CultureCase

Why people go to pop concerts

This research was conducted by **Steven Caldwell Brown** and **Don Knox** at the **University of Edinburgh** and **Glasgow Caledonian University**

Summary

This research used an online survey of 249 people to uncover four main reasons why people attend pop concerts: they seek experience, engagement with others, to hear something novel and to take advantage of the practical opportunities that the concert affords. ‘The results highlight that participants want to “be there”, to be a part of something unique and special, sharing the experience with likeminded others. Other social dimensions such as the use of live music events as a means to demonstrate fan worship were also found. The unknown, novel aspects of live music were key motivators, such as hearing new material and watching support bands. Notably, price was not a contributing factor when choosing to attend a concert, suggesting that live music offers fans something special that they are more than willing to pay for.’

The sample of survey respondents was principally UK-based

The survey also gathered data from people based in North America, Europe, Australasia and Asia. The survey asked people to ‘list three main reasons why you go to live concerts’. The authors of the study state that ‘three separate boxes were given to encourage different reasons, and they were sufficient in size to allow for lengthy responses.’ It is likely that people answered the question in relation to attendance at concerts and (although this is a subtle distinction) it doesn’t therefore really offer insight ticket purchasing behaviour.

Live music attendance continues to be popular despite declining sales of recorded music

People are increasingly aware that musicians earn more money from live performances than from recorded music. This may offer a way for those engaged in music piracy ‘to justify their behaviour in a principled way’. The paper offers some advice for the music industry: to think about ways to monetise meeting the band in person, and to vary the set lists and arrangements of the musical acts.

Keywords

attendance **popular** **survey** **music** **concerts**

Title	Why go to pop concerts? The motivations behind live music attendance
Author(s)	Caldwell Brown, S. & Knox, D.
Publication date	2017
Source	Musicae Scientiae, Vol. 21, Iss. 3, pp 233-249
Link	**https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864916650719**
Author email	**steven.brown@ed.ac.uk**

By **Culture.Case** | 29 November 2018 | **Consumer behaviour in arts and culture** , **Developing new audiences in arts and culture** |

King's Culture
© Copyright 2026
Designed, developed and maintained by **King's Digital Lab**
Originally built by **weheartdigital Ltd**
Accessibility Statement