

Why people attend performing arts events

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This research was conducted by **Pieter de Rooij** and **Marcel Bastiaansten** at the **NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands**.

Summary

This study sought to understand and categorise the reasons why people visit performing arts events, as well as develop a way to measure these motivations. In-depth interviews were conducted with theatre-goers and a review of the literature was undertaken. This then informed a questionnaire which was completed by people attending a classical music concert. The results show that there is both a cultural and social side to attending performing arts events.

Eight interrelated motives were identified, which centred on the need to enjoy performing arts and be affected by its artistic appeal

Cultural motives included a need to relax and escape from routine (cultural relaxation), pass on cultural interests to children (cultural transmission), and be emotionally touched by the performance (cultural aesthetics). Improving individual knowledge (cultural stimulation) seemed to be less important. Other reasons for attending included social bonding, and supporting a family member or friend in a play (social duty). Wanting to belong to a favourable social group (social distinction) and spend time with those people (social attraction) emerged as concealed motives.

Cultural transmission was related to social distinction, cultural stimulation and social bonding; cultural aesthetics was related to artistic value and enjoyment of beauty

The authors argue that connecting with others, sharing emotions that emerge during a performance, and belonging to a specific social world appeared important motivations. These findings can be used to explore the social impacts of performing arts and improve the customer experience at concerts and shows.

This summary was written by **Tanya Graham, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

Keywords

Interviews performing arts attendance social impact

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