

Interrupted Rhythms: Investigating the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on jazz musicians in the Netherlands.

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 was declared a public health emergency of national concern. The global spread of the virus resulted in a vast global economic crisis affecting numerous industries globally, with particularly devastating effects on the music industry. The live music sector was the most heavily impacted due to the imposing of national lockdowns and social distancing measures (Vecco et al., 2022). The global music industry developed innovative responses to continue artists' line of work, most notably live-streaming on different platforms (Anderton, 2021). Nonetheless, the digital performance alternatives proved to be unfavorable for live musicians who typically perform in collectives to play remotely (Cai et al., 2021). Due to these factors, it is inevitable to wonder what the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was on live musicians performing genres that were struggling before the commencement of the global crisis. According to research, jazz music is identified as a niche genre that encounters financial challenges and attracts limited audiences (Baicu, 2016). The jazz scene in the Netherlands specifically has endured great hardship due to ongoing budget cuts in the cultural sector for the past three decades (Dowling, 2012; DutchCulture, 2010; Holligan, 2012). For this reason, this research has a specific interest in the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on jazz musicians in the Netherlands which raises the question: "How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected jazz musicians in the Netherlands?"

To conduct this research, thematic analysis is employed to analyze semi-structured interviews with jazz musicians performing in the Netherlands. The study investigates the performing arts sector and the jazz industry in the Netherlands as well as the interferences of the Covid-19 pandemic in the global and local music industries in order to grasp comprehensive knowledge on the topic, which also assisted in the completion of a precise interview guide. The results of the thematic analysis revealed that the Covid-19 pandemic deepened preexisting issues in the jazz industry, namely limited performance opportunities and scarcity of performing venues. Additionally, the results showcased that jazz musicians in the Netherlands did engage in live-streaming performances but only in ones organized by governmentally funded venues because they received payment for their participation. An interesting finding that emerged was that not all jazz musicians were eligible for government subsidies during the pandemic due to the institutionalization of the profession in the

Netherlands. The research concludes with an observation of the positive effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the personal lives of jazz musicians, as the lack of professional responsibilities opened more time for self and professional development.

KEYWORDS: jazz musicians, Covid-19 pandemic, live music industry, entrepreneurship, Netherlands

Preface

Before you lies the master thesis “Interrupted Rhythms: Investigating the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on jazz musicians in the Netherlands.” This thesis was written to fulfill the graduation requirements of the Media and Creative Industries program at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I worked on this research from December 2022 until June 2023.

Throughout my academic journey, I have predominantly investigated topics concerning media affordances and digital practices. For this final research that marks the completion of my academic studies, I chose to delve into a subject matter that has always constituted a particular interest of mine: jazz music. Due to the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the live music sector, I was curious about its possible effects on the jazz music scene as it is quite niche and, unfortunately, does not attract large audiences. I commenced this research with no prior academic knowledge about the Dutch music industry, which made the journey challenging but rewarding. The research process taught me valuable knowledge and helped me reconnect with a strong passion of mine.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. AM Diallo whose excellent guidance and knowledge helped me complete this research. Furthermore, I want to thank my family and my partner for being a strong support system throughout the six months of writing this thesis. Finally, I want to thank the talented jazz musicians who participated in this study. Without them, I would not have been able to finish this paper and stay motivated and inspired throughout the process.

I hope you enjoy reading this paper!

Petra Baturova

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1. Introduction

On January 30th, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of the novel virus Covid-19 to be a public health emergency of international concern. The global spread of the virus resulted in the emergence of a vast economic crisis that affected numerous industries worldwide. One of the most heavily affected industries is the music industry, specifically the live music sector (Vecco et al., 2022, p. 12). The government imposed restrictions such as lockdowns and social distancing regulations led to the closing of venues and concert halls. This occurrence affected entire live music ecosystems worldwide, making them suffer an enormous loss of performances, audiences, work, and, therefore, income (VNPF, 2022). Music industry workers such as artists, managers, bookers, and others had to find ways to innovate, develop new revenue streams, to connect to audiences while also requesting financial support from their respective governments (Anderton, 2021, p. 69).

The Covid-19 pandemic inevitably drastically affected the supply and demand for music worldwide. Due to the closing of music venues, festivals, and physical music stores, live music consumption and physical musical sales significantly decreased (Denk et al., 2022, p. 16). Being confined to their homes, audiences and music industry personnel have no choice but to rely heavily on social media and technology. Therefore, the music industry needed to comply with the demands of the digital native generations (Denk et al., 2022). In order to comply with government-imposed safety regulations and remain profitable, the music industry shifts from physical to digital consumer spending and music consumption (Denk et al., 2022). Consumers started valuing the convenience of streaming services as alternatives to satisfy their demand for musical goods (Denk et al., 2022). Premium streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music took advantage of the shift from physical to digital music. They implemented digital-based revenue models that do not cause friction in the supply chain (Denk et al., 2022). The subscription model was a robust revenue stream, provided that customer lock-in effects were achieved on the platform, the monthly subscription fees could be raised to obtain more revenue (Denk et al., 2022). Furthermore, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok allow established and emerging artists to connect with their fans and acquire income through live streaming (Thomas, 2020). Artists could perform their repertoires and receive funds directly through their listeners by implementing virtual tip jars and less frequent physical sales (Thomas, 2020).

Despite the digital shift in the music industry, research shows that during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, music consumption and consumer spending reached an all-time low

(Denk et al., 2022; Sim et al., 2021). Consumer spending decreased by more than 45% compared to the pre-pandemic years (Denk et al., 2022, p. 1). Music consumption also dramatically decreased during the pandemic years, regardless of the fact that people were spending more time at home. The pandemic created friction in the music industry's supply chain, resulting in less music production and releases (Denk et al., 2022., p. 3). Accordingly, a reduction in new music supply affects consumers' consumption and spending behavior as music fans put a high value on listening to the latest songs (Denk et al., 2022).

Furthermore, in their research on Covid-19's impact on music consumption, Sim et al. (2021) showcase that countries with more significant mobility decrease saw a notable decline in streaming during the pandemic (p. 19). Therefore, there is also an affiliation between music consumption and commuting. According to Sim et al., the nature of music is nonintrusive and complimentary to commuting activities (e.g., commuting to work or driving to a restaurant) (2021, p. 25). Due to governmental restrictions, these activities were not possible, hence, the decline in music streaming.

The dramatic decline in music consumption and consumer spending inevitably affected musical artists globally. Innovative responses were developed in order to help artists continue practicing their line of work. Nevertheless, different factors showed those responses not to be very effective. Live-streaming seemed promising for musicians to perform their music to audiences confined to their homes. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube and the implementation of virtual tip jars created an opportunity for artists to connect with their fans while also receiving funds directly from the listeners. Soon after, pay-per-view (PPV) or ticketed live streaming emerged as a viable option for well-known musicians and all across the music spectrum (Anderton, 2021, p. 73). The two available options for live-streaming were pre-recorded live performances, which were later live-streamed, and real-time live performances, which may also be geo-blocked and scheduled for particular time zones (Anderton, 2021). Although live streaming seemed to be a viable solution both for audiences and musicians, the reality was that it attracted only existing fans rather than new audiences (Anderton, 2021).

Furthermore, the lack of a central live-streaming platform made it difficult to communicate online events across different audiences and channels (Anderton, 2021). Additionally, live-streaming shifted traditionally collocated activities of music-making (e.g., jam sessions, lessons, concerts) into a computer-mediated remote context (Cai et al., 2021, p. 10). This creates fundamental challenges for musicians to play music together remotely easily (Cai et al., 2021). The existing softwares and digital tools at that time did not allow

synchronous real-time remote collaborations due to latency and sound delays (Cai et al., 2021). While these factors might not cause issues for some artists such as DJs and solo performers, for live musicians who usually play in a collective (e.g., jazz, classical), they can become serious obstacles preventing them from the opportunity to play remotely.

Accordingly, it is safe to conclude that the alternative responses to the Covid-19 restrictions benefited only specific genres and the respective groups of musicians. What happens then to musicians performing genres that were not fairing well even before the commencement of the Covid-19 pandemic?

Jazz music has a prestigious history and has been proclaimed a national treasure in the United States (Jeffri, 2003). While jazz music is still stylistically evolving and filling concert halls today, its popularity has significantly declined since its prime years in the mid-20th century. According to Jonathan Kamin (1975), the decline in the popularity of jazz is a result of its evolution into an art form for a more acquired taste and its replacement by rock'n'roll music which was a more digestible and danceable music genre for the youth at the time. In recent times other musical genres have emerged, such as pop, hip-hop, and electronic music, that have captured the attention of the youth. These genres, however, often incorporate elements from jazz music (Early & Monson, 2019, p. 10). Prime examples are the works of avant-garde hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar and pop star Beyonce (Early & Monsoon, 2019). Another factor for jazz's decline in popularity is the perception that jazz is music for an acquired taste and that it is too complex and challenging to understand, thus, making it less accessible to casual listeners (Baicu, 2016; Christmas-Routledge, 2015). According to the Founder of the Research Center for Arts and Culture at Columbia University, Joan Jeffri, jazz music does not fare as well as other musical styles, making it challenging to continue the legacy of this art form (Jeffri, 2003, p. 4). Research conducted by Jeffri in the United States shows that the jazz musicians, who participated in her study, were better educated than the overall U.S. population (Jeffri, 2003, p. 6). Jeffri states that most jazz musicians are underpaid relative to the higher education that they have attained (Jeffri, 2003). By "higher education," the author refers to musicians who have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher (e.g., master's or doctorate) (Jeffri, 2003, p. 8). Furthermore, the findings from a 1999 study showcase a significant difference between the average salary of a male with a bachelor's degree (\$52,985) and a jazz musician on the same academic level (\$20,000 - \$40,000) (Jeffri, 2003, p. 9). It is difficult to accurately determine the exact statistics for current times due to the lack of recent academic literature. Accordingly, it is inevitable to wonder how a globally

economically devastating event such as the Covid-19 pandemic influenced niche genres such as jazz music.

This study will investigate the challenges faced by jazz musicians post Covid-19 with a focus on jazz musicians in the Netherlands. The cultural sector in the Netherlands has been a victim of monetary deficit due to colossal budget cuts. At the beginning of the early 2000s, the Dutch government announces drastic budget cuts for the arts sector consisting of 200 million euros in cuts, which is 25% less than the previous state budget for culture of € 800 million (Dowling, 2012; DutchCulture, 2010; Holligan, 2012). These changes affected mostly the live art sector, including live music acts such as jazz (DutchCulture, 2010). Due to the cuts, out of 118 performing art organizations at the time, around 70 stopped getting any kind of government funding (Dowling, 2012). This resulted in a loss of diversity in the Dutch arts, with more experimental and avant-garde organizations struggling to survive (Dowling, 2012). Music venues all around the country had to close their doors, leaving many live music performers in a difficult financial and artistic situation. In her research from 2016, Raluca Baicu showcases that these events have left a mark for the years to come (Baicu, 2016). In her research about gatekeepers' decision-making in the Dutch jazz industry, she writes that continuing budget cuts are decreasing the performing venues, public cultural media, and consequently, the opportunities for artists to perform and gain exposure (Baicu, 2016, p. 36). Furthermore, she reveals that jazz musicians heavily rely on subsidies (Baicu, 2016). For these subsidies to be obtained, jazz musicians must meet certain requirements, including presenting a development plan, including scheduled performances for the upcoming year (Baicu, 2016). However, musicians often cannot meet these requirements because they are rejected by venues and producers who do not want to take financial risks (Baicu, 2016). Considering this information, it is very much evident that jazz musicians in the Netherlands are still facing professional challenges to this day. Therefore, it is important to investigate how a devastating global event such as the Covid-19 pandemic has affected such a niche and compromised art sector. In order to investigate this issue, this research aims attention at the music industry in the Netherlands pre and post Covid-19 and the preexisting challenges faced by jazz musicians before the commencement of the pandemic. After investigating these matters, a qualitative research approach through the means of semi-structured interviews is employed to study the personal experiences of jazz musicians in the Netherlands. Subsequently, a thematic analysis is applied to investigate the emerging themes from the collected data corpus in order to answer the question: "How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected jazz musicians in the Netherlands?"

1.1. Relevance and motivation

The outbreak of Covid-19 occurred just over three years ago from the moment of writing this paper, and the music industry, although considerably stabilized, is still recovering from its devastating effects. Although there are many academic contributions to the discourse of the music industry post-Covid-19 (Denk et al., 2021; Marques & Giolo, 2020; Anderton, 2021; Morrow et al., 2022), there is still a lack of academic research about the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on niche less popular genres such as jazz music. This is an important issue to investigate to grasp why specific genres are doing better financially and in terms of popularity. Furthermore, Covid-19 is still a relevant topic, as cases are still being recorded globally to this day. Therefore, it is necessary to study the successes and losses of the music industry during the outbreak in an attempt to suggest accurate responses in the case of future lockdowns. This research will give an understanding of the level of importance of jazz within the Dutch music industry and the differences in career-building between musicians who perform different genres of music. This research will give an understanding of the level of importance of jazz within the Dutch music industry and the differences in career-building between musicians who perform different genres of music.

This paper can be considered a continuation of a previous academic investigation with a focus on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on jazz musicians in the Netherlands. Motivation for this study arose due to a previously conducted research in the fall of 2019. The research was conducted in collaboration with the Platform for Freelance Musicians Foundation (PvFM) based in Amsterdam and under the supervision of the University of Groningen. The research aimed to investigate jazz musicians' working conditions and salaries in Groningen, Netherlands. The PvFM is a non-profit organization that strives for sustainable music practice, the ending of structural underpayment, and unsafe practice for freelance musicians (<https://pvfm.nl/>). A series of interviews were conducted and video recorded with local venue owners, jazz students, and established jazz musicians, indicating poor working conditions and low monetary rewards for jazz musicians. The goal of this research was to conduct a small trailer to raise awareness about the unfair working conditions for freelance jazz musicians. Due to the commencement of the Covid-19 pandemic shortly after the beginning of the research, it was never finalized.

1.2. Structure

The research design of this paper consists of four sections. The theoretical framework will unpack the concepts deriving from the research question and will function as a theoretical guide for the research method. The methodology section will introduce the research method that will be used to gather and analyze data, the operationalization of the method, and the data sampling procedure. The third section will report the results that have been derived from the data analysis process. The fourth concluding section will summarize the study's findings, suggest further research on the topic, and present an answer to the research question, "How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected jazz musicians in the Netherlands?".

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Jazz in the Netherlands

The jazz scene in the Netherlands is internationally oriented, active, and considered to be on a very high level (Baicu, 2016, p. 36). The music conservatories in the country are the starting point for many jazz instrumentalists (Dutch and international), who then proceed with their careers by moving abroad to study jazz in reputable foreign programs (McGee, 2011, p. 205). Currently, there are nine state-funded conservatories in the Netherlands where students can obtain bachelor's and master's degrees in jazz music (European Association of Conservatoires, 2018). The Dutch conservatories offer high-quality education because they provide an international study environment, education in English, curricula aiming at international professional practice, and possibilities for doing a semester abroad (European Association of Conservatoires, 2018). The Dutch government has developed solid structural policies and subsidies for the development of the music sector and individual musicians (Everts & Haynes, 2021, p. 735). The opportunities for performing and subsidies, however, come only for the benefit of a small group of musicians (Oostveen, 1998, p. 1). Performers must meet certain conditions to benefit from the subsidies, such as referring to a plan of development and several concerts that will be performed within the upcoming year (Baicu, 2016, p. 36). Most musicians cannot meet these criteria due to a limited amount of performing jazz venues, a lack of audiences, public cultural media, and rejection from venues and producers (Baicu, 2016, p. 36). Accordingly, the socio-economic position of most Dutch jazz musicians is in a bad state (Oostveen, 1998, p. 1). According to the Founder of the Research Center for Arts and Culture at Columbia University, Joan Jeffri, jazz music does not fare as well as other musical styles, making it challenging to continue the legacy of this art form (Jeffri, 2003, p. 1). Research conducted by Jeffri in the United States shows that the jazz musicians, who participated in her study, were better educated than the overall U.S. population (Jeffri, 2003, p. 6). Jeffri states that most jazz musicians are underpaid relative to the higher education that they have attained (Jeffri, 2003). By "higher education," the author refers to musicians who have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher (e.g., master's or doctorate) (Jeffri, 2003, p. 8). Furthermore, the findings from a 1999 study showcase a significant difference between the average salary of a male with a bachelor's degree (\$52,985) and a jazz musician on the same academic level (\$20,000 - \$40,000) (Jeffri, 2003, p. 9). It is difficult to accurately determine the exact statistics for current times due to the lack of recent academic literature.

2.2. Challenges for jazz musicians

As previously mentioned, Dutch jazz is considered to have a weak foundation and is still too niche to survive without the help of sponsorship and governmental support (Baicu, 2016, p. 36). However, the institutions allocating funds take into consideration if the artists are receiving other financial aid outside of the fund they are about to receive (Baicu, 2016). This is done with the purpose to stimulate artists to find their own means of income and audiences without having to rely too much on subsidies (Baicu, 2016). Additionally, in order to even have access to funds, artists must meet certain conditions (Baicu, 2016). However, most artists cannot meet these conditions as they are being rejected by venues and producers who do not wish to take risks (Baicu, 2016). This rejection also comes from the Netherlands' deficiency in performing jazz venues. The local performers created their own performing spaces in response to the private venues' preference for international jazz artists rather than Dutch (Baicu, 2016, p. 37). The growing emergence of these venues (mainly in Amsterdam) creates a strange competition with the subsidized concert halls. Nevertheless, while the artistic level of performance is regarded as high, their income-earning possibilities remain very low (Baicu, 2016).

Another challenge contemporary jazz musicians face in the Netherlands is the stylistic approach to music by the different generations of musicians (Baicu, 2016, p. 37). The older and more established names in the Dutch jazz industry have a more traditional approach, whereas the younger talents prefer to mix more genres, hence, performing at clubs, bars, and even pop concert halls (Baicu, 2016, p. 38). Nevertheless, the younger generation experiences difficulties entering traditional jazz venues (Baicu, 2016). The stylistic fusion of genres and the interconnection of different music scenes are the directions in which jazz is heading as both musicians and producers follow it (Baicu, 2016). Moreover, traditional jazz comprises only 2 to 4% of the total music market. In contrast, all jazz-related music (e.g., soul, funk, Latin, blues, and gospel) amounts to 30 to 40% of the music market (Baicu, 2016). The Dutch jazz industry, however, does not exist in a vacuum. The characteristics mentioned above of the Dutch jazz industry also apply to the general music industry in the Netherlands. The global music industry's majors (EMI, Sony BMG, Universal, and Warner) traditionally tend to have a preference for international acts rather than local ones (Hitters & Van der Kamp, 2010, p. 465). This is usually the case because local artists impose a financial risk as they require a more intense and personal approach regarding promotion and development (Hitters & Van der Kamp, 2010). As mentioned before, private companies also have a preference for

international jazz artists for the same reason. Nevertheless, some local artists are still taking part in the majors' portfolios (Hitters & Van der Kamp, 2010, p. 462). This inclusion is particularly likely when independent record labels and others show that said local artists are commercially viable (Hitters & Van der Kamp, 2010).

Additionally, record companies classify music into genre categories in order to create identifiable patterns in music industry practices and recognizable motives guiding the habits of musicians and recording industry personnel (Negus, 1999, as cited in Hitters & van der Kamp, 2010, p. 462). Genre classification also serves the function of hierarchical rankings, whereby some genres are seen as more important than others (e.g., traditional jazz versus jazz-related music) (Hitters & Van der Kamp, 2010, p. 463). These rankings delineate social groups and act as boundary markers to differentiate hierarchical social relations (Hitters & Van der Kamp, 2010). For instance, the ranking of high culture (e.g., classical music) over popular music (e.g., pop and rock) and their respective production by non-profit (e.g., orchestras) and commercial organizations (e.g., record labels) (Hitters & Van der Kamp, 2010). This ranking also includes the hierarchy in the status groups associated with the consumption of each (e.g., affluent groups familiar with classical music) (Hitters & Van der Kamp, 2010). For example, jazz can sometimes be "complicated" or "very difficult to many ears," especially some of its improvisational stylistic forms, therefore, calls for a more sophisticated audience (Baicu, 2016, p. 38).

Due to the lack of access to producers and formal music venues, many jazz musicians have no other option but to participate in the so-called 'schnabbel circuit' also called the 'informal circuit' (Oostveen, 1998, p. 1). The informal circuit refers to the system of connected venues that are not affiliated with the mainstream or traditional platforms where artists can perform their work (Oostveen, 1998). This circuit does not operate under the advocacy of established institutions. Therefore, it can provide exposure to artists that do not have access to mainstream platforms (Oostveen, 1998). As previously mentioned, jazz musicians are often rejected from traditional venues. Therefore, they frequently rely on small cultural venues, private events, jazz cafes, and other food and beverage establishments (Oostveen, 1998). The formal circuit consists of institutional factors, such as minimum and collectively agreed wages, fixed working hours, and direct withholding of payroll taxes and premiums (Oostveen, 1998, p. 2). In the informal labor market, however, the decision of wage formation, determining working hours, and whether or not premiums and taxes are paid is made between the individual suppliers and demanders (Oostveen, 1998). For this reason, wages in this circuit are often paid 'black' (in cash). Furthermore, finding work within the

informal circuit is highly accessible as it is not required to hand in official paperwork, social security number, or a diploma (Oostveen, 1998). The informal circuit largely consists of illegal activities where people participate through their formal work connections (Oostveen, 1998). Therefore, jazz musicians can find employment within small venues and jazz cafes through the contacts and skills they have acquired in the formal sector (e.g., education). Although this work allows them to earn extra income, creatively express themselves, and reach new audiences, the wages they are paid in the informal circuit are often not enough to cover living costs, and the nature of the work remains illegal (Oostveen, 1998).

Another strategy for tackling financial insecurities and changing dynamics within the music industry among musicians is pursuing entrepreneurship (Albinsson, 2017; Everts & Haynes, 2021). According to Everts et al. (2022), a revenue shift from recorded music to live performances and a series of technological innovations democratized the means of music production and consumption (p. 3). As a result, intermediaries such as record labels, music retailers, and media outlets have lost their central role in the industry (Everts et al., 2022). Accordingly, for artists, it is essentially vital to grab the attention of the current influential cultural intermediaries such as managers, bookers, and A&R (Artists and Repertoires) representatives who introduce the artists to the music industry (input) and the media, retail, and promoters who introduce the artists to the audiences (output) (Everts et al., 2022). This suggests that musicians must perform more business tasks to create artistic products and establish a career with usually limited financial support (Everts & Haynes, 2021, p. 733). These business tasks include career self-management, social and networking skills, raising funds, distributing and marketing their music, and project management (Everts & Haynes, 2021, p. 734). The goal of these tasks is to achieve milestones and to create a reputable image that will attract the attention of the music industry intermediaries, which on the other hand, will open more business possibilities and higher pay (Everts et al., 2022, p. 5). Everts et al. (2022) describe milestones as “ritualized practices that they believe to function as signals of prior success and predictors of future success to intermediaries” (p. 5). Due to the oversupply of new musicians and uncertainty of who will become successful, intermediaries use milestones as a selection mechanism (Everts et al., 2021). The development of new technologies seemed to be an optimistic and democratizing approach for musicians allowing them to connect directly with their audiences without the interference of intermediaries, thus, creating new career-building strategies (Everts et al., 2022, p. 1). A widespread practice among some musicians is recording their music themselves and uploading it on Spotify, where they could be added to curated playlists to increase their visibility in the music market

and earn more revenue (Everts et al., 2021). Furthermore, all musicians have a strong presence on social media, generating followers and selling merchandise through webshops (Everts et al., 2021, p. 7). Despite these efforts, technological developments only make a modest contribution, and financial gains are still not optimistic (Everts et al., 2021). This is due to the fact that it is challenging to create a following base online due to the dominance of the mainstream media. Moreover, a large following base online is challenging to monetize, therefore, does not translate into ticket sales (Everts et al., 2021). As a result, musicians still feel dependent on the traditional career path imposed by the music industry due to the lack of opportunities outside of it, indicating that power dynamics have remained the same (Everts et al., 2021). Additionally, music industry intermediaries have also adapted to the new situation by recognizing musicians' strong social media presence as milestones (Everts et al., 2021).

Even though the chances of establishing a career outside the music industry are negligible due to market saturation, it is still beneficial for musicians to focus their entrepreneurial efforts on gaining the attention of key industry actors and the circuits and funding they control (Everts et al., 2021). However, due to the prevailing of old power economics within the music industry and only a fraction of musicians being able to sustain a successful career, entrepreneurial strategizing is still not profitable enough for musicians (Everts et al., 2021).

2.3. The Performing Arts Sector in the Netherlands

The performing arts sector refers to the performances consumed at the same time of production (Langeveld, 2009, p. 7). Following this definition, the performing arts are distinguished by disciplines and genres. According to Preece (2011), the performing arts traditionally include dance, theater, music, and opera (p. 105). Accordingly, jazz music falls under this description. This sector's production chain comprises processes of creation, production, distribution, and presentation (Langeveld, 2009, p. 14). The creation process is driven by the artistic expression of writers, composers, directors, and choreographers (Langeveld, 2009.). Accordingly, the creatives are the ones who have ownership of the intellectual properties. The performances and concerts are produced by companies, producers, bands, and orchestras (Langeveld, 2009). Distribution of performances and concerts is in the hands of companies themselves, impresarios, producers, A&R (artists and repertoires) representatives, and media and music companies (Langeveld, 2009). Then, the presentation is executed in specially built halls, outdoor festivals, and arenas and halls (Langeveld, 2009). Most venues in the Netherlands are specialized within a variety of genres (Langeveld, 2009, p. 16). Their presentations range from musicals, cabaret, and light music to

dance and drama (Langeveld, 2009). The only few venues that have a specialization are concert halls for classical music and subsidized theaters for dance and acting performances (Langeveld, 2009).

There is a difference between events, however, as venues in the Netherlands present both subsidized and non-subsidized performances and concerts (Langeveld, 2009, p. 16). The Netherlands' performing arts sector is subsidized by the national government and local municipalities (Langeveld, 2009). The subsidies for production companies only benefit the sponsored concerts and performances (Langeveld, 2009). To be one of the subsidized acts, certain conditions imposed by the government must be met. Therefore, the government controls a particular supply of concerts and performances (Langeveld, 2009). The subsidies for venues benefit both subsidized and non-subsidized performances (Langeveld, 2009). This means that the venues make the decisions about what shows and performances to buy and present on their stages.

As previously mentioned, the performing arts sector in the Netherlands is subsidized by the national government and by regional municipalities. While the government supports national cultural institutions and performances, the local municipalities focus on local arts organizations and events. The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science is the main governmental institution that financially supports the performing arts sector in the Netherlands (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.). The main organization that drives the subsidies and funding of the Dutch performing arts sector under the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science advocacy is the Performing Arts Fund (<https://fondspodiumkunsten.nl/>). The Performing Arts Fund is the national culture fund for music, music theatre, and dance in the Netherlands and the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Performing Arts Fund). Dutch Culture is an organization funded by the Dutch government that does not offer grants and subsidies but offers support and advice for artists and organizations in obtaining funding for international projects in the areas of culture, media, and heritage (<https://dutchculture.nl/>). Both the Performing Arts Fund and Dutch Culture are under the advocacy of the national government. Therefore, the funds and subsidies go to performers and arts organizations with the incentive for international reach. The Performing Arts Fund offers two fund activities: Fast Forward is a programme dedicated to developing talent in an international context, and International Promotion which is a system of grants and programmes that support Dutch makers and organizations with international ambitions, as well as promote performing arts from the Netherlands abroad (Performing Arts Fund, 2014). The Fonds Podiumkunsten offers one grant option that does not have an international

incentive: the Grant for Composition or Libretto Commission. This grant aims to support the composition climate in the Netherlands, promote the quality and diversity of the Dutch performing arts, and reach relevant audiences (Performing Arts Fund, 2014). The assessment criteria for application for the grants and funds include the motivation of the performer, venue or organization, the significance of the presentation, the effects of the presentation on the prominence or visibility of Dutch performing arts abroad, and what is the contribution to the Dutch International Cultural Policy (Performing Arts Fund). Accordingly, the local municipalities offer funds for arts and culture within the borders of their cities (Municipality of Amsterdam). In terms of performing arts, the municipality offers grants for performance spaces, organizing events and festivals, and enriching the nightlife (Municipality of Amsterdam). However, each grant application comes with specific conditions that must be met. Considering that municipalities' main goal is developing and enriching their designated catchment areas, the primary condition that must be met when applying for an arts and culture grant is a cultural contribution to a specific neighborhood or district (Municipality of Amsterdam).

2.4. Covid-19 and the global live music industry

The Covid-19 pandemic undeniably had a significant impact on the global music industry, especially in the context of the live music industry (Vecco et al., 2022, p. 12). The live music sector is the most impacted due to the hygienic, social distancing, and lockdown restrictions imposed by the government to tackle the rising numbers of infected people. Due to the limits, many in-person events (tours, festivals, concerts, and solo performances) were canceled, leaving many artists and creative workers with professional and financial insecurities (Vecco et al., 2022). Although festival organizers and venue owners made attempts to comply with the government restrictions, musical events still needed to improve attendance due to the increasing costs of traveling and accommodation (Vecco et al., 2022, p. 13).

Industry professionals have tried to respond to the crisis by changing their traditional in-person service delivery methods (Vecco et al., 2022). The alternative was switching to online music alternatives and tools, changing the customer experience, demand, and consumption (Vecco et al., 2022). Live streaming and VR (virtual reality) became the natural response to carrying live music performances during the lockdowns and social distancing (Vecco et al., 2022). Although online digital platforms helped the relative stabilization of the music sector, the revenues obtained from live streaming and video-on-demand platforms did not correspond to the earnings from live performances for many artists (Vecco et al., 2022).

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube and the implementation of virtual tip jars created an opportunity for artists to connect with their fans while also receiving funds directly from the listeners. Soon after, pay-per-view (PPV) or ticketed live streaming emerged as a viable option not only for well-known musicians but all across the music spectrum (Anderton, 2021, p. 73). The two available options for live streaming were pre-recorded live performances, which were later live-streamed and real-time live performances, which may also be geo-blocked and scheduled for particular time zones (Anderton, 2021). Although live streaming seemed to be a viable solution both for audiences and musicians, the reality was that it attracted only already existing fans rather than new audiences. Furthermore, the lack of a main live-streaming platform made it difficult to communicate online events across different audiences and channels (Anderton, 2021). VR was seen as a viable and democratic solution to the exclusive character of music festivals due to limited space and the corresponding high ticket sales prices (Vecco et al., 2022, p. 14). However, VR proved to cater to only a specific group of listeners. This group consists mainly of gamers, as they predominantly use the expensive VR headset, controllers, and consoles required to experience VR (Anderton, 2017, p. 74). Furthermore, this group of listeners proved to specifically listen to genres such as hip-hop and electronic music (Anderton, 2021).

During 2020 the physical and digital music sales conceivably decreased due to the closure of the physical retail stores, downloads, and other digital ownership formats (Vecco et al., 2022, p. 14). Although this would suggest that there would be a possible demand for music streaming as an alternative to physical sales, studies indicate that there was a drop in audio music streaming in many countries (Vecco et al., 2022). According to Vecco et al. (2022), music streaming significantly declined following lockdown measures, and on average, audio music consumption decreased by 12.5% after the World Health Organization (WHO) announcement of the pandemic on March 11th, 2020 (WHO, 2023).

2.5. Covid-19 and the Dutch live music industry

According to the Association of Dutch pop theaters and festivals (VNPF), 2019 was a record year for music venues and festivals in aspects of the number of visitors, amount of programmed festivals and live performances, and generated revenues (VNPF, 2022, p. 3). 2020 turned out to be disastrous for the accumulated success during the prior year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Until mid-March 2020, all festivals and venues were still operating at total capacity, however, with the commencement of the global pandemic, the Dutch government released an order for all venues and live performances to be abruptly closed and

canceled (VNPF, 2022). The restrictive measures closed clubs, events, and festivals together and prevented the sector from functioning normally for two years, at least until the last measures were finally lifted in March 2022 (VNPF, 2022). The negative effects that were caused due to the lockdowns are still present today, as many rescheduled events still suffer from the absence of ticket holders who are not able to attend (VNPF, 2022). This causes monetary losses not only for venue owners and staff but for artists as well. The Dutch government recognized the disastrous effect of the closed venues on the music sector and released financial support in the form of subsidies alongside the local municipalities (VNPF, 2022, p. 4). Although the released subsidies helped stabilize the sector during 2020 and 2021, the research conducted by the VNPF showcased that more than the regular subsidies are needed to cover the strong cost increase for music venues in 2022 and 2023 (VNPF, 2022). As a result, many music venues are faced with no option but to cut back on talent development and personnel for the upcoming years (VNPF, 2022). Some festivals and performances could be executed through hybrid and online arrangements. However, these responses were unable to prevent great financial losses for suppliers and artists (VNPF, 2022).

In 2021 the music venues in the Netherlands organized 5,571 live audience events in total, which are 67% less than the 16,628 events organized in 2019 and 5% less than the ones organized in 2020 (VNPF, 2022, p. 5). Although some events were organized throughout the pandemic, social distancing regulations imposed a limited capacity of visitors per programme. Therefore, only a specific amount of people could attend concerts and would have to take a seated position in order to comply with distancing restrictions (VNPF, 2022). Moreover, traveling restrictions and concert cancellations forced artists to reschedule their performances to sometimes a year ahead. As previously stated, due to the rescheduling, some ticket holders were unable to attend because of the unpredictability.

In addition to the decreased number of events, a change was also noticed in the distribution of the events. The share of concerts was the highest compared to other types of events (VNPF, 2022, p. 6). This is due to the fact that standing audiences and night programming were not allowed during the lockdowns. Therefore, concerts were the only viable option because they allowed socially distanced sitting audiences and online audiences as a result of live-streamed online events (VNPF, 2022). The share of concerts in 2021 consisted of 41% of all other types of events compared to 37% in 2020 and 38% in 2019 (VNPF, 2022). Dutch music venues organized more online events in 2021 than ever before (VNPF, 2022, p. 10). Concerts were recorded and streamed online on Video-on-Demand

platforms, furthermore, online podcasts and radio programs were offered (VNPF, 2022). The online events would be hybrid or entirely online. Hybrid events would allow a limited capacity for sitting audiences on-site and online access to audiences at home (VNPF, 2022). In 2021 the total number of organized hybrid events was 272, which reached around 50,000 online viewers and listeners in addition to the live audiences (VNPF, 2022). The organized online events of the same year were 1,809, which included 2,258 artist performances and an estimated 2.8 million views (VNPF, 2022). In total, for 2021, Dutch music venues organized around 2,617 online and hybrid music events with 2,358 artist performances and an estimated 2.9 million views (VNPF, 2022).

The live music sector would not have been this stabilized without the support measures from the national government, local municipalities, provinces, and public funds (VNPF, 2022, p. 28). In 2021 the total programme costs and artist fees paid by the venues were slightly higher than in 2020 due to the support of funds (such as the Performing Arts Fund) which made it possible for venues to compensate artists for canceled and rescheduled shows (VNPF, 2022, p. 22). In the same year, 9.5 million euros was spent on artist fees compared to 7.6 million euros in 2020 (a 26% increase) and 34.5 million euros in the record year of 2019 (a 72% decline) (VNPF, 2022).

3. Methodology

As previously stated, the objective of this research is to investigate how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected jazz musicians in the Netherlands. Therefore, this study has a focus on how the governmental responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent changes in the Dutch music industry have influenced the personal and professional lives of jazz musicians practicing in the Netherlands. Since this research is examining personal experiences and motivations of behavior, a qualitative research approach implemented by the means of semi-structured interviews has been chosen as the most suitable. The reasoning behind this is that this research deals with interpretative matters rather than quantifiable ones (Bryman, 2016, p. 380). The main objective of this research is to investigate the behaviors connected to the norms, values, and culture of a specific group or community (Bryman, 2012, p. 620). Although both quantitative and qualitative research approaches are interested in what people say and what people do, they take different approaches to investigate those matters (Bryman, 2012, p. 620). One of the most important aspects that differentiate qualitative and quantitative research is the focus on behavior versus meaning (Bryman, 2012, p. 408). Quantitative research is interested in analyzing a relevant population's behaviors through measurement procedures for social life (Bryman, 2012, p. 408). The quantitative approach is mechanistic and examines social life in a static environment due to the emphasis on relationships between variables (Bryman, 2012, p. 408). For this reason, quantitative research approaches are suitable for conducting more generalizable and robust data analysis that can be applied to a broader population (Bryman, 2012, p. 408). Qualitative research methods, on the other hand, focus predominantly on the interpretative nature of finding meaning behind particular behaviors (Bryman, 2012, p. 408). For this reason, in qualitative research, the driving force of the research is the point of view of the participants, as they are the ones experiencing the phenomenon of interest (Bryman, 2012, p. 408). Accordingly, qualitative research often takes an inductive approach whereby theory emerges from the data analysis process (Bryman, 2012, p. 568). Hence, it is essential to thoroughly theoretically study the world and the context in which the participants operate in order to understand the meaning behind their behaviors through their point of view (Bryman, 2012, p. 401). Consequently, a qualitative research approach is the most suitable for this research in order to investigate the niche world of jazz musicians and the interpretation of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on their specific music genre.

3.1. Method

Given that this study investigates the practices of a specific group of people, qualitative semi-structured interviews have been selected as the most suitable research tool. According to Flick (1998, p. 222), interviews make the accounts of practices accessible (as cited in Blandford, 2013, p. 23). Qualitative interviews deal with topics of practice that need in-depth understanding (Johnson, 2001, p. 5). The deep understandings are held by real-life members of or participants in a specific everyday activity, place, or event (Johnson, 2001). Furthermore, deep understanding goes beyond commonsense explanations, therefore, aims to explore the contextual boundaries of the aforementioned topics of practice, to uncover what is usually hidden from ordinary view (Johnson, 2001). There are several reasons why semi-structured interviews are a better fit for this research compared to other qualitative research methods, such as participant observation and focus groups. Participant observation is a research method whereby the researcher immerses themselves in a specific social situation, observing, listening, and asking questions to the observed participants (Bryman, 2012, p. 714). While this method allows the researcher to observe the participants in their daily life and, therefore, gain a perspective from their point of view, some issues are resistant to observation and call for the reconstruction of events that cannot be observed at the time of happening (Bryman, 2012, p. 494). This research focuses on past events and their effects on the participants, therefore, asking questions about said events is the only feasible option to gain understanding. Accordingly, focus groups seem to be an appropriate option for investigating the same network of people by asking them questions. A focus group is a form of a group interviewing process where the researcher asks questions on a particularly defined topic where the attention is on the collective discussion and joint construction of meaning on this topic (Bryman, 2012, p. 712). Although this method could provide insights into the collective understanding of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic amongst jazz musicians in the Netherlands, it also comes with its limitations. Due to the collective setting, some participants might not feel comfortable discussing private topics (e.g., income, mental health) (Bryman, 2012, p. 517). Furthermore, in a group setting, participants tend to give more culturally acceptable answers compared to one on one interviews (Bryman, 2012, p. 518). For these reasons, a semi-structured qualitative interview is the most feasible option for this research. The Covid-19 pandemic commenced before the conduction of this research, therefore, the experience of the participants cannot be investigated through the means of participant observation as it requires the recollection of events. Furthermore, the topic of

interest includes the discussion of professional, financial, and mental health aspects, which participants might find difficult to discuss in the group arrangement of focus groups.

In this research, jazz musicians hold an understanding of their working practices. To gain a better insight into the accounts of these practices, interviews allow space and flexibility for the topic to unfold. In qualitative interviewing, there is great interest in the interviewee's point of view. Therefore, rambling or going off on tangents is encouraged to understand better the topic of interest (Bryman, 2016, p. 470). The flexibility of qualitative interviews allows unexpected information to emerge and gives the participants space to elaborate on it. Hence, the respondent's answers guide the direction of the interview, and the emphasis of the research can be adjusted as a result of significant issues that may emerge during the talking (Bryman, 2016). Semi-structured interviews require an interview guide that consists of fairly specific topics that need to be covered. The questions constructing the interview guide derive from the existing literature on the topic. Although the order of the questions within the interview guide may not follow the initial schedule, the conversation must flow reasonably well (Bryman, 2016, p. 471).

In qualitative research, it is essential to know what is said and how it has been said (Bryman, 2016, p. 482). Therefore, the interviews will be audio-recorded and will be followed by a verbatim transcription. Due to the length and effort of manual transcription, a transcription software will be used (e.g., Amberscript). The graphic and sound dimensions of this software allow a time-effective conversion from sound to text. Furthermore, the transcribing software can increase the reliability and validity of the research due to the minimized influence of the researcher's values and biases (Alcock & Iphofen, 2007, p. 25). After the transcription process, the gathered data will be coded with the aid of the qualitative data analysis and research software Atlas.ti. This coding and annotation tool will reduce the time that would be spent manually coding the lengthy interview transcripts and can also increase the reliability and validity of the research as it would minimize the personal judgments of the researcher. The coding process will result in organizing the gathered data into codes, categories, and themes that will contribute to answering the research question.

3.2. Sampling

The gathering of the participants was operated through the means of purposive sampling. This is a non-probability form of sampling that does not seek to sample cases on a random basis (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). The rationale for using purposive sampling suggests that after a theoretical investigation of a specific topic is made, certain groups of people may have a

unique, different, or important perspective on the phenomenon of interest (Robinson, 2014, p. 7). In the case of this study, the phenomenon of interest is the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on jazz musicians in the Netherlands, and the jazz musicians are the group of people experiencing the phenomenon. In order to find the perfect fit of jazz musicians for this study, only jazz musicians who had already been performing before the Covid-19 pandemic were selected for the interviewing process. This decision was made in order to compare their practice before and after they experienced the pandemic.

Additionally, snowball sampling was applied. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sample where the researcher makes initial contact with a group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish further contact with others (Bryman, 2016, p. 716). This type of sampling is effective when researching organic social networks and ‘hidden populations’ (Noy, 2008). Contrary to other sampling methods, snowball sampling gives the participants considerable control over the sampling procedure. Therefore, the respondents continue the sampling process (Noy, 2008, p. 332). The first participant was recruited through the personal network of the researcher. Additionally, LinkedIn and Instagram were used for the recruitment of participants. After the completion of each interview, the interviewee was asked to forward the researcher’s contacts to other potential participants within the jazz music network who fit the requirements of the study. This sampling strategy accumulated a corpus of 10 interviews.

All participants in this study had been practicing jazz music in the Netherlands before the Covid-19 pandemic commenced. The participants vary in age, nationality, and experience. The ages of the respondents are between 22 and 50. The sample consists of five males and five females. One of the respondents did not obtain a formal music education, whereas the remaining nine attended conservatories. Furthermore, seven out of the ten respondents were still pursuing their academic musical education during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.3. Operationalization

In this study, the driving concepts that derive from the research question are “Covid-19” and “effects on jazz musicians in the Netherlands.” The following operationalization paragraph outlines how these notions will be defined, measured, and analyzed to investigate the research question, “How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected jazz musicians in the Netherlands?”.

In order to grasp the two main concepts, we first must explore their formal specificities deriving from the theoretical framework. The first concept, “Covid-19,” refers to the global

pandemic that was caused by the novel coronavirus from January 2020 until May 2023 (WHO, 2023). The concept's formal specificities include government lockdown measures, canceled performances, and the closing of venues (Anderton, 2021; Vecco et al., 2022; VNPF, 2022). The formal specificities of the second concept, "effects on jazz musicians in the Netherlands," include impact on music performances, music performance alternatives, financial losses, subsidies, and mental health challenges (Anderton, 2021; Cai et al., 2021; Denk et al., 2022; Sim et al., 2021; Langeveld, 2009; Thomas, 2020; Vecco et al., 2022; VNPF, 2022). The formal specificities of the two main concepts assist in evaluating the most important topics that must be investigated. This is an important procedure as it defines the elements of which the interview guide is conducted.

As mentioned previously, The data collection procedure is operationalized through semi-structured qualitative interviews with jazz musicians in the Netherlands. In order to complete all seven interviews, an interview guide was conducted. In brief, an interview guide is a list of somewhat structured issues to be addressed or questions to be asked in semi-structured interviewing (Bryman, 2016, p. 473). The interview guide in this paper was conducted in accordance with the operational definitions of the main concepts discussed in the previous paragraph. The interview guide consists of six different topics of interest in relation to the research question. The guide begins with introductory questions regarding the background and experience of the interviewees as jazz musicians. The second stage of the interview guide addresses the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on performances. Accordingly, the following stage of questions focuses on the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on financial stability. The fourth stage of questions addresses possible governmental financial aid in the form of subsidies. Inevitably, a fifth stage of questions follows, which touches on the topic of the mental well-being of the interviewees during the Covid-19 pandemic. The concluding questions give space for the participants to reflect on how the Dutch government and cultural institutions could have better supported them as jazz musicians during the Covid-19 pandemic and allow more information to emerge that has not been mentioned during the previous sets of questions. In order to build rapport and flexibility in the conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee, all questions included in the interview guide are open-ended and are written in comprehensible and relevant language to the interviewees. Furthermore, no leading questions were added to the interview guide to avoid possible influence and bias from the researcher (Bryman, 2016, p. 472).

The interviews were conducted both in person and online through the use of Zoom based on participants' preferences and schedules. As the participants were preoccupied with

performances and rehearsals, most of them preferred to be interviewed online. At the end of the interviewing stage, two interviews were conducted in person, and five interviews were conducted online. A consent form was sent to the interviewee before the commencement of each interview. The purpose of the consent form is to allow the participants to be fully informed of the nature of the research and the implications of their participation (Bryman, 2016, p. 140). Furthermore, the consent form asks for the informed verbal consent of the participant to share sensitive information and to be recorded.

Open-ended questions were used in order to explore jazz musicians' experiences, challenges, and adaptations during the pandemic. Although all of the respondents were asked the same questions concerning the main concepts of this study, a significant amount of leeway was allowed in order for more valuable information to emerge. Each interview was unique and had a different chronology than the others based on each respondent's answers. Accordingly, interviews lasted between 35 and 60 minutes, with an average of 45 minutes. All of the interviews were recorded with a smartphone. Afterward, they were transcribed verbatim with the transcribing software Amberscript.

3.4. Data Analysis

This research employs grounded theory, which is an inductive approach where collected data is used to generate theories rather than testing already existing theories (Bryman, 2016, p. 387). In grounded theory, concepts are generated through the collection of data that has been systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process (Bryman, 2016, p. 388). The two central principles of this approach are that theory is developed out of data and that the process is iterative, meaning that data collection and analysis proceed in tandem, often referring to one another (Bryman, 2016). The grounded theory approach was operationalized through the means of thematic analysis for the data analysis process. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3). The procedure of the data analysis in this paper will be executed based on the six-step guide for thematic analysis developed by Braun & Clarke (2006). Braun and Clarke's framework suggests six consecutive steps that allow the completion of a credible thematic analysis of qualitative data. The first step deals with becoming familiar with the data. During this step, transcripts are read and re-read in order for the researcher to be very familiar with the entire data corpus and to note down early impressions. The second step entails generating initial codes. Coding reduces large amounts of data into small chunks of meaning (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 5). After the coding step

has been executed, the third step deals with recognizing themes within the codes that capture something significant relating to the research question (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 6). The following fourth step deals with reviewing, modifying, and developing the preliminary themes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 8). Accordingly, during the fifth step, the definitive themes are defined, and the essence of each theme is determined (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 11). The final sixth step deals with reporting the thematic analysis by writing up the results (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 12).

3.5. Ethical Issues

Ethical issues within social research concern topics such as privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, and over-involvement (Allmark et al., 2009). The topic of this research focuses on the working conditions, income, and mental health of the participants. These can often be regarded as topics of sensitive nature. For this reason, all participants were introduced to an informed consent form which describes the interest of this study, the rights of the participants, and the risks and confidentiality procedures. The participants were informed that the interviews would be audio-recorded, to which they all consented. Furthermore, pseudonyms were used instead of real names and an age range instead of the exact age in order to provide anonymity and confidentiality. These measures were implemented because while the general reader might not be able to identify the participants based on the limited information and quotations, their fellow peers who also took part in this study might be able to do so (Allmark et al., 2009, p. 2).

3.6. Validity & Reliability

Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research (Bryman, 2012, p. 47). In this paper, validity is ensured through full transparency of the research design, theoretical framework, methodology, and process of analysis. Furthermore, each section in this paper that contributes to the emergence of the findings has been written on the base of extensive academic research. The introduction chapter gives a detailed clarification of the research design and the function of each component. This research's theoretical framework serves as a review of preexisting academic literature on the research topic and as a sampling process protocol. The methodology is executed with the aid of academic literature, which serves as guidelines for the operationalization and data analysis process. Furthermore, each data analysis process is described in full detail and with clarity to

provide transparency on the subjective interpretations carried out as part of the coding of the interviews.

Reliability is concerned with the replicability of the research and the consistency of the analytical procedures, including the researcher's personal biases (Bryman, 2012; Noble & Smith, 2015, p. 1). This paper ensures reliability through complete transparency of the sampling, operationalization, and data analysis process. Complete replicability in qualitative research might not be as achievable as in quantitative research. However, by providing transparency and reflection on the emergence of the findings, the limitations, and the researcher's personal bias, replication with satisfactory results should be possible, provided that the same process is followed. It is essential to acknowledge that the researcher in this study has a strong affinity for jazz music and has, at some point, taken part in the jazz industry as a performer. Therefore, the researcher's interaction with the participants may have influenced the respondents' answers during the interviews, thus, interfering with the accuracy and objectivity of this research.

4. Results

The principal goal of this research is to investigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on jazz musicians in the Netherlands. This section will discuss all codes and themes that emerged during the data analysis. The analysis of the ten interview transcripts revealed eight main themes with their respective codes. The eight themes are *The jazz scene in the Netherlands*, *Distinctive professional characteristics*, *Entrepreneurship*, *Lack of employment opportunities*, *Financial alternatives*, *Performance alternatives*, *Mental health*, and *Possible support*.

4.1. The jazz scene in the Netherlands

Firstly, it is crucial to shed light on the changes that occurred in the jazz music industry in the Netherlands in order to understand the present climate of the jazz scene. As reported in the theoretical chapter, since the early 2000s, there has been an ongoing process of significant budget cuts in the Dutch cultural sector (Baicu, 2016; Dowling, 2012; DutchCulture, 2010; Holligan, 2012). As a result, numerous performance venues nationwide were shut down due to a subsidy deficit. The sector that experienced the greatest impact from these measures was the live music scene, leaving many live performers with lower chances of exposure.

All ten interviewees agreed that the jazz music scene has changed and continues to change. Participant E (trumpeter and singer, female), who has been active in the Dutch jazz scene since the 1990s, expressed that that was the “golden time” for jazz performances in the country. She shared that there were a lot more opportunities to play as there were many small venues in all major cities, including official concert halls. Due to the abundance of performing spaces, there was enough work for jazz musicians at that time. As Participant E said:

Then there was a real sort of golden time for a lot of projects. A lot of little bars had music as well as, um, there were a lot more sort of official podiums in Holland at that point. Like a little village would have a place that would have music concerts for like an entire month.

She further explained that the BIM (Beroepsvereniging van Improviserende Musici), which is the first trade union for jazz musicians created in the Netherlands, had established the BIM norm, a set amount that jazz musicians should be making from performances. Accordingly, music venues had to follow the payment guidelines of the BIM, which at that time was a substantial amount, according to Participant E.

Furthermore, the interviewee shared that during those years, there were considerably more subsidies for different cultural acts during those years. She added that obtaining money for touring, experimenting, and researching was easier. She expressed that the cause of the significant changes in the past 30 years is the Netherlands adopting the euro over the former official currency, the ‘Dutch guilder’, in 2002 and the vast budget cuts for cultural activities in the early 2000s. Participant E shared that with the commencement of the early 2000s, the budget cuts vastly influenced the jazz scene. A large number of venues in the Netherlands had to close down due to the lack of resources. This resulted in fewer opportunities for jazz musicians to perform and a cut in the BIM norm, which meant lower salaries. Participant E shared: “There's still the BIM norm, but it's not in line with what it used to be.”

In alignment with Interviewee E’s experience, another respondent, who started living and performing in the country in 2012, has also experienced a substantial amount of venues closing in the eleven years of his residence in the Netherlands:

11 years ago, there were more places and quite a few have shut down. Some squats are now closed. And I've heard from friends that have been here. I mean, they've been playing since the 80s, you know? And back then, it was a whole different story. There were squats everywhere and many, many places to play. Now, there's only a handful of places, really. (Participant A, drummer, male)

Accordingly, it is safe to affirm that performing venues have been continuously closing for the past couple of decades and, therefore, stripping away jazz musicians in the country from performing opportunities.

A second interesting observation emerged in relation to the changes in the Dutch jazz scene. Respondents mentioned changes in the performance opportunities and exposure methods today. Participant E shared that currently, “festivals are more popular whereas it used to be more a series of concerts at venues”. In terms of exposure, Participant C (flutist, female) expressed that there is a lot more weight on jazz musicians today because of how prominent social media is. She shared that due to the saturation of content and music online, it is difficult to stick out and make yourself seen by the public. However, she also mentioned that jazz compositions could not comply with the time limitations of videos on social media and streaming platforms, as the nature of experimental music is long and complex compositions. Therefore, it is difficult to show just one moment of the composition that stands out. Furthermore, Participant A (guitarist, male) shared that it is becoming more important for jazz musicians to work on their branding online. He mentioned noticing that the pop department at the music conservatory is putting more effort into branding than the jazz department. He says:

We [jazz musicians] just are super nerdy and we don't want to do all the thing that goes with like promoting or like, you know, like making your brand thing. The students from the pop department, they have the branding thing much more well done than ours.

Participant G continues to say that many jazz musicians continue to work in a very archaic fashion. He believes that in order to be relevant, jazz musicians have to adapt to the current times. The performance opportunity and exposure methods changes can be explained in reference to the study of Everts et al. (2022). They argue that a shift from recorded to live music performances and technological advancements democratized the means of music production and consumption. Consequently, outdated intermediaries (e.g., record labels and music retail) lost their central role in the music industry. Due to these changes, music lovers shift from physical music sales to online streaming and to visiting live performances. Furthermore, musical artists become more autonomous in their work, resulting in having to take up more business and social networking responsibilities.

Regarding the significance of record labels, all participants stated that record labels did not play a big role in jazz. They shared that record labels function more as an exposure entity they would work with to publish and promote their albums. Participant E says that signing a deal with a record label is “more of a pop kind of thing.” One of the respondents had a firm opinion about record labels, as he stated that they tend to scam “young cats” (non-experienced musicians). He shared his experience with a record label that offered his band an unbalanced deal. As Participant B (drummer, male) puts it:

Well, I mean, it gives you visibility. You get a very nice cover, a very nice product, and everything. But you also pay, like, 2600 euros tax included for the whole deal and the pressing. So it's huge. And of course, you don't earn because you're not famous yet, so you don't earn much. And finding concerts is almost impossible. So you cannot sell CDs. That's the situation in which we are.

He continued to say that the record label would take 85% of the ownership of their album for the upcoming ten years. Although record labels give artists exposure and promotion of their music, their contribution stops there. Artists must still perform all other professional activities, such as producing music, reaching out to venues, organizing performances, and looking for funding.

Although the funds for the cultural sector have drastically decreased, all interviewees agreed that the jazz scene in the Netherlands is still at a very high level. Every year many internationals choose the national conservatories for their formal musical education and the Dutch jazz scene as the jump-start of their musical careers. The participants collectively

agreed that the Dutch jazz scene is active and exciting, with a particularly developed free improvisation niche.

4.2. Distinctive professional characteristics

The analysis of the interviews determined another line of investigation, namely the particular aspects that come with the jazz musician profession. All interviewees agreed that one of the biggest challenges jazz musicians in the Netherlands are facing is the need for performing venues in the country. As previously mentioned, the scarcity of jazz venues is a result of budget cuts in the arts sector. Regardless, the jazz community keeps growing, with many graduating from the national conservatories each year. The interviewees shared that the bookers have no other option but to filter out musicians by giving them an opportunity to perform only a few times a year due to the small number of functioning venues. Respondents stated that even that is a strike of luck because venues prefer to employ more well-known musicians that will fill up their stages and sell more tickets. As Participant B (drummer, male) states:

There are less and less venues and more and more musicians. But what I hear is that there are less and less venues. And the Netherlands is a very close country. A small one. So there's always like a little group of people playing and a bunch of other people that are at the gate or like, you know, struggling to find concerts. And if you win a big competition, then you get into the circle. If you don't, then it's hard.

Accordingly, for musicians who are at the beginning of their careers, it is challenging to break through. However, three of the participants shared another obstacle. Bands with a member who recently performed with another collective may face rejection from venues as well. Hence, due to the saturation of musicians and the small number of venues, bookers must be selective in an effort to keep the performances as diverse as possible. Raluca Baicu (2016) states that some jazz musicians have formed their own performance spaces in response to the inaccessibility of the private venues.

Nevertheless, two respondents shared that they have not faced the struggle to find performances. Participant C (flutist, woman) and Participant F (bassist, male) have been fortunate because of the instruments that they play. Participant C plays the flute, which, according to her, is an uncommon instrument in the free improvisational jazz scene. Due to this, many jazz collectives have a high demand for flutists. On the other hand, Participant F is a bass player, which is a highly common instrument in most music genres. However, it plays a crucial rhythmic and harmonic role in most compositions. Therefore, bass players also have

high demand. Furthermore, Participant F states that most bookers do not pay as much attention to bass players as they have a more “in the back” role as opposed to saxophonists, horn players, or singers:

Luckily, as a bass player, sometimes I feel like bookers kind of think like, ah, he's just like, you know, the bass player in the back. So it doesn't matter as much if he's planning to play there twice again because he's just part of the company, you know? And I think it's more of a problem for people that are more like traditionally upfront, like saxophone, horn players, singers, or whatever. Because they're more visible so people do take that into account.

Although all participants shared that there is a scarcity of venues, it is evident that there is a higher demand for some artists in relation to the musical instrument that they play, irrespective of their experience.

Another aspect of the jazz musician profession is financial difficulties. As aforementioned, the budget cuts in the cultural sector have significantly influenced the BIM (the approved basic salary for performers by the jazz musicians' trade union). Jeffri (2003) states that jazz musicians earn significantly less than full-time workers, regardless of their level of education and proficiency. Furthermore, Baicu (2016) acknowledges that jazz musicians in the Netherlands are heavily reliant on government subsidies. As discussed in the theoretical section, government subsidies for culture are usually granted to the venues and performance spaces and not to the individual artists. Therefore, artists' payments are distributed by the venues that hire them. In the cases where they perform in non-subsidized venues, they are paid for with entrance fees or donations from the visitors. Six respondents agreed that they do not earn a sufficient income from performances alone. Seven of the respondents stated that they have other sources of income. As said by Participant A (drummer, male):

I had a talk with my accountant recently, I had to do my income taxes, and she does my income taxes for me. And she said I'm well below the poverty line. Like, really, this is serious stuff.

He continues to say: “If you compare what I'm making to most people in the city, it's really peanuts.” Participant E (trumpeter and singer, female) shared that the salary increases for traditional employment do not affect the salaries of jazz musicians. Due to the fact that most jazz musicians make way below the minimum wage in the Netherlands, they often have to take up side jobs in order to ensure financial stability. The respondents, who have been performing for a longer period of time, teach music on the side as a source of income. Participant B (drummer, male) stated that even established and well-known jazz musicians in the Netherlands have a lack of choice but to teach music on the side, most of the time in the

conservatories. Furthermore, being a jazz musician comes with a great deal of financial uncertainty as pay slips are not processed systematically as standard business hours employment. It is inherent for the profession to have an irregular workflow as it is never certain when you will be employed for a performance. Due to the popularity of festivals in recent years, bookers sometimes employ musicians for performances up to a year ahead in order to have a set lineup in advance. Additionally, there are different waves of demand for performances during the year. Participant D (trumpeter, male) shared that he receives the most performance opportunities during summer and the Christmas holidays. He also included that he usually has “dry periods” at the beginning of the year. Accordingly, it is safe to claim that jazz musicians struggle with financial insecurity due to modest salaries and irregular obtainment of said salaries.

In reference to the theoretical framework, Baicu (2016) claims that the jazz industry in the Netherlands is still quite niche. Jazz performances usually consist of small audiences. Participant C (flutist, female) expressed that audience members are usually people with acquired tastes or other practitioners from the jazz scene. She argued that although the improvisational music community is welcoming toward new and younger audiences, this music genre has a distinct style and aesthetic that requires an extent of prior comprehensive knowledge. For this reason, audiences often consist of other artists, which to a degree, makes the jazz scene very closed off. This can be seen as a broader issue in the global music industry, as Hitters and Van der Kamp (2010) argue that record companies use genre classification as a hierarchy ranking, whereby some genres are seen as more important than others. Subsequently, this ranking acts as a delineator between the social groups that listen to specific genres. With regard to jazz music, Baicu (2016) acknowledges that jazz is sometimes perceived as complicated or difficult to listen to by an untrained ear, therefore calling for a more sophisticated audience.

4.3. Entrepreneurship

The nature of the musician profession has become significantly entrepreneurial. All respondents mentioned that to be able to perform legally and pay taxes, they must register as a one-person business with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce (KVK). As freelancers, they offer their services to different employers, respectively music venues, concert halls, and festival organizers.

Entrepreneurship comes with various tasks that must be completed by the performer alone as opposed to performers in other genres who are assigned to record labels. The performer

must contact music venues, organize tours, apply for competitions, rehearse, work on social media branding and visual materials, find funding, network, and keep financial accounts (Everts & Haynes, 2021). Most respondents stated that the workload can be daunting and tiring and takes much time they would prefer to spend playing music. As Participant E (trumpeter and singer, female) states:

I find it challenging because you just ultimately want to be playing music and working on your music. But there are all these other things around it that you have to take care of. If you want to be, you know, out there and if you want to be performing with your own material.

The interviewees stated that it is an uncommon practice in the jazz scene to perform exclusively alone or stick with the same music collective for long periods. All of the respondents mentioned that they were working on multiple different projects with various other musicians and creative workers. Hence, networking is essential in order to find jobs in the jazz scene. Respondents expressed that networking is the main way they can find work due to the fact that jazz music is solely played live and often in a collective.

Although all jazz musicians in the Netherlands are freelancers, not all of them have the same approach and desired outcomes from their work. Some musicians have a more proactive approach and tend to attend performances more often to network and seek out more possibilities. Others focus on practice and wait to be called up. Participant B (drummer, male) shared that the jazz scene in the Netherlands has a very entrepreneurial nature as opposed to his home country France. He continued to say that proactiveness is necessary to make it in the Dutch scene, which can be challenging for more introverted people like himself. Overall, none of the respondents expressed a desire to become famous in their field. The collective opinion on measuring success is to be able to contribute to the jazz community and to be able to do what they are already pursuing.

The findings in the first segment of the results section discussed the rearrangement of power dynamics within the global music industry. As Everts et al. (2022) discuss, the shift from recorded music to live music performances and digitized music consumption democratized the means of music production and consumption. As a result, artists became more autonomous in their practice and the intermediary role was taken up by managers, bookers, and Artists and Repertoires representatives who have control over when and where musicians can perform. As the interviewees stated, the current role of record labels is to collaborate with the artists in the process of album production and exposure. Therefore, musicians must perform all of the remaining business practices by themselves. Baicu (2016)

and Everts et al. (2022) discuss the notion of musicians achieving milestones in order to create a reputable image that would attract the attention of music intermediaries. Everts et al. describe milestones as “ritualized practices that are believed to function as signals of prior success and predictors of future success to intermediaries” (p. 5). Both Baicu (2016) and Everts et al. (2022) argue that intermediaries utilize milestones as a decision-maker in the hiring decision-maker. All interviewees stated that it is essential to make a name for yourself before beginning to contact bookers and venue owners. Participant H (singer and pianist, female) said, “It is all about credibility, and the more you get into the scene, the more people would want to work with you.” The interviewees stated that a common milestone amongst jazz musicians is participating in competitions organized by the national conservatories or by the Bimhuis (the principal jazz venue in the Netherlands) to achieve exposure and attract the attention of prominent figures in the field. Furthermore, the participants shared that they take advantage of the annual festival InJazz, which is “the Netherlands’ main showcase, conference, and networking event for jazz music and its affiliate genres” (InJazz, 2023).

4.4. Lack of employment opportunities

The first line of investigation under this theme is the lack of performance opportunities. As discussed in the theoretical framework, after the commencement of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, governments worldwide imposed restrictions entirely on all social gatherings, live music performances including (Vecco, 2022; VNPF, 2022). These measurements affected mainly the live music industry (Vecco, 2022). All of the interviewees shared that the lack of performance opportunities due to the government-imposed restrictions in the Netherlands significantly impacted them during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic. The closure of venues, concert halls, and festivals put the professions of many jazz musicians on hold. The respondents shared that all of their booked performances were canceled quickly, leaving them in an uncertain professional and financial situation. As Participant D puts it:

I was panicking in the first week because everything was shut down. Fuck, all my things are canceled, my teaching is canceled, and the gigs that are planned, they're canceled. There is no source of income anymore.

In 2021 and the beginning of 2022, the Dutch government made several attempts to lift the measurements. Respondents shared that the liftings of the measurements made them feel hopeful and encouraged to start performing and networking again. However, these moments were short-lived, as the restrictions would be imposed again after the drastic rising of infected people.

Three of the respondents shared that the Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on performance opportunities long after the restrictions were lifted. Participant B shared that the jazz scene became more crowded after the pandemic, making many musicians compete for performances in only a few available music venues. Furthermore, Participant D explained that bookers have become even more selective after the pandemic as they want to “play it safe” and book more famous performers that will ensure ticket sales and full concert rooms.

4.5. Financial alternatives

The following line of investigation touches upon jazz musicians’ financial alternatives. Baicu (2016) argues that jazz musicians in the Netherlands are heavily reliant on governmental subsidies. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Dutch government released subsidies for the cultural sector (VNPF, 2022). As discussed in the theoretical chapter, however, these subsidies were distributed mainly to concert halls and small venues. All of the interviewees stated that they did not receive subsidies from the national cultural funds. Rather, the only subsidy available at that time for jazz musicians was the Tozo (Temporary bridging measure for self-employed professionals). Only three of the respondents obtained this subsidy. They explained that the Netherlands recognizes jazz musicians as self-employed freelancers, therefore, they receive a subsidy meant for self-employed professionals. The respondents indicated that the amount they were receiving was around €1000 and was enough to cover basic costs during the time. Respondent A shared that the subsidy amount was much more than he usually makes from music. According to the interviewees, the subsidy was released in March 2020 and was available for about one year.

Not all of the respondents received government subsidies, however. As previously stated by Baicu (2016), subsidies usually require meeting a set of conditions in order to be obtained. Seven of the interviewees were still enrolled in conservatories during the pandemic. For this reason, they were not eligible to obtain the Tozo subsidy. According to the interviewees, the requirements for the application of this subsidy are to be registered as a self-employed professional for at least a year, to earn at least a specific annual salary, and not to be registered as a student. Although the seven interviewees had already been registered as self-employed professionals before the commencement of the pandemic, they could not accumulate the required annual salary due to their academic obligations. Furthermore, Baicu (2016) argues that institutions that allocate subsidies take into consideration if the artists are receiving other financial aid outside of the subsidy they are about to receive. This is done with the incentive to stimulate artists to find their own stream of income and not rely on

subsidies too much. The Netherlands already provides subsidies for students enrolled in higher education institutions. Therefore, the seven participants who did not obtain the Tozo subsidy were not able to do so because the government recognized them as students. As Participant D (trumpeter, male) puts it: “That was practically nothing for me. Because Tozo, it was a really nice promise. But if you were a student, you couldn't apply for it then.” For this reason, four of the respondents, who were still enrolled in conservatories, had to find alternative ways to finance themselves. The other three were still financially dependent on their parents. Participant D (trumpeter, male) shared that for the first two years of the pandemic, he worked as an essential worker in a supermarket. Participant G (guitarist, male), Participant H (singer and pianist, female), and Participant I (singer, female) were teaching music lessons.

Furthermore, the respondents shared that the Tozo subsidy was not granted to musicians who had employed partners. The decision was made on the presumption that the employed partner could provide for the household. Additionally, due to the fact that the subsidies were not granted through cultural institutions but directly from the Dutch government, many jazz musicians were left uninformed about the subsidies and missed out on the chance to receive governmental help. The respondents shared that although they were grateful for the subsidy opportunities, the government and cultural institutions could have communicated better with the performing arts community about the available resources.

4.6. Performance alternatives

In 2021, the Dutch government loosened the pandemic restrictions on several occasions. This allowed the live music sector to come up with performance alternatives that would abide by the social distancing rules. The response to the crisis was to change the traditional in-person service delivery methods (Vecco, 2022). Therefore, live-streaming was the most viable option. In the same year, Dutch music venues organized more online events than ever before (VNPF, 2022). The live-streamed events were executed either completely online or hybrid in the presence of a limited audience. These events were funded by the main funding body for the Dutch cultural sector, the Performing Arts Fund.

All ten interviewees shared that they participated in live-streamed performances during the pandemic. The performances were streamed from small venues and the Bimhuis. Furthermore, outdoor concerts were organized in order to abide by the social distancing rules. The recorded streams were then uploaded on social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube or specialized platforms like Bimhuis Radio TV. The respondents played in both

online and hybrid live-streams. They stated that they were paid for the live-streamed performances, as the Fondspodiumkunsten granted venues with funding. The interviewees did not organize personal non-funded live-streams and did not utilize other alternative digital methods for performing. Rather, they invested time into sharing their music on streaming platforms.

4.7. Mental health

Finally, an important aspect that emerged regarding the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on jazz musicians was mental health. All of the respondents agreed that at the beginning of the pandemic, they felt insecure about their future. The emotional impact of the new way of living was most observed among respondents who were still students at that time. They stated that it was difficult for them to find the motivation to play as it was very uncertain what the outcomes of the pandemic were going to be. Participant D (trumpeter, male) shared that he did not feel motivated to play the trumpet, and he became careless about his education. However, the overall experience of the interviewees during the Covid-19 pandemic was not negative. All of the respondents shared that they took advantage of the professional hiatus to reflect on their careers and to compose more music. Participant E (trumpeter and singer, female) shared that it was advantageous for her to step away from all of the entrepreneurial tasks and dedicate more time to her hobbies. Participant A (drummer, male) shared the same experience, saying that the pandemic affected his mental health “if anything for the better.” He stated that it was refreshing for him to spend time at home without having to worry about booking performances and accumulating an income.

4.8. Possible support

The last line of investigation that emerged from the data analysis is the participants’ suggestions for better support of the Dutch jazz community. The interviewees emphasized more funding for the cultural sector as primary importance. As previously stated, jazz musicians heavily rely on cultural subsidies as their means of income depend on the accessibility to venues. Additionally, the interviewees expressed their disapproval of the institutionalization of the nature of their profession. In reference to the previous theme, the participants, who were still in the process of their studies, shared that they were not qualified for the obtainment of the subsidy for self-employed professionals. They argued that irrespective of their academic occupation, they are registered entrepreneurs who are engaging in their line of work as a means of making a living. Consequently, they believe that they

should not be excluded from obtaining the Tozo subsidy. As Participant D (trumpeter, male) puts it:

Realize that conservatory students are already professionals, so don't make up this exception for students regarding the compensation, this Tozo.

According to Albinsson (2017), musicians consider themselves as entrepreneurs reluctantly. He states that musicians pursue entrepreneurship out of necessity which is in correlation to the statements made by Everts et al. (2022) in regard to the changed dynamics within the global music industry. Accordingly, the interviewees voiced that their line of work should be mainly supported by the cultural sector. They shared that during the Covid-19 pandemic, many musicians missed out on government subsidies for self-employed professionals because of the lack of information and communication from cultural institutions. Participant F (bassist, male) adds:

But sometimes they could be distributed a little bit more. A bit like what we were talking about before, like more directly toward the musicians. Because in every music field, you're aware of how much a lot of people are making in the music industry and then compare that to what the musicians make. And it's such a weird imbalance.

Additionally, all ten interviewees shared that more exposure opportunities are essential for the vitality of the jazz scene. As previously discussed, the substantial budget cuts in the cultural sector resulted in the closure of numerous performing venues all around the Netherlands. This affected mainly the live music sector, leaving a high saturation of jazz musicians with few possibilities to perform. As Participant B (drummer, male) stated, the Covid-19 pandemic drastically affected the jazz scene in the Netherlands. He shared that the market is now more crowded than before the commencement of the pandemic, and bookers prefer to “play it safe” with whom they hire for performances. The report made by the Association of Dutch pop theatres and festivals (VNPF, 2022) revealed that additional support beyond the regular subsidies is needed to cover the significant cost increase for music venues. Therefore, many music venues are cutting back on talent development and staff for the upcoming years (VNPF, 2022). For this reason, sufficient funding is needed for both venues to function better and for artists to receive more performance opportunities and better pay.

Lastly, three of the respondents voiced their concern with the lack of media coverage of the jazz scene in the Netherlands. It became evident that jazz preserves its reputation as a genre for acquired taste due to the little accessible information and promotion of jazz performances as compared to other genres. Participant E (trumpeter and singer, female, who

has lived in the Netherlands since 1990) shared that the jazz sector used to be much more exposed to the public through newspaper articles, radio shows, online articles, and special programs that have now been discontinued. The three respondents shared their beliefs that the jazz sector is substituted by people with an acquired taste and other musicians because the general public is not aware of its existence. Accordingly, it is justifiable to conclude that more media exposure could potentially attract more audiences and, therefore, bring higher demand for jazz music.

5. Conclusion

The main objective of the current research was to investigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on jazz musicians in the Netherlands. This section aims to deliver an answer to the research question based on the information gathered from the preceding sections. The previous sections were essential for achieving a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Accordingly, this section will answer the research question: “How has Covid-19 affected jazz musicians in the Netherlands?”

The analysis of the interviews revealed eight main themes that were elaborated in the results section. The themes touched upon both preexisting issues within the Dutch jazz scene as well as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on jazz musicians. The results indicated that the preexisting issues in the Dutch jazz scene and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are closely interconnected. Accordingly, the main finding in this research is that the Covid-19 pandemic deepened the already existing complications within the jazz scene in the Netherlands. The first three themes gave a comprehensive understanding of the nature of being a jazz musician in the Netherlands and the specific challenges that come with this line of work. As discussed, the main challenge that jazz musicians face is limited performance opportunities due to the scarcity of performing venues. This issue is a result of an ongoing flow of government budget cuts for the cultural sector in the past three decades. As stated by Langeveld (2009), the Dutch performing arts sector, which includes the live music sector, is subsidized by the national government and local municipalities. Therefore, the significant financial reductions in the performing arts sector affected the number of functioning venues and, subsequently, the wages of musicians because they are paid by the venues. The interviewees stated that the process of finding performance opportunities has worsened as a result of the pandemic. Jazz musicians must contact venues and bookers in order to be hired for a performance. Although this process was challenging before the commencement of the pandemic due to the small number of venues, currently, it is even more burdensome. The participants stated that bookers are selective with whom they hire because they want to ensure selling tickets and filling music halls. The report made by the Association of Dutch pop theatres and festivals showcases that music venues are also still recovering from the financial losses during the pandemic, therefore, cutting down on talent development and staff (VNPF, 2022). For this reason, bookers prefer hiring more well-known and established musicians that can guarantee financial profit. As a result, jazz musicians who are at the

beginning of their careers must achieve milestones as indicators of future success. In correspondence with Everts et al. (2022), achieving milestones in order to attract the attention of intermediaries is quintessential not only for jazz musicians but for pop artists as well. They argue that a revenue shift from recorded music to live music consumption and a series of technological innovations made the musicians' professional trajectories more independent. As a result, musicians have adopted an entrepreneurial work ethic whereby they must strive for the attention of the new intermediaries, respectively managers, bookers, and Artists and Repertoires representatives rather than the previously dominant record labels. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the necessity to achieve milestones among jazz musicians in order to attract the attention of bookers.

Additionally, another interesting finding emerged from the data analysis in regard to the available governmental financial support in the form of subsidies during the Covid-19 pandemic. The available subsidy granted to jazz musicians was the Tozo which stands for Temporary Bridging Scheme for Self-Employed Entrepreneurs. The obtainment of this subsidy came with the requirement that the receiver has been registered as a self-employed professional with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce (KvK) and has accumulated at least 1225 hours per year developing their career. All ten interviewees were registered as self-employed-professionals. However, only three out of the ten interviewees were able to obtain this subsidy because the remaining seven were still enrolled as students in musical conservatories. In relation to Baicu (2016), the Dutch government takes into consideration whether musicians are receiving other forms of subsidies prior to the ones they are about to receive. Since the Dutch government already provides subsidies for students, the Tozo subsidy was not granted to artists whom the government recognized as students. The interviewees expressed their disagreement with the institutionalization of their line of work, asserting that they should be regarded as entrepreneurs regardless of their academic occupation. Accordingly, the subsidy requirements during the Covid-19 pandemic revealed that the Dutch government views jazz musicians solely as one-person businesses rather than taking into consideration all of the complexities that come with this line of work.

Further, another influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on jazz musicians in the Netherlands is the shift from live in-person performances to live-streaming (Anderton, 2021; Vecco, 2022). The participants shared that they participated in live-streamed performances during the pandemic. The performances were organized by venues and concert halls funded by the FondspodiumKunsten, the main funding body for the Dutch cultural sector, and studios that offered their spaces for live-streaming. The live-streamed events were exclusively online

during the first year of the pandemic and hybrid during the second year (VNPF, 2022). Conservatories also adapted to the digital shift during the pandemic as they organized live-streamed lessons and graduation performances for their students. The results showed, however, that jazz musicians were not so fond of utilizing digital channels during the pandemic. According to the respondents, the nature of jazz music is not suited to be conveyed effectively through digital channels. Jazz music is predominantly played live in musical collectives. Due to the experimental and unpredictable essence of this genre, it is difficult for technologies to convey timing and synchronization, thus stripping away the artistry of the performance (Cai et al., 2021).

Lastly, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental well-being of the respondents surprisingly turned out to be positive, regardless of the caused uncertainties. The beginning of the pandemic caused feelings of demotivation and concern in the respondents. However, as time moved forward, the break from entrepreneurial activities proved to be beneficial for the interviewees. Most of the respondents spent more time engaging with hobbies that they usually would not have the time for due to their hectic schedules. Furthermore, the lack of professional responsibilities during that time allowed more space for creativity, as some of the respondents shared that they had more time to spend reflecting on their artistic identities, composing new music, and improving their skills. Therefore, it can be inferred that on a personal level, the Covid-19 pandemic had beneficial effects on jazz musicians in the Netherlands.

5.1. Social and Academic Significance

This research contributes to the academic discourse about the effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic on the music industries, and more specifically on niche genres in the live music industry. The results showcased how a small-scale genre that is heavily reliant on governmental funds adapted to the new social and technological demands imposed by the global pandemic. Furthermore, this research contributed to the discourse about the shift in the power dynamics in the global music industry, resulting in the necessity for performers to pursue entrepreneurship. Additionally, this paper can function as a more recent depiction of the jazz industry in the Netherlands due to the scarcity of recent academic articles on the topic.

The social relevance of this research is embedded in the finding that the Dutch government views jazz musicians as entrepreneurs rather than cultural workers. This finding was essential in order to understand the distribution of government funds among jazz

musicians in different stages of their careers. Moreover, the possible solutions highlighted by the interviewees in the results section can function as a practical handbook for the Dutch government, creative institutions, and the general public to provide better support to the jazz sector.

5.2. Limitations and Further Research

The limitations of this research concern the size and the quality of the collected sample. Due to the time limitations of this research, a sample of only ten interviewees was collected. As previously stated, jazz musicians have demanding schedules, therefore, a lengthier period of time is needed for recruiting people from this professional network. A larger sample size is necessary for solidifying the reliability and generalizability of the research. Furthermore, eight out of the ten participants are based in Amsterdam. Accordingly, the saturation of the sample in Amsterdam does not give an objective view of the jazz musicians in the entire country. Additionally, seven out of the ten respondents were still enrolled in conservatories during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the results in this study cannot accurately depict the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the professional state and the obtainment of governmental funding for jazz musicians in the Netherlands. While jazz musicians in the Netherlands register as self-employed professionals and engage in paid performances throughout their academic journey, conducting interviews with more established performers is necessary to provide a more accurate answer to the research question. Further research on this topic should take these aspects into consideration.

With regard to potential future research, exploring the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on jazz in the Netherlands and comparing them to other music genres would be an intriguing line of investigation. As concluded, jazz is a niche music genre in the Netherlands, therefore, comparing it to more successful genres such as pop and electronic music in a time of crisis could bring important insights to the genre classifications in the global music industry, as discussed by Hitters & Van der Kamp (2010).

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Introduction:

1. Background as a jazz musician in the Netherlands
 - Education
 - Experience
2. How long have you been practicing in the jazz scene in the Netherlands?
 - How do you find work?
 - Are you signed with a label or are you a freelancer?
3. Have you experienced any challenges as a jazz musician?
 - What kind?

Covid-19 and its impact on performances:

4. How have you been impacted by Covid-19 as a jazz musician?
5. Have you found alternative ways to perform during the pandemic?
 - Virtual performances
 - Live streaming
6. How have audiences responded to the new alternatives?

Impact on financial stability:

7. Has Covid-19 impacted your financial stability?
 - How?
8. Have you been able to access financial support?
 - What kind?
9. Have you had to find alternative sources of income during the pandemic?

Subsidies:

10. Have you received subsidies during the pandemic?
 - What kind?
11. How accessible were the subsidies?
12. Were the subsidies enough to cover expenses?

Impact on mental health:

13. How has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted your mental state?

14. Were you able to find ways to cope with the stress and uncertainty during the pandemic?

Conclusion:

15. Would you like to add anything about your experience as a jazz musician during the Covid-19 pandemic?

16. Do you have any suggestions on how the government or the creative community could have better supported jazz musicians?

Appendix B: Overview of respondents

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Region	Formal Education	Instrument	Nationality
Participant A	male	30 - 35	Amsterdam	no	Drums	British
Participant B	male	20 - 25	Amsterdam	yes	Drums	French
Participant C	female	20 - 25	Amsterdam	yes	Flute	Latvian
Participant D	male	20 - 25	Utrecht	yes	Trumpet	Dutch
Participant E	female	45 - 50	Amsterdam	yes	Trumpet and Voice	Australian
Participant F	male	30 - 35	Amsterdam	yes	Contrabass	Dutch
Participant G	male	25 - 30	Amsterdam	yes	Guitar	Nepali
Participant H	female	25 - 30	The Hague	yes	Voice and Piano	Italian
Participant I	female	25 - 30	Amsterdam	yes	Voice and Piano	Latvian
Participant J	female	20 - 25	Amsterdam	yes	Voice	Belgian/Brazilian

Appendix C: Consent request for participants in research

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS RESEARCH, CONTACT:

Petra Baturova

614961pb@student.eur.nl

DESCRIPTION

You are invited to participate in research about jazz musicians in the Netherlands. The study aims to understand how the Covid-19 pandemic affected jazz musicians in the Netherlands.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means you accept being interviewed. Unless you prefer that no recordings are made, I will make a recording of the interview.

I will use the material from the interviews exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings, and publications.

RISKS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

This research includes income and mental health topics that some people may find uncomfortable to discuss. You are always free not to answer any particular question and/or stop participating at any point. Anonymity will be provided through the use of pseudonyms instead of real names.

TIME

The interview will take around 45-60 mins. You are free to stop participating at any point.

PAYMENTS

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS If you have decided to accept participation in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written

data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish—Petra Baturova, 614961@student.eur.nl

SIGNING THE CONSENT FORM

You DO NOT NEED to sign this form. Your oral consent is sufficient.