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Beyond music and libretto:

To what extent do the motivations and reasons to attend operatic performances among young adults affect their likelihood to engage in traditional and modern opera?

ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the different reasons leading the younger segment of the audience (between ages 18 to 35) to attend and engage in opera performances. In the paper, a model is developed analyzing the link between demographics, cultural background and personal motivations related on the one hand to traditional opera and on the other hand modern opera performances. The data is first analyzed for both genres (traditional and modern opera) and then is clustered in order to get more insights and results into the topic.

This research is quantitative, from a deductive perspective and uses data collected through surveys which is analyzed through regressions.

The musical aspect of the performance and its duration, and the first opera experience by the audience member are found to be key elements when talking about opera engagement. This gives an insight for cultural management policies, as these findings should be taken into consideration by opera houses to develop their audience.

KEY WORDS: Performing Arts, Opera, Audience Studies, Young Audiences, Cultural Management

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1. Introduction

Opera audiences, like the genre itself, have evolved from the art form's birth in the sixteenth century. The audience for early opera was largely made up of nobles and other affluent patrons, and the art form was not widely accessible to the more ordinary people. This changed, however, as public opera houses began to be built across the world beginning in the seventeenth century, and audiences started consisting of a mix of people and including more and more individuals from the middle class (Zelevich 1991).

European opera houses, which are generally managed as non-profits, are now aiming to connect and serve local communities and to enlarge and offer access for everyone to the art form. However, despite efforts to reach out to a broad audience, many organizations fail to expand beyond their current homogenous, elderly, and largely white attendance. This problem in increasing their demographic reach might greatly influence their future viability as their existing audience ages.

Moreover, Opera is frequently regarded as a snobbish and elitist genre. Public opinion describes it as inaccessible and as a genre with very strong conventions that draw boundaries between what is correct and what is not in terms of consumer and producer behavior (Frith, 1996).

Many opera houses are creating programs and work departments around young audiences, developing concrete audiences in order to attract them (Liceu Opera Barcelona, n.d.; Dutch National Opera, n.d.).

The opera industry is also aiming to become more “modern” and is commissioning a lot of new operas and new productions that revisit the classics from another point of view.

However, modern stagings and new pieces are often badly received, being booed at the opening night and getting bad reviews (Agid & Tarondeau, 2010).

There is some research about contemporary adaptations in theatre, and some also discuss opera (Erdman & Paun de Garcia, 2015; Iriarte, 2015; Jones, 2006). However, they talk about the audience in a broad sense and none of these addresses the effects that they might have on the future generation and how young audiences perceive them.

This research looks at to what extent do motivations among young adults affect their likelihood to engage in traditional and modern opera and attend these performances?

For this study, the working definition for traditional opera corresponds with repertoire operas (what is perceived as opera when generally speaking) staged in a traditional way (historical, not regie theater).

On the other hand, the definition of modern opera is slightly more complex as it is divided in two categories, taking into consideration both the staging and the music (traditional and contemporary). This is defined more in detail in the methodology chapter.

Theatres have been putting in place programmes in order to attract young audiences and this might make the difference when convincing young people to visit a specific performance.

However, having traditional or modern forms of expression (such as actualisation of the libretto, modern costumes and scenery...) in the opera world might be one of the important things that young visitors might consider when going to book a ticket.

Having an insight into this could help in understanding the needs of the new generation regarding opera, what their preferences are, and what would be best to attract them and keep the art form alive. Moreover, to help opera programmers and marketers to build up a future generation of opera visitors and selling tickets.

Chapter 2 of this paper looks into previous literature around this topic.

A methodology section (Chapter 3) puts into place the model and the different variables that are used in the last section in order to analyze the results of the tests and regressions. Then, the results are analyzed and grouped in different categories: both genres combined, traditional opera and modern opera. The latter includes clustering of the results around two categories: traditional music and contemporary music.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Motivations and Reasons for Opera Attendance

Benzecry (2009) develops sociological research that aims to explain the processes of initiation in an activity that is usually regarded as "high culture" by focusing on a specific segment of the opera audience: current devoted opera fans and strong consumers. After doing 18 months of ethnographic study at the Colón Opera House in Buenos Aires, he discovered that a variety of middle-class initiation experiences drew people to opera. Contrary to popular belief, operatic enthusiasm did not just emerge from the upper middle class in the city; rather, it was fostered by family, friends, or educational institutions and developed via spontaneous

and random acts of initiation, often in maturity. Twenty percent of the audience was seated in standing rooms in the upper gallery, and it constituted a space and environment that encouraged extreme sociability and served as an on-site observation lab for social interaction. The absence of early acquired knowledge and disposition towards the operatic arts in the backgrounds of the Colon fans gave more significant foreground factors and mediating institutions when describing and understanding their current engagement with opera. Fans talked about their first impression of opera as being explosive and transformative, which led them to create a strong bond with the art form. A highly immersive learning process and a powerful and enduring physical and emotional impact in the performance are two of the many factors that motivate people to attend opera performances on a regular basis (Benzecry, 2009). Opera fans go through a cycle of enchantment, initially connecting with the music on a deep and strong level. Socializing mostly happens beyond family, especially in tertulia and what he calls “cazuela spaces”. He defines “tertulia” as meetings, that happen weekly, with a cultural goal such as the reading of texts, the interpretation of musical pieces, or just as general conversations on artistic topics (Benzecry, 2009). Formal classes (and pre-performance talks) help bridge the gap between the initial attraction and a committed interest, which is what helps to lead towards affiliation (Benzecry, 2009).

Ouazzani et al. (2023) talk about opera streamings and how these have value a factor that could explain loyalty and willingness to attend an opera in an opera house. They point out different factors contributing to viewer loyalty and the intention to attend opera, while also acknowledging potential value sources of streamed opera that lead to loyalty. In order to explain this, they talk about three main values. First, hedonic value, which relates to various emotional experiences, enjoyment, and relaxation that can be experienced and that heavily impact viewer loyalty. Being aware of these emotional dimensions and using them in communication leads to increased loyalty. Second, the paper suggests that intellectual enrichment the intellectual stimulation that happens through watching streamed operas can encourage viewers to attend live performances. The intellectual aspect becomes essential for opera houses seeking to broaden their audience. That is the epistemic value. Finally, they describe a functional value, that in the case of streamed operas relates to the overall quality of the streamed opera, including the level provided by the cast and overall production, which influences the intention to watch again (Ouazzani et al., 2023)

Cuenca et al. (2015) discuss audience development, and state that biographies of opera-goers (that refer to varied life experiences, backgrounds and perspectives) influence the ways in

which they approach opera performances and lead to diverse and varied enjoyment processes. This means that there is no single way of enjoying opera. However, they do point out two identifiable opera enjoyment strategies. One treats opera as something unique (almost as something sacred) while the other approach sees it as something rather ordinary (but still complex). Their interviewees agree on the fact that being cultivated is important, and almost a prerequisite in order to enjoy opera. The text concludes by bringing up the need to broaden the audience base for the sustainability of opera. It suggests breaking barriers previously brought up and creating a new audience that will be loyal on the long term (Cuenca et al., 2015).

Guachalla (2017) develops findings related to audience development and social inclusion programs that are used and developed at the Royal Opera House (London), and he analyzes the tourist's perceptions and experiences of the venue. The Royal Opera House responds to perceptions of exclusivity by setting up various access initiatives and audience engagement schemes, that are very important to shape the audience's perception. This is why they put in place live relays, discounted tickets, and daytime access to free exhibitions that are aligned with marketing frameworks in order to contribute to social inclusion in tourism. Something important highlighted by the paper is the fact that it is a publicly subsidized institution that therefore has to bear a social responsibility and provide access to a large audience. Guachalla (2017) also points out the importance of active audience engagement, which can be translated by activities such as open-air live relays and daytime visits and that lead to active participation and exploration by audience members, resulting in increased individual cultural motivation and curiosity. This can be completed by strong and inclusive marketing campaigns that rise the feeling of belonging and can be a bridge between audiences and opera, making them feel more welcome and included in the art form.

The people that get interested in opera come from very diverse backgrounds. It's not just for the upper middle class. Many people discover opera through their circles of acquaintances. Indeed, they are often introduced to their first opera experience through their family, friends, or school. This can happen at an early stage or sometimes at a later point in life (Benzecry, 2009). The big opera fans often feel a strong emotional impact and a strong connection from their first experience. It looks like it all comes from this first experience, and later they aim to gain knowledge through talks and discussion, and also through classes, which changes initial interest into a hobby or a passion (Benzecry, 2009; Ouazzani et al., 2023). Later on, it is clear

that opera attendees enjoy the art form in different ways. Part of the audience experiences it as something special, almost sacred, while others see it as a complex but normal part of culture. It looks like having some knowledge in opera helps enjoying it more (Cuenca et al., 2015). Therefore, some opera houses have services to make opera more accessible, like discounted tickets and free exhibitions. These actions make more people feel welcome and gain this initial interest in opera (Guachalla, 2017). This helps creating a lasting audience that is diverse and helps opera to thrive. For this, houses use inclusive marketing in order to reach a broader audience (by bringing down barriers) (Cuenca et al., 2015; Guachalla, 2017). This brings us to the next point which is the topic of young audiences and opera.

2.2. Young Audiences and Opera

Attracting young audiences to the opera has been an increasingly important concern in the major opera houses around the world. While many are actively trying new outreach programs, “opera audiences seem to be steadily shrinking and, worse, getting older and older” (Vincent, 2011).

The belief that opera is exclusive, particularly among younger generations, is one of the problems, however there isn't a single straightforward explanation for why this is the case (Zelechow 1991). Opera companies are conscious of this impression and have been making concerted efforts to alter the public perception of themselves; they are gradually succeeding in this endeavor. In actuality, attendance by young people's audience segments increased significantly in the case of the United States between 2008 and 2012: attendance by those in the 18–24 age group increased by 43.2%, while attendance by those in the 35–34 age group increased by 33.8% over a period of four years (OPERA America 2018).

Opera houses such as the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Paris Opera, the Teatro Real in Madrid or the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam have developed programs to attract these. Many houses use pricing strategies, described by Langeveld (2014), which can be around price discrimination (either through last-minute tickets, subscriptions, early prices, day of the week policies...) but also through bundles and special evenings reserved for young audiences (Amsterdam Opera and the Liceu offer performances reserved for people under 35 and offer cocktails (Amsterdam) and food trucks (Barcelona) in the intermission and after the performance. This was very well received and all performances of this kind in the 21-22

seasons ended-up sold-out (Liceu Opera Barcelona, n.d. , Nationale Opera en Ballet, n.d.). This is very important and relevant because these actions could be one of the principal incentives for young people to attend a performance (or even to go to the opera for the first time). From a managerial perspective, theatres have done this since making opera accessible to everyone. The legacy of opera is necessary so that it can be passed from one generation to the next, and this largely depends on the young audiences (Towse, 2010).

Research by Martin et al. (2012) shows that young audiences have specific taste and that some things lead them to attend some performances. Martin et al. (2012) studied performing arts attendance by young audiences and found that preferences are based on and tied up to factors such as gender, age, and socio-economic status. They point out and explain that female respondents, older participants, and those coming from higher socio-economic backgrounds will tend to attend theater and dance performances, while on the other hand, older participants and high-economic status respondents are often tied to attendance at music events and familial engagement is important when shaping the receptivity of teenagers and young people to attending performing arts events (Martin et al., 2012).

Audiences are aging, which is an issue that opera houses face; therefore, it is important for the management teams to create the audience of the future (Vincent, 2011). This can be because young people often see opera as exclusive, but this perception is being challenged and changed by opera companies so that young audiences feel at ease in the atmosphere of the theatre and welcome by the art form (Zelechow, 1991). Making opera accessible to the younger age segment is essential for passing the legacy of opera to the next generation, as explained by Towse (2010). Opera houses like those in Barcelona, Paris, Madrid, and Amsterdam have been successfully using special programs and pricing strategies, such as discounted tickets and special evenings with price bundles (with food-trucks, cocktails and other activities around the performance) (Langeveld, 2014; Liceu Opera Barcelona, n.d.; Nationale Opera en Ballet, n.d.). Finally, young people's attendance at opera is influenced by demographic factors such as gender, age, socio-economic status, and family engagement. Martin et al. (2012) find out that females, older young adults, and those from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to attend. This is further touched upon in a following stage of the literature review, focusing on audience characteristics.

2.3. From the classics to the modern stage

Erdman, H., & Paun de Garcia, S. (2015) explore how Spanish classical theatre is nowadays adapted and reviews (through different authors) a large set of pieces analyzing what has been adapted and shifted in order to make it more appropriate for our era. This can be for instance the use of technologies (such as including music and other additional sounds), but also goes to the point of adapting some parts of the text in order to make it more relatable to the lives that the attendees might have, and so that it leads to more engagement with the work. For example, Iriarte (2015) writes about a theatre piece by Lope de Vega from 1641, *El Caballero de Olmedo*. She had a strong relationship with Lorca and she acknowledges the contemporary relevance of his work. For this, she reflects on the fact that it is important to reinterpret and produce stagings of the classical works in a manner that resonates and connects with the XXI century's audiences. She explains that she had to stage *El Caballero de Olmedo* but recreating a scenario connected to the Spanish Civil War (as part of a remembrance day), which is a recent event that is still deeply present in Spanish society. She recreated how Lorca staged this work during the Civil War with his street theatre group "La Barraca". Therefore she added layers to the performance by adding Lorca as a character to the piece. The adaptation not only revives a classical piece, but also pays tribute to Lorca's ideas and terrible death (as he was executed during the Civil War), establishing connections between the fictional plot and Lorca's lived experiences. It's a monument to classical writings' enduring power, but also the artist's constant path of learning and discovery, reaffirming the conviction that these works remain relevant and lively when put alive in theater. Therefore, this production of *El Caballero de Olmedo* had three levels: first, the original piece by Lope de Vega; second, the interpretation given by Lorca (and its context, also incorporated into the piece); and third, the actual performance, with new elements, especially relating to linguistics, aiming to make the performance more understandable for a general audience (Iriarte, 2015). Iriarte (2015) explains her profound respect towards the classical theatre pieces, but she also points out how committed she is to keeping them alive through reinterpretation and adapting them to the modern circumstances.

Jones (2006) discusses on staging a Händel opera and states that companies often perform Händel operas in a very traditional way when talking about the music (using historical instruments for example) but on the other hand, they create contemporary stagings setting the action in a modern time (or even in the XXI century). The article points out interesting and positive aspects of this trend but also its risks, saying that the stage directors

often think that the modern audience is not capable of appreciating the original work on itself, and has to be entertained by added gimmicks and cheap jokes, ending up in destroying the libretto and the opera themselves.

In the performing arts scene, adapting classical works with modern elements makes the performances more engaging and relevant to contemporary audiences (Erdman & Paun de Garcia, 2015). By incorporating current or recent historical contexts, such as the Spanish Civil War in the adaptation of *El Caballero de Olmedo*, classical works can resonate more deeply with modern viewers (Iriarte, 2015). In opera, combining traditional music with contemporary staging, as in some Handel opera productions, can attract new audiences while maintaining the integrity of the original work (Jones, 2006). This is a basis for the model, developed in the next chapter of the thesis, that assesses traditional and modern opera at different levels and stages.

2.4. Audience Characteristics

We want to determine what makes young people attend an opera performance. Sociological studies like Tait et al. (2019), DiMaggio and Useem (1978) or Keaney (2008) state that certain elements lead audiences to attend or engage with certain forms of arts or culture. First, for understanding what makes to attend a performance, it can also be useful to notice what blocks young people from attending a performance. Tait et al. (2019) determine the barriers that young people face when wanting to engage with the arts and culture. They distinguish three main types of barriers that young people may have to face. First, attitudinal barriers relate to the feeling of belonging that young people might not find in an art form, just feeling “it is not for me”, independently of the price. These can be for instance related to the atmosphere of the building where the event takes place. They explain that venues can be off-putting (for instance, they cite theatres giving a medieval vibe to the young audience, and therefore not feeling welcoming). Besides this perception, other examples of attitudinal barriers could be the language used by the arts organization, a lack of family involvement, a perception of the art form as irrelevant or non-interesting and a lack of recognition of the diversity of young people. Second, functional barriers, stand for the fact of not being able to take part, even if wanting to, because there is no opportunity. Finally, they define practical barriers as not being able to come along because of an inconvenient time, a difficult location

to reach, the price is prohibitive, or just because the information about the event is not easy to reach (Tait et al., 2019).

Keaney (2008) looks at some characteristics of people attending arts events in the United Kingdom. She looks at many different types of events and not only performing arts but she identifies interesting variables. She finds out that higher levels of education and social status lead to a more frequent and regular attendance to arts events. Keaney (2008) points out that people from Black or Asian ethnic groups are being significantly less likely to attend arts events than those who are white, if all other factors are held constant. Furthermore, women are found to be more likely to attend arts events than men (Keaney, 2008). Older people are significantly more likely to attend arts events than younger people. Therefore, according to Keaney (2008), engagement with arts events increases with age. She also looks at other factors such as family structure, finding out that respondents without young children are more likely to attend arts events compared to those with children under the age of four (since family structure shapes availability).

DiMaggio and Useem (1978) look at the social composition of arts audiences in the United States. They found evidence suggesting that the arts audience has a group that can be qualified as “core” and that individuals within that group are the frequent attendees, constituting active arts social circles and shaping their friendships and social interactions around a shared interest in the arts. Besides this core group, there are also peripheral groups. These have fewer expectations and are less likely to hear about events through their friendships and networks.

Those most often among the arts audience are found to be the ones also highly educated. Through sixteen studies reviewed in the paper, all found that regular visitors are more highly educated than sporadic visitors both for museum attendance and for the performing arts (DiMaggio and Useem, 1978). Furthermore, they also found out another variable of interest, which is the income level; when higher, it also positively impacts on the frequency of attendance at art events. On their side, however, frequency of attendance is not clearly linked to gender and age, since some studies find differences in an ambiguous way, or no differences at all. For example, they found nine studies claiming that age had an impact (6 for older visitors and 3 for younger visitors) while two ended up reporting no age difference. An explanation for this could perhaps be linked to the countries of origin of the participants, or their cultures and their traditions.

Tait et al. (2019) identify three main barriers not to attend arts events: Attitudinal Barriers, Functional Barriers and Practical Barriers. Moreover, Keaney (2008) finds a positive relation with age, with higher education and with social status. Moreover, she finds out in the same way as Martin et al. (2012) (see chapter 2.2) that women are more likely to attend art events. DiMaggio and Useem (1978) discuss the social composition of arts audiences and find out in the same way as Keaney (2008) that there is a positive relation between education and arts events attendance, while they nonetheless find and report mixed findings on age and gender, suggesting these factors may vary depending on context or culture. They call these highly educated frequent attendees “the core group” (DiMaggio and Useem, 1978).

The literature on the topic points out that the opera audience members have different ways of enjoying the art form. Some see it as a special, an almost sacred experience, while others view it as a complex but normal part of culture. Moreover, some previous knowledge on the art form increases enjoyment (Cuenca et al., 2015; Guachalla, 2017). Attendance to art events seems to be tied to factors such as gender, age, socio-economic status, and family engagement. Females, older young adults, and those who come from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to attend (Martin et al., 2012; Keaney, 2008). In order to break barriers to attendance (Tait et al., 2019), opera houses are developing inclusive marketing strategies to lower barriers and reach a broader audience, including the young audience that is necessary to ensure the future of the art form (Towse, 2012; Vincent, 2011; Zelechow, 1991). Moreover, integrating modern elements into classical works can make them more engaging and relevant to contemporary audiences (Erdman & Paun de Garcia, 2015; Iriarte, 2015; Jones, 2006).

3. Methodology of Sampling and Analysis

This thesis is conducted from a deductive and quantitative perspective as it aims to answer the question stated above. First, a sample was defined. The sample consists of young individuals between 18 and 25 which constitutes a stratified random sample based on age group (Bryman, 2012). Quantitative research allows for the measurement of variables and statistical analysis in order to identify the different existing correlations and trends. In this case, it can help identify which preferences are the most significant ones for young audiences when deciding whether to attend operatic performances. The decision of making this study

quantitative comes from a will of getting a broader picture, that can be generalised more easily, rather than getting in-depth data from qualitative research.

The reason to put the bar for “young individuals” at age 35 is the following: Most opera houses have programs reserved to young audiences. While not all of them have the same age limit, a recurrent number is 35 (Liceu Barcelona, Madrid, Amsterdam Opera, Concertgebouw, English National Opera); therefore, it seemed reasonable to set up the limit at that age in order to have the possibility to compare outcomes. On the lower extent, 18 was selected because it is the start of adult life and also when individuals come of age.

Concerning location, the sample is constituted of young people (between the ages of 18 and 35) in the Netherlands and in Spain. For this, I did convenience sampling, as I live in the Netherlands and I am originally from Spain, my network was bigger in these territories in order to get respondents. I also used snowball sampling as I had some initial participants to whom I asked referrals coming from them, in other words, that they would spread my survey with their contacts (Bryman, 2012).

I developed an online-survey around the topic of young people and their operatic preferences. Since the research question focus is on understanding the preferences of young audiences, a survey as research design can efficiently gather data from a broad range of individuals within this demographic group. It allows for the collection of information on various preferences, such as preferred opera genres, performance features, ticket pricing, venue location, and accessibility (Bryman, 2012). In general, surveys are particularly suited for collecting data on preferences and opinions. Having an online-survey offers the advantage of anonymity, which can encourage respondents to respond in an honest way about their preferences without fearing judgment or wanting to pretend something they are not by shaping their answers in an appropriate manner .

A first section of the survey relates to demographics of the respondents (Age, Income, Education...). A second section of the survey collects data on opera experience and preferences of the respondents, these are collected through statements that respondents rate with a Likert scale (strongly disagree/ disagree/ neutral/ agree/ strongly agree). The last two sections of the survey are quite innovative. There, I use photo elicitation and video elicitation in order to trigger a reaction from the participants. This method is more common in qualitative interviews but I decided to integrate it here in order to trigger reactions from the respondents in relation to different contemporary and traditional stagings of operas. This method allows researchers to integrate data interactions gained from video recordings with data about participants' associated thoughts, beliefs, and emotions gained from elicitation

(Henryn & Fetters, 2012). On top of it, this also contributes to the uniqueness and relevance of this paper, since using photo and video elicitation is something relatively innovative in research, not very common and even less-seen before when talking about research in the opera field.

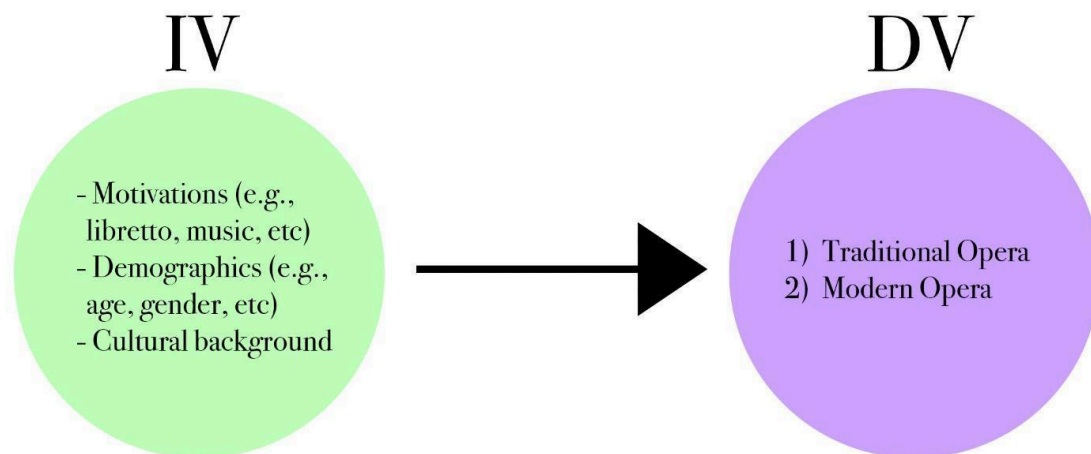
3.1. Setting up the model

The model proposes that the dependent variables (Traditional Opera and Modern Opera) are influenced by a variety of independent variables grouped under demographics, cultural background, and motivations.

The model is grounded in the existing literature which points out what can shape opera engagement. For instance, Benzecry (2009) emphasizes the transformative impact of early opera experiences on long-term engagement (this will be tested as a variable), while Cuenca et al. (2015) and Guachalla (2017) discuss the importance of accessibility and initial exposure in cultivating a lasting interest in opera (to be tested). Additionally, studies like those by Tait et al. (2019) identify different types of barriers that prevent arts attendance, for which it is helpful to understand demographic influences and cultural background in overcoming these barriers (Keaney, 2008).

In the analysis, each independent variable (IV) is tested to determine its impact on the dependent variables (DV). This is done through statistical techniques such as regression analysis to quantify relationships and identify significant predictors. The model will help with an understanding of which factors most strongly influence young people's engagement with traditional and modern opera, providing insights that can guide marketing strategies, programming, and educational outreach to increase opera's appeal to younger audiences. The variables (except for age which is nominal) are ordinal and turned into 5-point Likert scales, and likert scales can be continuous and used as such (Sullivan & Artino 2013). Then, the variables are numeric as they are continuous. "Both 'Income' and 'Education' are ordinal variables. This means that they are categorical variables with a clear, ordered ranking but without a consistent interval between the categories (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). However,

during the cleaning of the data, these variables were given a numerical value or ‘score’ from 1 to 5 to facilitate their inclusion to the linear regression model (in a similar manner to that of the Likert scales in the model).” I decided to enter the ordinals as such to keep the model consistent in its use of variables.



3.2. Dependent Variables

3.2.1. Traditional Opera

Definition: The extent to which participants have been exposed to or have attended traditional operas. On the other hand, how they perceive it, and how appealing does it look to them.

Traditional Opera in this study is defined by repertoire operas (what is perceived as opera when generally speaking) such as *Carmen*, *Turandot* or *Tannhäuser*. On top of it, they have to be staged in a traditional way (historical, not *regie theater*).

Operationalization: Survey questions/answers showing the degree and the frequency of attendance to traditional forms of opera. On the other hand, videos/pictures connected to Likert scales to show how appealing it is for young people to attend such performances.

3.2.1. Modern Opera

Definition: The extent to which participants have been exposed to or have attended modern or contemporary adaptations of operas. On the other hand, how they perceive it, and how appealing does it look to them. In the case of this study, Modern Opera is divided in two categories. In the photo-elicitation section, it is only about the staging, and it is defined as

operas in modern stagings (such as *La Bohème* taking place on a space ship). In the video-elicitation section, it is both about the staging and the compositions. Some operas are labelled as: modern opera (staging) with traditional music (such as *Turandot* in a staging by Bob Wilson) and on the other hand modern opera with contemporary music (a new production of an opera by Kaaija Saariaho for instance).

Operationalization: Survey questions/answers showing the degree and the frequency of attendance to contemporary manifestations of opera. On the other hand, videos/pictures connected to Lickert scales to show how appealing it is for young people to attend such performances.

3.3. Independent Variables

3.3.1. Demographics

a) Age

Definition: The age of the respondents, all between 18 and 35.

Operationalization: Open-ended question that the respondents fill with a number with no decimals. Ordinal variable.

b) Level of Education

Definition: The highest level of education attained by participants, which may impact their exposure to and appreciation of opera.

Operationalization: Survey question to determine participants' educational background, ranging from high school to postgraduate studies.

c) Income

Definition: The income level or socioeconomic status of the respondents, which could influence their ability to attend operatic performances.

Operationalization: Survey questions to grasp participants' income range and socioeconomic status, providing insights into financial barriers or opportunities for engagement with opera.

3.2.2. Cultural Background

a) Languages spoken

Definition: The number of languages spoken by the respondent

Operationalization: Survey question listing a range of numbers of languages spoken.

b) First contact with opera as a transformative event

Definition: First contact with opera as a transformative event refers to the initial experience an individual has with opera that significantly alters their perspective, emotions, or appreciation for the art form (Benzecry, 2008).

Operationalization: Statement question (Likert scale) in the survey: “My first encounter with opera was a transformative event in my life”

c) Exposure to the arts during childhood

Definition: The extent to which participants were exposed to cultural institutions (museums, theatres, musical performances, etc.) during their childhood.

Operationalization: Statement question (Likert scale) in the survey: “During my childhood my parents commonly took me to cultural institutions such as museum, theatres, musical performances, etc...”

d) Musical Background

Definition: Participants' previous musical education or experience, which might lead to a different level of opera appreciation.

Operationalization: Survey questions on whether the respondent identifies with being a musician.

3.2.3. Motivations

a) Music

Definition: This caters the musical aspect of the performance.

Operationalization: Survey question on how important this is for the participant (Likert scale)

b) Libretto/Story

Definition: This is defined by the story and topic of the performance, the text and the message it displays.

Operationalization: Survey question on how important this is for the participant (Likert scale).

c) Atmosphere

Definition: The overall atmosphere and experience of attending an opera, including the venue, setting, and social environment.

Operationalization: Survey question on how important this is for the participant (Likert scale).

d) Price

Definition: Price is the amount of money required to attend a performance. It is a key indicator of value from the consumer's perspective. Price can reflect various factors, including production costs, competition, target market, brand positioning, and perceived quality. Price is an element that plays a major role in consumer decision-making, as it usually directly impacts affordability and perceived value (pricing affects demand and supply). In the performing arts, there are a wide range of pricing strategies in place as Langeveld (2014) defines. This includes, among others, discount pricing, premium pricing, dynamic pricing, and price discrimination.

Operationalization: Survey question on how important this is for the participant (Likert scale).

4. Results and Discussion

There were 188 responses to the survey. This survey can be found in appendix A. The average age was 23.5 years while the median was 22 years. 75% of the respondents live in the Netherlands while 25% live in Spain. 72,8% of the respondents identified as female, 26,1% as male and 1,1% as non-binary. Most respondents hold a Bachelor degree (46,5%) and 28,6% a Master's degree. 23,8% were high-school graduates. The sample of respondents was quite international as respondents spoke on average 2,9 languages. 72% of respondents had a low income (below 20,000 euros per annum). Finally, 32% of the respondents identified as musicians.

In essence, this research looks to what extent do the motivations and reasons to attend operatic performances among young adults affect their likelihood to engage in traditional and modern opera.

Our model tries to find out whether different elements (demographics, motivations, cultural background) have an influence on the willingness to attend opera performances, later on divided in two categories: traditional opera and modern opera.

For the results report, the tables are grouped around models and around the genre (traditional, modern opera, all combined). The statistical measures analyzed are the following:

B (Unstandardized Coefficients) which is translated by the estimated impact of the variable on the dependent variable. **SEB (Standard Error of B)**: The standard error of the unstandardized coefficient. **β (Standardized Coefficients)**: The standardized impact of the variable, which allows for comparison across variables with different units of measure. **R² (R-squared)**: The proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the model. **F (F-statistic)**: Tests the overall significance of the model.

There were two **Significance Levels** taken into consideration for reporting the results: $p < 0.05$: Indicates statistical significance at the 5% level; $p < 0.01$: Indicates statistical significance at the 1% level.

4.1. An analysis of the models explaining willingness to attend opera.

Table 1:
Willingness to attend opera (All Performances)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SEB	β	B	SEB	β	B	SEB	β
Demographics									
What is your age?	.277	.177	.173	.216	.168	.135	.205	.164	.128
What is your level of education?	-.541	.957	-.051	-.222	.915	-.021	-.023	.874	-.002
What is your level of income? (yearly)	.963	1.022	.096	.508	.975	.051	.594	.935	.059
Cultural Background									
How many languages do you speak?				.755	.750	.077	.236	.717	.024
STATEMENT 1: "My first				2.221	.499	.335**	1.619	.490	.244**

encounter with opera was a transformative event in my life"

STATEMENT 2: "During my childhood, my parents commonly took me to cultural institutions such as museums, theatres, musical performances, etc"	.115	.442	.020	.081	.421	.014
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Motivations

MOTIVATION 1: How important is MUSIC when attending an opera performance				1.831	.682	.196**
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MOTIVATION 2: How important is LIBRETTO/STORY when attending an opera performance				.061	.631	.007
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MOTIVATION 3: How important is ATMOSPHERE when attending an opera performance				.104	.628	.013
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MOTIVATION 4: How important is PRICE when attending an opera performance				.964	.779	.093
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MOTIVATION 5: How important is DURATION when attending an opera performance				-1.728	.575	-.260**
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MOTIVATION 6: How important is TIME when attending an opera performance				-.421	.614	-.060
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R2	.051	.172	.291
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F	2.805*	5.370**	5.096**
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Note: * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$
 Dependent Variable: SCORE: Media-elicitation ALL together

The first model only takes into consideration the different demographic aspects. We find that the first model as a whole accounts for 5% of all changes in the dependent variable (in this case, willingness to attend operas of the media elicitation). The model as a whole is significant with $p = 0,042$. We observe that none of the independent variables are significant independently.

We then move to our second model, that adds to the demographics the different aspects of the cultural background of the respondents that potentially lead young individuals to attend opera performances. In this case, the second model as a whole accounts for 17% of all changes in the dependent variable (in this case, willingness to attend operas of the media elicitation). This sharp increase (from 5% of all changes from model 1 to 17% of all changes in the second model) shows that the cultural background of the individual does have a big impact on the willingness to attend opera performances. We find out the test to be very significant, as when running the ANOVA we are confronted to an $p < 0,01$. When we look at the variables, all seem to have a positive relation to the exception of the level of education that has a negative relation. However, out of all these variables, only one of them appears to be significant. The first confrontation to an opera performance appears to be a key element when attending further performances. In the survey it was translated by the statement: "My first encounter with opera was a transformative event in my life". We find a strong positive relationship with a significance with an $\alpha < 0,01$. This is connected to the findings by Benzecry (2009) on the Teatro Colón de Buenos Aires most loyal attendees, that describe their first impression of opera as being explosive and transformative through a cycle of enchantment, initially connecting with the music on a deep and strong level. Then, the first encounter with opera would lead to the creation of a special bond leading to be more willing to attend performances.

Finally, I looked at the third model which also considers the different motivations that people have to attend opera performances. The explanatory power of the model as a whole is again higher as we find a variance explaining 29% of all changes. Moreover, the ANOVA is highly significant with $p < 0,01$. In this model, we see again a significant effect from having a first encounter with opera as being transformative in the respondents' lives. When talking about motivations for attending a performance we see two relevant variables. First and foremost music. Music seems to be the most important factor and the biggest motivation when people want to attend a performance.

Another motivation seems to be significant here which is the duration, where we find a negative relationship, that would point out that those who find the duration of the performance important would find lower engagement scores later on with their willingness to attend the different performances.

4.2. An analysis of the models explaining willingness to attend traditional opera

Table 2: Willingness to attend opera (Traditional Opera Performances)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SEB	β	B	SEB	β	B	SEB	β
Demographics									
What is your age?	.045	.111	.045	.003	.104	.003	-.014	.100	-.014
What is your level of education?	-.308	.601	-.047	-.095	.566	-.014	.053	.530	.008
What is your level of income? (yearly)	1.057	.641	.169	.743	.604	.119	.827	.568	.132
Cultural Background									
How many languages do you speak?				.558	.464	.092	.179	.435	.030
STATEMENT 1: "My first encounter with opera was a transformative event in my life"				1.504	.309	.364	1.110	.298	.269
STATEMENT 2: "During my childhood, my parents commonly took me to cultural institutions such as museums, theatres, musical performances, etc"				.089	.274	.025	.045	.256	.012
Motivations									
MOTIVATION 1: How important is MUSIC when attending an opera performance							.256	.383	.048
MOTIVATION 2: How important is LIBRETTO/STORY when attending an opera							-.071	.381	-.014 *
							.447	.473	.070

performance			
MOTIVATION 3: How important is ATMOSPHERE when attending an opera performance		-1.187	.349
MOTIVATION 4: How important is PRICE when attending an opera performance		-.416	.373
MOTIVATION 5: How important is DURATION when attending an opera performance		-.014	.100
MOTIVATION 6: How important is TIME when attending an opera performance		.053	.530
			-.286
			-.095
			-.014 **
			.008
R2	.035	.181	.325
F	1.897	5.702**	5.966**

Note: * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$
 Dependent Variable: SCORE: Media-elicitation TRADITIONAL together

In the second stage of the study, we now focused on the traditional opera performances only, and subsequently ran the three models to see the potential changes and differences.

When clustering the data, however, we see that Model 1 (only taking into consideration demographic information) is not significant when talking about traditional opera performances. Therefore, the coefficients of the various variables will not be analyzed, as they are in any case neither significant.

For Model 2. we find again the first encounter with opera to be important, as it has a positive relation with the potential of attending further performances (in this case, the ones displayed through media elicitation).

We do not find major differences between the results when looking at all performances and on the other hand when clustering them and analyzing only based on the traditional opera performances.

To sum this part up (traditional operas), we find the most significant predictors to be: First, the statement, "My first encounter with opera was a transformative event in my life," appears to be a highly significant predictor ($B = 1.110$, $t = 3.733$, $\text{Sig} < .001$). This suggests that individuals who describe their initial experience with opera as transformative are likely to exhibit higher engagement scores and to further attend performances. The strong positive effect underscores the lasting impact that a profound and memorable introduction to opera can have on an individual's ongoing interest and engagement with the art form. This finding highlights how vital it is to have an impactful and memorable first experience at the opera house in order to cultivate a lifelong appreciation for opera. This is aligned with what Benzecry (2009) finds at the Teatro Colón de Buenos Aires, which leads us to the conclusion that with opera, there is such thing as "love at first sight".

The importance attributed to music when making the decision to attend an opera performance is another significant predictor ($B = 1.029$, $t = 2.484$, $\text{Sig} = .014$). This indicates that individuals who give priority to music as part of their experience at the opera tend to have higher engagement scores. The positive effect of this motivation underscores the centrality of musical quality and its appreciation in enhancing audience engagement. For opera companies and promoters, this results in emphasizing the musical elements of the performances and providing with high quality casts and artistic proposals, which appears to be key when attracting young audiences to attend a specific performance.

Finally, the importance of the performance's duration shows a significant negative effect on the engagement scores ($B = -1.187$, $t = -3.396$, $\text{Sig} < .001$). This suggests that individuals who consider the duration of the opera performance to be an important aspect are less likely to have a high willingness to attend performances. The negative effect may reflect a sensitivity to the duration of the performance, possibly indicating that longer performances might set aside some audience members. In terms of performing arts management, this result and finding could have practical implications for programming and marketing strategies, where balancing the duration of performances to meet audience preferences without compromising artistic integrity might be needed.

4.3. An analysis of the models explaining willingness to attend modern opera

4.3.1. All modern opera performances mixed

In this part, the same analysis will be conducted but this time but focusing on the performances labeled as “modern opera”.

Table 3:
Willingness to attend opera (Modern Opera Performances- ALL)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SEB	β	B	SEB	β	B	SEB	β
Demographics									
What is your age?	.233	.093	.275*	.215	.093	.254*	.221	.095	.261 *
What is your level of education?	-.316	.499	-.057	-.246	.499	-.044	-.230	.500	-.041
What is your level of income? (yearly)	-.044	.535	-.008	-.171	.536	-.032	-.146	.540	-.027
Cultural Background									
How many languages do you speak?				.213	.413	.041	.082	.415	.016
STATEMENT 1: "My first encounter with opera was a transformative event in my life"				.651	.272	.187	.456	.282	.131
STATEMENT 2: "During my childhood, my parents commonly took me to cultural institutions such as museums, theatres, musical performances, etc"				-.006	.243	-.002 *	.001	.243	.000
				.215	.093	.254	.758	.394	.154
Motivations									
MOTIVATION 1: How important is MUSIC when attending an opera performance							-.168	.365	-.038
							.088	.361	.021
MOTIVATION 2: How important is LIBRETTO/STORY when attending an opera performance							.592	.449	.109
MOTIVATION 3: How							-.478	.332	-.136

important is ATMOSPHERE
when attending an opera
performance

MOTIVATION 4: How
important is PRICE when
attending an opera
performance

MOTIVATION 5: How
important is DURATION
when attending an opera
performance

MOTIVATION 6: How
important is TIME when
attending an opera
performance

R2

.060

.098

.147

F

3.406*

2.827*

2.156**

-0.027 .355 -.007

.221 .095 .261

-.230 .500 -.041

Note: * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$

Dependent Variable: SCORE: Media-elicitation ALL together

For model 1, R Square (0.060) shows that approximately 6% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The F-Statistic (3.406) and its corresponding p-value (0.019) indicate that the model is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, meaning that at least one of the predictors is significantly related to the dependent variable. In this scenario, we see already a major change, which is that the variable age ($B = 0.233$, $p = 0.013$) is positively and significantly associated with the dependent variable, indicating that as age increases, the score on "Media-elicitation MODERN all together" will then also increase. Therefore, this result can be put in parallel with different broader cultural trends where older adults may have more leisure time and resources to be willing to engage with a cultural event like opera. This might also be linked to how much they have been exposed to opera in the past.

In model 2, there is a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.313, indicating a low to moderate relationship between the predictors and the media-elicitation modern score. The R Square value is 0.098, meaning that approximately 9.8% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables in the model. The F-value of 2.827 and a

significance level (p-value) of 0.012 indicate that the regression model is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Statement 1, again, which reflects “the transformative first encounter with opera”, is also significant in this scenario of modern performances (B = 0.651, p = 0.018). Again, this result underscores the importance of formative cultural experiences in shaping one's engagement with the art form. In contrast, level of education (B = -0.246, p = 0.623), yearly income (B = -0.171, p = 0.750), number of languages spoken (B = 0.213, p = 0.607), and Statement 2 about childhood exposure to cultural institutions (B = -0.006, p = 0.981) are not significant predictors. Their p-values exceed the 0.05 threshold, indicating that these factors do not have a statistically significant impact on the media-elicitation modern score in this model.

Finally, the regression model number 3 explains 14.7% of the variance in the dependent variable, with a significant F-test indicating that the model as a whole is significant. Among the predictors, age is a significant positive predictor, suggesting that older individuals tend to score higher on the dependent variable. The importance of music (Motivation 1) is no longer significant, as compared to the case of all performances mixed and traditional music. These results suggest that even though it can be observed that the model on its own has some predictive power, there are likely other factors and variables not included in the model that have an influence when talking about modern opera performances.

4.3.2. Comparing traditional music to contemporary music in modern opera performances

Table 4: Willingness to attend opera (Modern Opera- Comparison between Traditional and Contemporary Music)

Variable	Model 3 (Traditional Music)			Model 3 (Contemporary Music)		
	B	SEB	β	B	SEB	β
Demographics						
What is your age?	.057	.044	.148	.061	.044	.160
What is your level of education?	-.116	.230	-.046	.076	.233	.031
What is your level of income? (yearly)	.162	.248	.067	-.245	.252	-.102

<i>Cultural Background</i>	-.030	.191	-.013	.248	.194	.107
How many languages do you speak?	.281	.130	.176	.134	.132	.085
STATEMENT 1: "My first encounter with opera was a transformative event in my life"	.071	.112	.050 *	-.098	.113	-.071
STATEMENT 2: "During my childhood, my parents commonly took me to cultural institutions such as museums, theatres, musical performances, etc"	.446	.181	.197	-.074	.184	-.033
<i>Motivations</i>	-.099	.168	-.048	-.068	.170	-.034
MOTIVATION 1: How important is MUSIC when attending an opera performance	-.052	.166	-.026*	.217	.168	.113
MOTIVATION 2: How important is LIBRETTO/STORY when attending an opera performance	.238	.207	.095	.115	.210	.047
MOTIVATION 3: How important is ATMOSPHERE when attending an opera performance	-.107	.153	-.066	-.223	.155	-.141
MOTIVATION 4: How important is PRICE when attending an opera performance	-.004	.163	-.002	.028	.166	.017
MOTIVATION 5: How important is DURATION when attending an opera performance	.057	.044	.148	.061	.044	.160
MOTIVATION 6: How important is TIME when attending an opera performance	-.116	.230	-.046	.076	.233	.031
R2		.139			.084	
F		2.021*			1.141	

Note: * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$

Dependent Variable: SCORE: Media-elicitation ALL together

As we had two divisions within the modern opera performances, these are clustered now in a last step of data analysis. The two divisions were having a modern staging of an opera with traditional music (as explained before, for instance a *Turandot* with a minimalistic staging by Bob Wilson) and on the other hand a contemporary opera with a modern staging (for instance, the opera *Innocence* by Kaija Saariaho). However, for this part of the study, only model 3 will be taken into consideration, as there is of course less data units when clustering so much information and therefore it is more relevant to get the overall picture directly.

For modern opera with traditional music, there is an R Square of 0.139, meaning that approximately 14% of the variability in the dependent variable can be explained by the predictors. The ANOVA results showed that the model is statistically significant ($F(12, 150) = 2.021, p = 0.026$). Among the predictors, two were found to be significant: "My first encounter with opera was a transformative event in my life" ($B = 0.281, p = 0.032$) and "How important is MUSIC when attending an opera performance" ($B = 0.446, p = 0.015$). These findings suggest that a transformative first encounter with opera and the importance of music are significant factors in predicting the score for the video elicitation combining modern with traditional music. Other predictors, including age, education level, income, number of languages spoken, and various motivations for attending opera, were not statistically significant.

When comparing the two models (Traditional Music and Modern Staging / Contemporary Music and Modern Staging), we find out that the first model explains a higher percentage of the variance in the dependent variable (13.9%) compared to the second model (8.4%). Meaning that the model as a whole when talking about traditional music accounts for more changes in the dependent variable than when looking at it with contemporary music (there is a difference of 5,5%).

The adjusted R Square in the first model (traditional music) is also higher (0.070) than in the second model (contemporary music) (0.010). This is an indicator that the first model provides a better fit after adjusting for the number of predictors.

Finally, the standard error of the estimate is slightly lower in the first model, indicating slightly better prediction accuracy.

Moreover, when looking at the ANOVA, we can observe that the first model has a statistically significant F-value ($p = 0.026$), indicating that the predictors significantly explain the variance in the dependent variable. However, in opposition to this, the second model's F-value (contemporary music) is not statistically significant ($p = 0.331$), indicating that the predictors do not collectively explain the variance in the dependent variable well.

The model with the contemporary music has no significant predictors: All predictors have p-values > 0.05 . This suggests that the factors that can have an influence on appreciation for modern opera with contemporary music (and willingness to attend these events) are not the same indicators and variables than the ones that were significant in all the other scenarios.

This would be an indicator that perhaps, the audience that goes to a very modern opera show with contemporary music and a modern staging is different and has different motivations (such as possibly seeing something completely new) that are not regarded in the model. This is an insight for future research.

5. Conclusions

This research explores the extent to which various motivations and reasons to attend influence young individuals' (between the ages of 18 and 35) engagement with, on the one hand, traditional opera and on the other hand, modern opera. By looking at demographics, motivations, and cultural backgrounds, the aim was to assess how these elements impact the willingness to attend opera performances.

The research used 3 models, from a simpler one to a more complex one, each of them led to interesting results and implications. Moreover, clustering the data and differentiating traditional opera performances and modern opera performances also led to some additional results.

Model 1: Demographics

The first model, which focused only on demographic factors, accounts for 5% of the variance in willingness to attend opera. While significant overall ($\alpha = 0.042$), individual variables (age, income, education) showed no significant impact. However, age and income had a positive relationship, while education had a negative one. The literature showed audience demographics such as age, income, and education influencing engagement with opera and

more attendance to opera events, with education positively correlating with arts engagement but showing mixed results for age and gender (Martin et al., 2012; DiMaggio and Useem, 1978). Model 1 shows demographic factors accounting for a small variance (5%) in willingness to attend opera. This suggests demographic influences are present but not the sole determinants of engagement.

Model 2: Demographics and Cultural Background

Adding cultural background into the second model increased the explanatory power to 17%. This suggests that cultural background significantly impacts willingness to attend opera. The model was highly significant ($\alpha < 0.01$). In particular, the transformative first encounter with opera emerged as a key predictor, aligning with Benzecry's (2009) findings on the lasting impact of an initial opera experience at the Teatro Colón de Buenos Aires; the initial exposure to opera and the first live opera performance, often through family, friends, or school, can have an important impact and turn an initial interest into a passion (Benzecry, 2009)

Model 3: Demographics, Cultural Background, and Motivations

Furthermore, in a later stage of the study, adding motivations to the model further nuanced the findings. The first transformative encounter remained a significant predictor. Additionally, music's importance also appeared to be as a crucial motivator, while performance duration had a negative effect on engagement, which would point out that those who consider the duration of the performance important tend to have lower scores in the media-elicitation part. This could be considered a barrier that can be categorized in some part as an attitudinal barrier (as duration of a performance might be scary) and on the other hand a practical barrier (as a long performance might just not be convenient) that prevents people to attend. In a nutshell, the findings indicate that high-quality musical experiences will attract audiences, but long performances may potentially discourage them. This can be linked to the values defined by Ouazzani et al. (2023). This importance given to music can be connected to Hedonic Value (Emotional Experiences) that relates to the emotional impact of music and performances, playing a crucial role in attracting and keeping opera audiences (Ouazzani et al. 2023). Moreover, adding cultural background (Model 2) and motivations (Model 3) significantly increased the explanatory power of the models (17% for

Model 2 and 29% for model 3), highlighting the importance of cultural background and motivations. This would confirm what Cuenca et al. (2015) and Guachalla (2017) discuss, which is the fact that intellectual enrichment and cultural exposure enhance the enjoyment and engagement of opera. This can be connected to the epistemic value (Ouazzani et al., 2023), which is connected to the intellectual side of the performance.

Comparing Traditional vs. Modern Opera Performances

When focusing on traditional opera performances, Model 1 was not significant, but the transformative first encounter remained crucial in Model 3. Significant predictors included the first transformative encounter and the importance of music, reinforcing the need for impactful first experiences and high musical standards to engage audiences. Performance duration's negative effect suggests a preference for shorter performances among young adults.

In the context of modern opera, the models clearly show that there are different dynamics in this scenario. Age became a significant positive predictor, showing that the older (within the age frame of 18 to 35), possibly due to older adults' greater leisure time and prior exposure to opera, making them more willing to see opera shows that are more modern and less embedded in the general idea of what opera is. The transformative first encounter remained significant, while education, income, and other variables remained insignificant.

When comparing the general model focusing on modern opera with traditional music compared to the one looking at modern opera with contemporary music, there are some visible differences. The traditional music model explained more variance (13.9%) than the contemporary music model (8.4%). Significant predictors in the traditional music model include the transformative first encounter and on the other hand the importance of music. This can be compared to Benzecry's (2009) emphasis on the lasting impact of early opera experiences (as a music shock) and Cuenca et al.'s (2015) finding that knowledge and appreciation of music enhance enjoyment. In contrast, no predictors were significant in the contemporary music model, indicating different factors influence engagement with highly modern opera. This gives a line for future research, as there are probably other factors influencing young individuals' willingness to attend very modern operatic evenings. This disparity underscores the importance of blending traditional elements in modern opera to

enhance accessibility and resonance with younger audiences, supporting Erdman & Paun de Garcia (2015) and Jones (2006), who note that modern adaptations can make opera more accessible and relevant, while keeping the essence of what is usually perceived as opera. Therefore, future research should be focused on the motivations that lead to attend performances of contemporary operas because it would appear that this model is less relevant for such scenario (as highlighted by the lower explanatory power of the contemporary music model).

6. Limitations of the study and directions for future research

This study came up with significant results and the data collected is valuable for the field of cultural economics and performing arts management and led to an interesting discussion of results and implications. However, there were some limitations that need to be acknowledged. It was challenging to collect a large amount data in such a limited scope of time. This is why in the end I did not manage to make a distinction between Netherlands and Spain because I had too few replies from Spain.

Moreover, we can observe a striking negative relationship between the level of education and the willingness to attend operatic performances. This negative relationship is not significant but it would suggest that in some way, the more educated, the less willing to attend opera performances. This points out some potential bias in my sample of respondents, as I did snowball sampling and many students (at the bachelor level) replied. Moreover, because of this same reason as well, a large amount of the respondents are linked to the artistic world.

This study worked with three distinct models (demographics, demographics + cultural background, demographics + cultural background + motivations), progressively increasing complexity and explanatory power. The consistent statistical significance, consistency among the results (when increasing complexity) and detailed clustering enhance the reliability of the study. The clear operational definitions, the variables being defined in a precise manner contribute towards the replicability of the study. Having a more diverse sample would have helped to further improve this. External validity could be strengthened through further replication with different populations. Internal validity is high because the measurements of the variables hold in a consistent manner across models; moreover, the variables are clearly divided in groups and strongly defined.

For future research, I encourage looking at the different motivations that lead young individuals to attend very modern opera performances. This could be done in a qualitative manner in order to get some initial reasons, through interviews or a focus group. This would be interesting for programmers in order to understand what the audience of tomorrow seeks when deciding to attend this kind of performances, that are taking more and more space and relevance in the opera seasons.

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APPENDIX A: Survey questionnaire

09/06/2024, 13:45

Qualtrics Survey Software



INTRO

Welcome to the survey for my Master's thesis on what drives young people to attend opera performances. Your participation is crucial in helping me gain insights into the evolving tastes and perceptions of opera among today's youth. Your responses will contribute significantly to the academic understanding of this topic. Thank you for dedicating your time to my research. Feel free to contact me for more information: iagocampello@student.eur.nl

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please enter your age (please do this as a numerical value without decimals)

Where do you live?

- Spain
 The Netherlands

Select your Gender

- Male

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Qualtrics Survey Software

- Female
 Non-binary / third gender
 Prefer not to say

Select your educational level

- Some high-school, no diploma
 High-school graduate
 Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree
 Doctoral degree

How many languages do you speak?

- 1 language
 2 languages
 3 languages
 4 or more languages

Income level

- Below €20,000
 €20,000 - €40,000
 €40,000 - €60,000
 Above €60,000
 Other

Are you a musician?

- Yes
 No

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Qualtrics Survey Software

Opera Experience

Select the option that aligns with your personal experience:

- I never attend opera
 I attend opera at least once a year
 I attend opera from 2 to 6 times a year
 I attend opera once a month
 I attend opera more than once a month

Music is important for me when I decide to attend an opera performance

- Fully agree
 Somewhat agree
 Neutral
 Somewhat disagree
 Fully disagree

The libretto/story is important for me when I decide to attend an opera performance

- Fully agree
 Somewhat agree
 Neutral
 Somewhat disagree
 Fully disagree

The atmosphere at the venue is important for me when I decide to attend an opera performance

- Fully agree
 Somewhat agree

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Qualtrics Survey Software

- Neutral
 Somewhat disagree
 Fully disagree

The price of the tickets is important for me when I decide to attend an opera performance

- Fully agree
 Somewhat agree
 Neutral
 Somewhat disagree
 Fully disagree

The length of the performance is important for me when I decide to attend an opera performance

- Fully agree
 Somewhat agree
 Neutral
 Somewhat disagree
 Fully disagree

The time of the performance is important for me when I decide to attend an opera performance

- Fully agree
 Somewhat agree
 Neutral
 Somewhat disagree
 Fully disagree

My first encounter with opera was a transformative event in my life

- Fully agree
 Somewhat agree

https://erasmusuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/QEditSection/Blocks/Ajax/GetSurveyPrintPreview?ContextSurveyID=SV_cZTQrC406iWVM&ContextLibraryID... 4/8




- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Fully disagree

During my childhood my parents commonly took me to cultural institutions such as museum, theatres, musical performances, etc

- Fully agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Fully disagree

Appealing

How likely are you to visit one of these productions?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very likely
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Very unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Very likely



<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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How likely are you to visit one of these productions? Feel free to watch the full video or only part of it and please look at the overall picture and not at the quality of the singing, conducting or orchestra.

- Very unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Very likely



<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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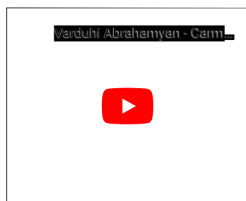


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- Very unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Very likely



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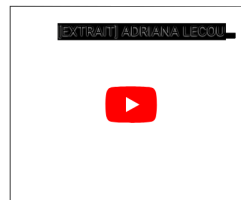
- Very unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Very likely



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