between 18 and 25 years old scored the highest on the being there motivational component ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ), while participants aged 60 years and older scored the lowest ( $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ). The being there motivational scores for the other age groups are displayed in Table 4.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to test hypothesis H4b with age groups as independent variable and being there as dependent variable (see Table 5). The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for age groups on the being there motivational component,  $F(4, 414) = 19.89$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .16$ . Tukey post-hoc comparisons revealed that participants aged between 18 and 25 years scored significantly higher on the being there motivational component than participants aged between 26 and 35 years old ( $M_{\text{difference}} = 0.62$ ,  $p < .001$ , = H4b.1), participants aged between 36 and 49 years old ( $M_{\text{difference}} = 0.76$ ,  $p < .001$ , = H4b.2), participants aged between 50 and 59 years old ( $M_{\text{difference}} = 0.85$ ,  $p < .001$ , = H4b.3), and participants aged 60 years and older ( $M_{\text{difference}} = 1.21$ ,  $p < .001$ , = H4b.4). Since participants between 18 and 25 years old significantly scored higher on the being there motivational component than all other age groups, hypotheses H4b.1, H4b.2, H4b.3 and H4b.4 can all be accepted.

**Table 3**

*Independent samples t-tests for togetherness, discovery, escapism and being there*

Motivational Component	Pre-COVID study		Post-Omicron Lockdown Study		Levene's Test (Sig.)	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Togetherness	2.83	0.87	3.54	0.87	.559	-13.41	<.001
Discovery	2.84	1.03	3.30	1.02	.230	-7.33	<.001
Escapism	2.75	0.97	3.48	0.95	.277	-12.44	<.001
Being There*	2.94	0.92	3.30	0.94	.762	-3.76	<.001

*Note.* Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was not significant for all executed t-tests, meaning equal variance was assumed for all t-tests. \* Included only age group 18-25 from both the pre-COVID study and the post-omicron lockdown study.



**Table 4***Togetherness and Being There in post-omicron lockdown sample according to age groups*

Age Groups:	Togetherness			Being There		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
18-25 years	3.80	0.77	173	3.30	0.94	173
26-35 years	3.56	0.80	77	2.67	0.89	77
36-49 years	3.38	0.89	95	2.54	0.84	95
50-59 years	3.17	0.91	58	2.45	0.88	58
>60 years	2.93	1.00	16	2.09	0.94	16

**Table 5***Results of the one-way analyses of variance in post-omicron lockdown sample using age groups as criterion*

Motivational Component	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Partial $\eta^2$
Togetherness	28.80	4	7.20	10.38	<.001	.091
Being There	64.66	4	16.17	19.89	<.001	.161

#### 4.4. Other Motivations

Respondents were also provided with the opportunity to name other motivations than the ones included in the Live Music Motivation Scale. 177 respondents provided input to this open question. This input has been coded and classified. Notably, the majority of the input matches the motivations already incorporated in the Live Music Motivation Scale: togetherness (e.g., “to experience this concert together with my partner”), escapism (e.g., “at a concert you’re in a totally different surrounding, disconnected from the world”), discovery (e.g., first concert, going to a concert for the first time alone, curiosity), being there (e.g., “to spend time with your favourite artist”), uniqueness (e.g., “wanted to see this artist perform live”, farewell tour, unique experience) and music specific (e.g., “to hear an iconic album in live format”).

Even though the majority of the input matches the scale used in this study, there were also motivations which were not included in the Live Music Motivation Scale. In line with the aim of the current study, the COVID pandemic was one of the most frequently mentioned motivational factors that was not in the Live Music Motivation Scale: “I missed it so much to feel the atmosphere of a concert, to feel the bass going through your body, and to see up close how artists give you the night of your life!” and “I’m trying to visit as many concerts as possible now it’s finally allowed again” demonstrate such motivations. The COVID pandemic category also overlaps with another frequently mentioned motivation outside of the scale: supporting the artist/cultural industry. Participants described that they wanted to “support the artist after two years of missed income” and to “sponsor the music and cultural industry”. Nostalgia was also one of the most-named motivations outside of the Live Music Motivation Scale. Participants namely described to visit live concerts because it was a tradition, to preserve the feeling of youth, and because they listened to that specific artist a long time ago. Finally, many respondents indicated a specific personal connection towards the performing artists which is not fully captured in the Live Music Motivation Scale. For instance, respondents stated that they are a fan of this specific artist, that the artist has saved their lives, that they are thankful for the artist helping them through difficult times, that they want to support the artist, and that they want to tell the artist how much they mean to them. Other motivations which were mentioned multiple times included the specific venue (e.g., location close to home), loud volume at concerts and the strong live-reputation of the artists.

Something that became very clear from the input is that people carry very strong emotions towards live music. Participants mentioned that live music gives them “the sense of being alive” and even described that they live for live music. One of the participants even described the emotional process and time leading up to a concert and afterwards: “Having something to look forward to helps you through difficult times. At the moment itself you forget all the stress of your daily life. After the concert its 10 times worse”.

## 5. Discussion & Conclusion

The current study used the Live Music Motivation Scale (Mulder & Hitters, 2021) to investigate motivations of visitors to popular live concerts after the omicron lockdown. The aim of this study was to examine whether motivations to visit live popular concerts have changed because of the COVID pandemic in order to answer the research question: *What is the effect of the COVID pandemic on the visitor motivations of pop concert attendees?* By comparing data of visitor motivations after the omicron lockdown with the data of visitor motivations before the COVID pandemic from the study of Mulder and Hitters (2021), the aim of the present research could be fulfilled.

### 5.1. Discussion of results

Overall, the findings of the study indicate that the four motivational components: togetherness, discovery, escapism and being there have all increased after the omicron lockdown compared to before the pandemic. This shows that first of all, the pandemic and its corresponding lockdowns has affected the motivations of popular concert visitors. Secondly, the exact effect demonstrates that the togetherness, discovery, and escapism motivations are of greater importance to live music concert attendees after the omicron lockdown than pre-COVID, while the being there motivation was found to be of greater importance to young popular concert attendees after the lockdown compared to before the pandemic. The interpretation of these results for each of the individual components will be explained below.

Togetherness, which is defined by its social prominence, is significantly more important to visitors after the omicron lockdown. This supports the idea that the lack of social contact during the pandemic period has put more importance towards the collectiveness of concert visiting. As demonstrated in the study of Vandenberg et al. (2021) on livestreams during the pandemic, people missed the socialization opportunities and collective energy that concerts provide during the pandemic. Hence, when people were finally able to visit concerts again after the omicron lockdown, they were found to be more motivated to attend concerts because they can spend time, interact, and collectively experience with loved ones and other like-minded people than before. This claim supports and strengthens previous research that illustrates the significance of collectiveness and socialization during leisure experiences (Brown & Knox, 2017; de Rooij & Bastiaansen, 2017; Dearn & Price, 2016; Hennig-Thurau & Houston, 2019; Kulczynski et al., 2016; Manolika et al., 2015; Perkins, 2012; Vorderer et al., 2006).

Also, the discovery component was found to be a strong motivator for visiting live concerts, significantly increasing from before the COVID pandemic. Hence, the curiosity of what will happen at the show, and the desire for personal enrichment and discovering new things are more important for concert attendees after the omicron lockdown than before the pandemic. Foremost, this validates that the seeking behaviour in leisure experiences (Iso-Ahola, 1980) can thus also be ascribed to live music, in line with Brown and Knox (2017). A possible reason for the post-omicron lockdown increase can be the rise in streaming during the pandemic (BPI, 2021; Cabedo-Mas et al., 2021; Fink et al., 2021), which has led to more discovery of artists (Mortimer et al., 2012) and resulted in an increasing demand for live music due to the conjunction of streaming with its counterpart (Aly-Tovar et al., 2020; Naveed et al., 2017; Nguyen et al., 2014; Papiés & van Heerde, 2017). Thus, the increase in discovery motivation might imply that the new music and artists that people have discovered on streaming during the pandemic, is shown in an increasing curiosity to discover these artists in live format. On the other hand, the increased willingness to discover could also refer to the curiosity of experiencing live concerts again after a two-year period of sparse opportunities to attend live music. Accordingly, the increasing discovery element could reflect the curiosity to discover how for instance the pandemic has affected the artists and their performance, and whether the live experience has changed due to the pandemic. Also, despite the claim of Charron (2017) that attending a concert to explore and discover new artists has become irrelevant due to the limitless amount of information that can be uncovered online, the current research demonstrates that visiting a concert for discovery purposes is still very relevant today and has even increased in the pandemic period. This might show that the infinite amount of information available online as well as music streaming does not suffice, as live experiences provide a distinct format and people remain curious to discover new things in this live format. This again underscores the importance of live concert experiences in an increasingly digitalized world (Bennett, 2015; Brown & Knox, 2017; Jones, 2015).

The escapism component was also of greater importance to the post-omicron concert visitors than to pre-pandemic visitors. This suggests that the ability for escaping the regularity of everyday life with its corresponding stress and boredom is more important to the decision of attending a concert after multiple lockdowns than before. The most likely explanation lies in the increased boredom and stress levels that individuals experienced during the pandemic (Boylan et al., 2021; Brodeur et al., 2021; Brooks et al., 2020; Forte et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Panchal et al., 2021). This outed into more, mainly limited to indoor leisure, escapism behaviour during the pandemic (Boursier et al., 2021; Fernandes et al., 2020; Lemenager et

al., 2021; Wulf et al., 2021). This effect is now also confirmed for the live concert industry as attendees indicate a stronger desire to escape daily life during concerts than before the pandemic.

Moreover, it was hypothesized that the being there motivational component, which entails that status enhancement is connected to the presence and proximity to the artist (Mulder & Hitters, 2021), has increased for young concert visitors after multiple lockdowns due to its connection with identity formation which is of significant importance to young adults (Haggard & Williams, 1992; Iwasaki et al., 2018; Layland et al., 2018). The idea of the concert enhancing one's status is indeed a more important motivation for youngsters to visit concerts after the omicron lockdown than before. This could be explained by the fact that youths could not explore and define one's identity for a prolonged period of time through live music. Yet, the greater importance of being there might also be the result of an increasing desire to experience the artist in person again after a period in which the pandemic shut down the live industry for two years. This would correspond to the emotional experiences that being in the proximity of the artists can provide (Radbourne et al., 2014). Besides, this result is in line with the value creation of live music as stated by Mulder and Hitters (2021) and the argument of Schäfer and Sedlmeier (2009) that motivations to consume music are strongly related to identity and values.

Also, responding to the request of Kulczynski et al. (2016) that asked for more research into the influence of demographic variables on popular music motivations, this study found that demographic variables do influence visitor motivations, in line with other studies into live music motivations (Kruger & Saayman, 2015; Pilcher & Eade, 2016; Uysal et al., 1993). It was found that age has a significant effect on the togetherness and being there motivations. For togetherness, people aged between 18 and 25 years old scored significantly higher than people aged 36 years and older after the omicron lockdown. This shows that in line with the literature, the crucial importance of social contact during adolescence which was indicated to be missed during the pandemic lockdowns (Luijten et al., 2021; Panchal et al., 2021), has resulted in a relative importance of togetherness for young adults compared to visitors aged 36 years and older after the omicron lockdown. Even though the togetherness motivation was found to be more important to popular concert visitors compared to before the pandemic, this motivation thus turned out to be even more important for young adults. This indicates that the idea of finally being able to interact again with others, spend time with beloved ones, to feel part of a group of like-minded people, and again receiving that sense of

belonging they missed (Tomova et al., 2021), is an even stronger motivator to visit concerts for youths, despite its overall increase for popular concert visitors.

For being there, respondents aged between 18 and 25 years old scored significantly higher than all other age groups, meaning that being there motivations are more important to young adults in visiting popular concerts after the pandemic than older generations. The status related items of this component are closely related to identity formation, which is critical to adolescents (Shaw et al., 1995). Besides, this component also includes items related to hero worship, such as being in the proximity of the artists and finding the artists physically attractive, which help to establish, express and validate fan identity (Bennett, 2015). Hence, what can be concluded from this result is that the opportunity to enhance one's status, receive social recognition and express one's (fan) identity through concert attendance is more important to young adults than to older generations, corresponding to the critical importance of identity formation for youths. A possible explanation may lie in the fact that this younger generation grew up in the internet age surrounded with numerous social media platforms to express oneself and to participate in digital fandoms (Bennett, 2015; Gündüz, 2017; Lingel & Naaman, 2012; Mallinder, 2015). Therefore, young adults might attach more importance to one's virtual identity and digital fandoms than older generations, and corresponding to the conclusion of Bonneville-Roussy et al. (2013) that youths attribute more importance to music than older people, this result demonstrates that live music attendance plays an important role in the formation and expression of youths' identity.

## **5.2. Limitations and suggestions for further research**

The empirical results reported in this study should be considered in the light of some limitations. First, the age group between 18 and 25 years old is slightly overrepresented in the post-omicron sample compared to the pre-COVID sample. This positive skew could be explained by the distribution method via Twitter, which might have reached a younger audience. However, a more likely explanation is that one of the requests on Twitter was retweeted by a fan account of a popular band among youths, which played twice in the Netherlands during the measurement period. Another reason might be that younger people have been more eager to visit live concerts shortly after the lockdown, while older people were still more cautious about visiting cultural activities since the virus was still circulating around. Secondly, the self-reporting nature of the survey method and in this case asking respondents to reflect on a particular concert they have visited, has as consequence that the results rely on people's personal memories for indicating their motivations. This suggests that

imprecise or selective memories could have negatively impacted the reliability of the results. This risk was minimized by posting requests on Twitter right after concerts ended and motivating respondents to answer the questionnaire based on their most recent concert experience to minimize the time between the survey response and actual concert visit. Thirdly, for this study two samples of the Dutch population of popular concert visitors were examined and compared. Consequently, it remains to be seen whether the same structure emerges in other populations of popular concert visitors. Thus, the generalizability of these findings to all popular concert visitors can only be validated through additional studies using a more diversified population. Fourthly, as also indicated in the study of Mulder and Hitters (2021), the Live Music Motivation Scale does not incorporate all motivations for visiting live popular concerts. Participants of the current research also indicated to hold motivations for visiting live concerts that were not included in the LMMS. For instance, respondents indicated to also visit concerts to support the artists, because of the strong live-reputation, and for nostalgia reasons. This latter motivation corresponds to the increasing consumption of nostalgia music during the pandemic (Wulf et al., 2021; Yeung, 2020). Even though the aim of the current study was to compare differences in motivations, making this limitation less relevant to this study, the lack of these motivations included in the scale could have impacted the content reliability of the research. Fifthly, as indicated before, the internal consistency of the uniqueness and music-specific components is a concern to the Live Music Motivation Scale. Both the present research and the study of Mulder and Hitters (2021) showed low scores for these components on construct reliability. Even though the uniqueness and music-specific components still hold values for Cronbach's Alpha which are classified as sufficient in many leading science journals (Taber, 2018), the reliability is a matter of concern and should be examined in further research. However, as noted by Lance et al. (2006), adequate reliability will always be a judgement call and depending on the measurement situation. Since the aim of the current study was to examine differences in motivations and the uniqueness and music-specific components were not relevant to the analyses, their low internal consistency scores did not directly affect the present work. Correspondingly, full exploration of the internal consistency of these components falls beyond the scope of the current study. Therefore, despite the fact that the reliability and validity measures of the Live Music Motivation Scale, including the uniqueness and music-specific components, were already established in the research of Mulder and Hitters (2021), the low reliability scores on these components indicate that the Live Music Motivation Scale should be critically revised and adapted. This could be the work for further research. Finally, whether the actual differences

found in motivations between the pre-COVID sample and post-omicron lockdown sample is definitely caused by the pandemic cannot be stated with full certainty. The COVID pandemic was a constant factor which affected all individuals' lives, differed between both samples, and numerous respondents addressed the pandemic as a motivator in the open question, which make it extremely likely that the pandemic is indeed the factor which have caused increasing motivations to visit concerts. Yet, there could have been other changes during this two year-period of time between both studies and differences between the samples which have caused these motivational differences. Also, because of the recency and uniqueness of the pandemic there was a lack of previous research into how or if the pandemic may affect motivations. Hence, follow-up qualitative research utilizing the Live Music Motivation Scale through an interview method allows for a more in-depth reflection to explore the exact role of the pandemic and can function to strengthen and validate the outcomes of the current study. It would also be interesting to see whether the COVID effect on motivations continues or diminishes by replicating this study over time.

Additionally, festival visitors could not be included due to the measurement period of the present research. Despite the fact that the context of live music makes it likely that results of the current study can be transferred to the festival atmosphere, studying whether the COVID pandemic also affected motivations for festival visitors would be an interesting point for further research. Furthermore, the current study took place in the live music context, but as the focus of this study is on how motivations have changed it is believed that these results can be transferred to other sectors of the cultural and leisure industry. For instance, the togetherness and escapism components are also important motivations for visiting other cultural events (de Rooij & Bastiaansen, 2017; Hennig-Thurau & Houston, 2019; Manolika et al., 2015) and as these turned out to have increased after the omicron lockdown for concert visitors, it is likely that these results can likewise be applied to other sectors of the cultural industries which needed to close down during the pandemic. Hence, further research can replicate this study format into other cultural sectors to examine whether visitor motivations have similarly increased in other contexts.

### **5.3. Implications for the live music industry**

The identification of differences in visitor motivations between age groups and due to the pandemic provides those involved in organizing, marketing, and managing concerts with a competitive advantage. The differentiation in respect to togetherness and being there motivations (i.e., based on age) enables concert marketeers and organizers to better position



popular live music for youths. Also, knowledge of the increase in togetherness, discovery, escapism and being there motivations due to the pandemic provides organizers, marketeers and managers with a better understanding of their customers, which can serve to design programs that fulfil customers' needs and to steer more effective and spreadable marketing communications (Collis, 2017; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Jenkins et al., 2013), leading to increased satisfaction. For instance, concert marketeers can draw attention to the social collectiveness and fun nature of concert attendance in marketing messages to cater to the increased togetherness and escapism motivations.

The impact of the pandemic remains an important point of attention for the future of the live music industry. On this note, Denk et al. (2022) suggest that artists should renew contracts with record labels in which they share their revenue from live music with the label in exchange for a higher pay-out percentage from recorded music. They also argue that artists should permanently integrate digital platforms to complement live music income. As the pandemic might have increased consumers' willingness to pay for digital content, it can reduce financial uncertainty (Denk et al., 2022). More scholars have advised the creative industries to invest in digital technologies that allow for a remote delivery of products (Harper, 2020; Khlystova et al., 2022). On the other hand, multiple scholars have argued that the digital counterpart is unable to match and replace the live experience (Bennett, 2015; Brown & Knox, 2017; Jones, 2015; Mulder & Hitters, 2021; Vandenberg et al., 2021; Váradi, 2021). Also, Mouillot (2022) shows that digital music livestreams diminished as soon as live events were allowed again. The present study shows that after a prolonged period with ample opportunities to digitally experience music and at the same time almost no opportunities to experience live music, concert visitors demonstrate a strong willingness to experience live music again. This implies that music fans do not seem to have found any worthy alternatives of consuming live music. Also, the increase in visitor motivations after multiple lockdowns can be considered an indicator of the resilience of the live music industry as it confirms the importance of the collective, physical live music experience.

#### **5.4. To conclude**

As the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the live music industry for a prolonged period of time, it is important to gain a better understanding of the resilience of the industry by examining the effect of the pandemic on demand in the live music industry. Therefore, the present work examined the effect of the pandemic on visitor motivations of popular concert visitors. The results demonstrate that statistically significant differences in

visitor motivations exist between pre-COVID and post-omicron popular concert visitors. After two years of the pandemic with its ongoing restrictions and very limited opportunities to attend live music, being able to collectively experience, discover and escape at concerts has become more important to concert visitors. Young adults also show a stronger willingness to be in the presence of the performing artists and enhance their status compared to before the pandemic. In addition, this study found togetherness and being there to be more important motivators for young adults compared to other age groups.

The increases in visitor motivations compared to before the pandemic signify a strong desire to experience live concerts again. Hence, the pandemic has emphasized the need for collective, discovery, escapism and being there experiences, and likewise confirmed the importance of the physical live music experience. These results can be considered an indicator of the resilience of the live music industry.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire

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#### Start of Block: Toestemmingsvraag

Bij voorbaat dank voor je medewerking aan ons onderzoek! Deze enquête is onderdeel van het landelijke onderzoek POPLIVE dat uitgevoerd wordt door Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam ([www.poplive.nl](http://www.poplive.nl)). Het project is onderdeel van NWO Smart Culture en wordt ondersteund door Mojo Concerts en de Vereniging Nederlandse Podia en Festivals (VNPF). Daarnaast is dit specifieke onderzoek ook onderdeel van een master thesis project voor de opleiding Media & Creative Industries. Coördinator van deze enquête is Kevin Belzer, mocht je meer willen weten over het onderzoek: [620945kb@student.eur.nl](mailto:620945kb@student.eur.nl)

Deze enquête gaat over je bezoek aan livemuziek (concerten) in Nederland sinds 25 februari 2022. Dit is de datum waarop de laatste coronamaatregelen voor concerten geschrapt werden, met uitzondering van de 1G regel voor concerten met meer dan 500 bezoekers. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 5 minuten. Je deelname aan dit onderzoek is uiteraard vrijwillig en zonder risico's. Na afronding van de vragenlijst kun je je indien gewenst aanmelden om kans te maken op **één van de 4 giftcards voor Ticketmaster à €25** die onder de deelnemers verloot worden.

Deze enquête is anoniem. Op geen enkele manier kan je identiteit achterhaald worden of gekoppeld worden aan je antwoorden. Indien je een e-mailadres invult om in aanmerking te komen voor een Ticketmaster giftcard, dan wordt dit mailadres niet gekoppeld aan je antwoorden. Mocht je gedurende de vragenlijst besluiten te stoppen met invullen, zullen je gegevens niet geregistreerd worden. Om deel te nemen aan het onderzoek vragen we je te bevestigen dat je bovenstaande tekst gelezen en begrepen hebt en ermee akkoord gaat.

- Ik ga **akkoord** met bovenstaande tekst en neem deel
- Ik ga **niet akkoord** met bovenstaande tekst en neem niet deel

#### End of Block: Toestemmingsvraag

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#### Start of Block: Selectievraag

Heb je sinds 25 februari van dit jaar (de datum waarop de poppodia weer open mochten na de lockdown zonder enige restricties, op de 1G regel voor concerten met meer dan 500 bezoekers na) een concert in Nederland bezocht?

*Let op: dit onderzoek gaat uitsluitend om concerten, **festivals tellen dus niet mee**. Het gaat hierbij om concerten waar populaire muziek centraal staat. In dit onderzoek hanteren we een brede definitie van populaire muziek. Het gaat om alle muziek die je in een algemene chart/hitlijst zou kunnen vinden en/of alle muziek die je logischerwijs in een poppodium live kunt zien. Denk bijvoorbeeld aan pop, rock, metal, hiphop, urban, singer-songwriter,*

*elektronische livemuziek, dance (dj's) en cross-overs tussen pop en bijvoorbeeld moderne jazz, soul of wereldmuziek. Genres die hier **niet** onder populaire muziek vallen zijn bijvoorbeeld klassieke muziek, (traditionele) jazz en volksmuziek.*

Ja

Nee

End of Block: Selectievraag

---

Start of Block: Focus op specifiek concert

We willen graag weten wat de belangrijkste redenen zijn voor mensen om live muziek te bezoeken en daarom vragen we je om te reageren op een aantal stellingen die betrekking hebben op het concert dat je gedurende de periode 25 februari 2022 tot op heden bezocht hebt. Mocht je meerdere concerten hebben bezocht gedurende deze periode, kies dan het concert dat je je het beste herinnert. Dat kan bijvoorbeeld het laatste (meest recente) concert zijn dat je bezocht hebt. De stellingen die daarna volgen gaan puur over dat specifieke concert.

Wat is de naam van de artiest die je bezocht hebt?

---

End of Block: Focus op specifiek concert

---

### Start of Block: Motivatiestellingen1

Hieronder volgt een aantal stellingen met betrekking tot je bezoek aan het concert dat je hiervoor genoemd hebt. Geef per stelling aan in hoeverre je het hiermee eens bent. Deze stellingen gaan dus alleen over dit ene concert dat je net genoemd hebt.

	helemaal <b>oneens</b>	enigszins <b>oneens</b>	neutraal	enigszins <b>eens</b>	helemaal <b>eens</b>
Ik bezocht dit concert om nieuwe dingen te ontdekken.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert om in de nabije omgeving van de artiest(en) te kunnen zijn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert om iets nieuws te ontdekken waarmee ik mezelf verrijk of ontwikkel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert om interactie met andere fans / muzikliefhebbers te kunnen hebben.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert om te ontsnappen aan mijn dagelijkse leven.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert om tijd met bekenden (vrienden, familie, kennissen) door te kunnen brengen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert om mij te gedragen zoals ik me in mijn normale leven niet kan of mag gedragen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### End of Block: Motivatiestellingen1

### Start of Block: Motivatiestellingen2

Hieronder volgen nog enkele stellingen, ze gaan nog steeds over hetzelfde concert.

	helemaal <b>oneens</b>	enigszins <b>oneens</b>	neutraal	enigszins <b>eens</b>	helemaal <b>eens</b>
Ik bezocht dit concert om aan anderen met trots te kunnen vertellen dat ik erbij was.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert omdat ik me daardoor onderdeel voel van het gezelschap waar ik mee was.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert omdat het afwisseling biedt op mijn dagelijkse bezigheden.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert omdat ik nieuwsgierig was naar wat daar ging gebeuren.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert omdat de sfeer van de plek me aanspreekt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert om muziek te horen die pas net uitgebracht is of binnenkort uitgebracht wordt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert omdat het een goede manier is om contact te maken en gesprekken te hebben met onbekenden.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert omdat ik daar onbevangen kon feesten, dansen, meezingen, head-bangen en/of moshen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### End of Block: Motivatiestellingen2

### Start of Block: Motivatiestellingen3

Je bent bijna klaar met de stellingen! Hieronder de laatste paar, nog steeds over hetzelfde concert.

	helemaal <b>oneens</b>	enigszins <b>oneens</b>	neutraal	enigszins <b>eens</b>	helemaal <b>eens</b>
Ik bezocht dit concert om vervelende of stressvolle dingen te vergeten.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert om de artiest andere songs of andere versies te horen spelen dan de muziek die ze op album/streaming uitgebracht hebben.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert omdat ik de optredende artiest(en) minstens één keer in m'n leven live gezien moest hebben.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert omdat ik een van de optredende artiesten (of meerdere artiesten) als persoon aantrekkelijk vind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert om me onderdeel van een groep van gelijkgestemden te voelen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert omdat ik me daardoor speciaal voelde ten opzichte van mensen die er niet bij waren.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert omdat wat je daar beleeft uniek is en het nadien nooit meer op dezelfde wijze zal plaatsvinden.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik bezocht dit concert vanwege de spanning en de onvoorspelbaarheid van live optredens.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

---

Had je naast alle stellingen hierboven nog een belangrijke reden om naar dit concert te gaan? Vul deze reden dan hieronder in.

*Zo niet dan kun je onderstaand antwoordvak leeg laten.*

---

End of Block: Motivatiestellingen3

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Start of Block: Persoonskenmerken

Tenslotte nog een paar korte vragen over je persoonskenmerken. Daarna kun je je mailadres invoeren om in aanmerking te komen voor een Ticketmaster giftcard.

Wat is je geslacht?

- Vrouw
- Man
- Non-binair
- Wil ik niet beantwoorden

---

Wat is je geboortjaar?

▼ 2004 (1) ... 1920 (85)

---

Wat is je hoogst afgeronde opleidingsniveau?

- Geen opleiding / basisonderwijs
- Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs (VMBO, MBO)
- Hoger beroepsonderwijs (HBO)
- Universitair onderwijs (WO, PhD)
- Anders, namelijk \_\_\_\_\_
- Wil ik niet beantwoorden

**End of Block: Persoonskenmerken**

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**Start of Block: Incentive**

Dat was het. Heel veel dank voor je medewerking! Mocht je meer wilt weten over het onderzoek, neem dan contact op met Kevin Belzer: 620945kb@student.eur.nl  
Indien je kans wilt maken op een van de vier Ticketmaster giftcards ter waarde van €25, vul dan hieronder je mailadres in. Als je gewonnen hebt, word je via dit mailadres benaderd.

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**End of Block: Incentive**