

A Bachelor's Thesis in Retail Management

Stockholm School of Economics

Behind the Stage:

A Comprehensive Analysis of the Live Music Industry in Stockholm
Through the Eyes of Musicians and Industry Professionals

Authors:

Isac Aspberg (50740) Bianca Martell (50716)

Supervisor: Johan Nilsson

Date submitted: 15/5 - 2023

Examiner: Wiley Wakeman

Abstract

Live music has recently been a popular topic of discussion as a consequence of COVID-19's influence and the exponential rise of digital alternatives to live music. Stockholm, as the third largest music exporter in the world, might be assumed to be culturally enriched with live music flourishing in its center; but if we dig further into the Stockholm live music industry by listening to those who make up its pillars, namely musicians, what will we find? This thesis investigates the live music industry in Stockholm through the eyes of musicians and live music industry professionals. Through qualitative research in the form of interviews with musicians and other industry professionals, we have gathered insights on the industry and ascertained several factors affecting the industry as a whole, as well as the musicians in it. The analysis has been structured with PESTLE as a framework in order to provide a wide scope of the whole industry.

The analysis largely concludes that the supply of musicians exceeds the number of work opportunities, leading to low wages and unemployment in the industry. There has also been a drastic increase in the number of productions in Stockholm post-pandemic, despite consumer demand not returning to pre-pandemic levels. A general dissatisfaction amongst musicians over working conditions in the live music industry has been noted, along with a remarkable satisfaction over career choices despite the aforementioned dissatisfaction.

Key words: Live music industry, music industry, industry analysis, musicians, popular music

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our supervisor **Johan Nilsson**, for his continuous support and guidance from the beginning to the end. **Micael Dahlén**, for his contagious positive mindset, and spirit rising words during moments of doubt. **All the respondents** who generously offered us their valuable time, sharing personal experiences and thoughts that enabled us to write this thesis. **Friends and family**, for giving us plenty of support, as well as some much-needed distractions during the writing process.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Background | 4 |
| 2.1. Setting the Scene | 4 |
| 2.2. Related Literature | 7 |
| 2.2.1. The Importance and Value of Music | 7 |
| 2.2.2. Musicians and Entrepreneurship in the Music Industry | 9 |
| 2.2.3. Impact of COVID-19 on Music | 11 |
| 2.2.4. Gap in Research & Contextualization | 12 |
| 2.3. Purpose & Issue | 13 |
| 3. Theory | 15 |
| 4. Methodology | 16 |
| 4.1. Selection of Methodology | 16 |
| 4.2. Research Strategy & Execution | 16 |
| 4.2.1. Saturation of Themes | 17 |
| 4.2.2. Identifying the Research Strategy | 17 |
| 4.3. Data Gathering | 17 |
| 4.3.1. Previous Research | 17 |
| 4.3.2. Semi-structured In-depth Interviews | 18 |
| 4.3.3. Interviewee Profile Requirements | 19 |
| 4.3.4. Anonymity | 19 |
| 4.4. Methodology Discussion | 20 |
| 4.4.1. Trustworthiness | 20 |
| 4.4.2. Limitations | 21 |
| 5. Research & Data | 22 |
| 6. Analysis | 25 |
| 6.1. PESTLE Analysis of the Live Music Industry in Stockholm | 26 |
| 6.1.1. Political / Unrewarding Efforts | 26 |
| 6.1.2. Economic / Challenging Economic Landscape | 28 |
| 6.1.3. Socio-Cultural / Unsophisticated Market | 33 |
| 6.1.4. Technological / Technological Speculations | 36 |
| 6.1.5. Legal / Few and Aggravating Laws and Regulations | 38 |
| 6.1.6. Environmental / Uncommon with Environmental Efforts | 40 |
| 6.2. Musicians' Psychological Aspects | 41 |
| 6.2.1. Dissatisfaction With Market Standards | 41 |
| 6.2.2. Immense Satisfaction With Career Choice | 44 |
| 7. Discussion | 45 |
| 8. Further Research | 47 |
| 9. Bibliography | 48 |
| 10. Appendix | 51 |

1. Introduction

Music has long been a point of pride and international differentiation for Sweden. For such a small country, Sweden is considered one of the greats when it comes to creating and exporting music, referring to the so-called “Svenska Musikundret”. In the last couple of years, in the wake of COVID-19 and with a harsh inflationary economy, there has been a lot of discussion surrounding the live music industry. As a consequence of the pandemic, as well as other factors more specific to Stockholm, the coined term “klubböd”, or “club-death” in the city has been a large point of discourse.

There have been important discussions on the value of culture, especially as a part of cities and urban areas. The concept of value is seen in different lights in the fields of economics and culture, as economic value is largely connected to utility and the financial value assigned to commodities. However, in cultural contexts, value is inherently intrinsic in that it adds value in forms of joy, belonging, community, and meaning. These contexts are crucial to consider when discussing the value of culture to society, as despite the fact they are often overlooked, they are often what builds a community and identity in a city or urban area (van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019). This intrinsic value is especially relevant when discussing live music, due to it being an easily accessible form of culture, for creators and consumers alike. The smaller “indie” venues and artists are to a larger extent within reach for audiences with financial or social barriers, and this accessibility can help in building a thriving community.

The revenue in the Swedish music industry during 2019, from Sweden and abroad, rose to SEK 12.2b, and about 56% of the revenue came from live performances and concerts (Portnoff & Ingler, 2020b). As a result of COVID-19, ticket sales decreased by 90% in Sweden, and effects from abroad will be felt 6-12 months after the fact, creating a worry for the aftermath (Portnoff & Ingler, 2020a). In 2021, the total music revenue had decreased to barely SEK 8.4b in Sweden, largely due to the decrease in concerts and live performances, although the increased growth in recorded music lessened the overall effects on revenue (Portnoff, 2022). Since Sweden is so identified by its musical exports, the value of music goes beyond only intrinsic values. Sweden can be put on the map and compared to larger nations in this respect.

In this report, we aim to paint a picture of Stockholm's live music industry as of today, as well as explicate the challenges, opportunities, and environment around the work of musicians in the industry. We want to outline the factors that currently affect the industry and musicians, organized through a PESTLE model, as well as examine possible factors that can affect live music going forward. The analysis is based on responses from musicians and industry professionals, and is thus weighted towards their perspective.

2. Background

2.1. Setting the Scene

The discussion around the live music industry in Stockholm has the last couple of years been much centered around its strong connection to political policies, particularly when it comes to the allocation of governmental financial support to the arts. For most of the 1900s, the Swedish government had a policy of prioritizing so-called 'art music', e.g. jazz and classical music, as a way of limiting commercialism in the music industry. However, this policy changed in 2009, and since then, there has been a greater emphasis on supporting a diverse range of musical genres (Albinsson, 2021). The older tendencies have however remained when it comes to the allocation of financial support, as commercial music, e.g. pop and rock, are considered able to survive and thrive on their own (Naumanen, 2017). This has been a contentious issue, as some argue that classical or old-fashioned genres are given more importance than other genres, and the discussion was further highlighted during COVID-19 pandemic.

Another political aspect that is essential for the future of the industry is education and professional development. In interviews with industry experts, a significant amount of optimism and hope for the future was centered around the need for education in the industry (Rodblom & Nyman, 2020). The music industry is continually changing, and there is a need for individuals working within the industry to stay up-to-date with new trends, technologies, and to adapt to new realities, such as the impact of digital streaming. With recent cuts on governmental financial support to "folkhögskolor" (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2022; Dammberg, 2022; Falk, 2022), the institutions where many begin their higher education in music, many experts have further

emphasized the need for educational programs that focus on providing individuals entering the music industry with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed.

Another important aspect is the economic factors affecting companies, individuals, and consumers in the industry. A big point of discussion is around COVID-19 and the effects it had and still has on the live music industry. Since the industry is dependent on gathering crowds of people and interacting socially in person, the many restrictions on gatherings during the pandemic hit the industry hard. Companies went bankrupt as they could not rely on income from live events (Guillou, 2022). Restrictions in Sweden were never as harsh as in many other countries internationally, however, the bans that were put in place in Sweden still affected the industry as a whole due to the harsh limitations on organizing events.

The current macroeconomic environment internationally has also affected the industry. The inflationary economy has affected Swedish consumers directly, and with rising costs on consumables, willingness to pay, and actual spending on the luxury of live music has decreased (Tidningarnas telegrambyrå, 2022; Haidl, 2022). The increase in ticket prices for events has also affected consumers' spending on tickets.

Most musicians in the industry are freelancers who run their own small firm to structure their income and work. Freelancers are mostly hired for one or a set of gigs, or a certain production. Another complication for many is therefore the issue of needing multiple streams of income, especially as most freelancers take on a number of roles and professions, in close succession if possible, both in the music industry as well as outside of it to keep themselves afloat (Rodblom & Nyman, 2020).

With respect to technology in the industry, the process of creating music has made use of more technologies and devices to help in the creative process. However, looking at the industry as a whole, most discussions around technologies have centered around more consumer-centric technologies such as the popularization of live-streaming of live music events, especially during the pandemic when it was used to a higher extent (Bruner, 2021; Faughnder, 2021).

There are also some legal issues of relevance to bring forth, specifically the recently debated legalities surrounding nightlife in Stockholm. Most notably, discussions have been centered around the strict noise-laws in Stockholm that have created large issues for many smaller live music venues. During the last 10 years, one in three live music venues in Stockholm have closed down, half of those due to complaints from neighbors or plans of construction (Rydberg et al., 2022). The main point of contention has been that many of the venues that have been forced to close down have been culturally significant, due to their long-standing tradition and activity. The issue has been largely attributed to people moving into culturally active parts of inner city Stockholm and consequently getting disturbed by music from the venues they have moved in close to. Complaints are made to authorities to cancel the live music, and as these venues' main stream of revenue comes from their live music events, many are forced to shut their doors. As of February 2023, this trend is however plateauing as a number of venues are opening or reopening after the struggles of financing and restrictions during the pandemic. Experts have also seen a change in political sentiment, as the discussion amongst politicians in Stockholm has become more aware of the value of a culturally lively city for both tourism and for residents (Lindstedt, 2023).

As for the environmental impact of the live music industry, one can look at factors such as touring and the consequent emissions from traveling, electricity used on-stage and in venues, the production of merchandise to promote the musician or artist, as well as the handling of waste at venues. Many venues and artists have taken steps to take responsibility for the environmental effects of their business activities through e.g. promoting plastic-free festivals or removing meat from food served at events (Nicholls, 2022; Corner, 2021). However, two of the largest contributors to emissions in festivals is traveling and energy usage in overnight accommodations (Collins & Cooper, 2017). This is especially topical due to increased travel and touring after the removal of pandemic restrictions, both pertaining to performers and attendees. It is worth mentioning here that the scale of the events organized are of significance when it comes to emissions and environmental impact. A big artist touring around Sweden with a large stage-setup will inevitably have a larger environmental impact than a small, local artist playing in smaller Stockholm venues.

2.2. Related Literature

This section includes a selection of the existing and relevant literature regarding the live music industry. The existing literature on the topic are of different character than of our research, and often refers to other geographical contexts than Stockholm. However, some findings are introduced in this thesis for the reader to get a deeper understanding of the live music industry and understand some factors contributing to our own findings in the analysis.

2.2.1. The Importance and Value of Music

In broader societal contexts, the importance of music is often implied and noted, yet not discussed further. Research on the value of music, both in society and on a more personal level, holds an inherently salient position in the subject of this thesis and also contributes to its purpose. There are a number of reasons why people choose to listen to music; most notably to manage and regulate moods and emotions and to pass the time, however it also serves a purpose in interpersonal relationships and personal identity (Lonsdale & North, 2011; Rentfrow, 2012). Research has also found that music is more effective in serving individuals' different needs than other leisure activities, indicating why music holds such large importance for people (Lonsdale & North, 2011).

When discussing live music more specifically, its value is often broken down to a certain “immediacy, intimacy and communication, perhaps even a space for spontaneous whims” (Fleischer, 2018), which is missing in pre-recorded music. Live music is often also discussed as a crucial part in communities; most notably due to the social networks built around publicly available culture like live music, and due to the cultural vibrancy it lends a community (van der Hoeven & Hitters, 2019).

With the decreased access to live music during the pandemic, as well as the increasing prices for attending live music concerts, the value of such cultural activities has been put to question. Evidence shows that cultural activities were “highly valued, widely supported, and pursued resolutely despite the many obstacles placed in the way of both creators and consumers” (Jeannotte, 2021). This bears the question of the value of attending live music events. Research

has shown that the most common motivations for attending music festivals, both live and online, are music and socialization. However, the live music festival was unique in that it offered escape and novelty, and the online music festival alone offered excitement/entertainment. The differences in motivations were dependent on a number of factors, amongst them demographic variables, entry tickets purchased, and companions. The research also concluded that the value-satisfaction relationship is stronger for online festivals than for live festivals, i.e. the perceived value affects satisfaction more strongly for online festivals (Perez-Monteagudo & Curras-Perez, 2022). The different live music formats also have different restrictions, most notably that live performances have less flexibility and are more time-intensive (Montoro-Pons & Cuadrado-García, 2016).

There are five main economic characteristics of live music that play a part in setting its value; first, live music events have high fixed costs due to the large costs of renting venues and keeping staff on for shows regardless of the number of attendees. Second, live music is an experience good from which the value and utility derived are difficult to assess for consumers, and it is consequently difficult for consumers to set an economic value prior to the experience. Third, live music events are perishable goods in that post-event, the tickets hold no economic value. Fourth, many live music production companies work with versioning as they offer different versions of their tickets in order to capture more value from consumers who have different willingness to pay for the event. Fifth and finally, live music events offer the opportunity to profit off complementary goods such as records and merchandising, as well as food and drink sold at the venue (Magni, 2023).

These economic characteristics can to differing degrees be harnessed by musicians, depending on their mainstream appeal. Generalists, or more mainstream and commercially accepted musicians, can set higher minimum concert ticket prices based on their superstar effect, reliance on status, and leveraging on a wider audience to better cover fixed costs of concerts and touring. This allows generalists to create and appropriate more value than specialists, who are in part limited by their more niche appeal and consequent smaller size and width in their audience (Magni, 2023).

2.2.2. Musicians and Entrepreneurship in the Music Industry

When mapping early-career musicians' working activities, it was noted that a majority of the work invested in their music is non-creative and often unrelated to the music itself. All in all, the number of hours spent per week differed greatly, between 6.25 and 56 hours, however, there was an average of 25 hours per week spent per musician on their musical endeavors and career. Only 41% of these hours were spent on creative endeavors like writing music and rehearsing, whilst 33% were spent on managerial and business-related activities such as bookings and meetings. 7% of their work was technical, such as recording music and setting up stages, whilst the remaining 19% of their hours were spent mostly traveling as part of their work. 82% of the musicians interviewed did not live solely off of their musical careers, but maintained other work alongside their musical endeavors (Everts et al., 2022).

Most musicians expressed that the unstable and low nature of their income combined with the long days worked were not sustainable in the long term, however despite this they reported satisfaction in their work. When further investigating the way in which the musicians value their musical work, three categories emerged: 'pop as art', 'pop as business', and 'pop as a hobby'. These categories have slight overlap, yet still successfully clarify the type of work musicians engage in and their subsequent satisfaction. 'Pop as art' has a strong focus on personal expression; 'l'art pour l'art'. Musicians with a focus on their art value their artistic autonomy and are not willing to "make concessions to increase commercial appeal", or in simpler terms: 'sell out' (Everts et al., 2022). Musicians who work more with 'pop as business' on the other hand work with the goal of commercial and financial success, and are convinced their artistic and commercial goals are not mutually exclusive. 'Pop as a hobby' is separate from the previous two categories in that the musicians most active here see their musical endeavors as simply a hobby, and their pessimistic view on possible opportunities in the industry have led them to other professional work in its stead (Everts et al., 2022).

These three accounts of value could be understood as the perception of opportunities that are embedded in the field to achieve certain positions, marking the boundaries of legitimate artistic practice that musicians have to navigate (Everts et al., 2022). In a similar sense to the three valuations of musical work, one could also view the musicians themselves through the lens of

their work and values in the music industry. According to research about artists who hold similar labor opportunities in the cultural industries, one can categorize cultural workers by bohemians or entrepreneurs, with some overlap in certain cases. Bohemians reflect the ‘pop as art’ sentiment in that art should be created for art’s sake. Entrepreneurs reflect the ‘pop as business’ perspective, as they mirror the view of creating art as an “occupation instead of a vocation” and hold no issue with aligning to commercial trends (Lindström, 2016).

When comparing different local music industries and how musicians work within them, it was noted that local contexts, in the case of an article regarding the Dutch and British music industries, have an effect on musicians and how they adapt to global challenges (Everts & Haynes, 2021). The Dutch music industry is shaped by more support for up-and-coming acts from commercial and governmental parties, which creates a clearer “institutionalized pathway” towards commercial success by “encouraging an alignment between entrepreneurial sensibilities and artistic goals” (Everts & Haynes, 2021). The British music industry on the other hand, has been marred by reduced funding from public and governmental parties, as well as the closing of many smaller music venues. This has created a stronger DIY culture within the musician community, as well as stronger “peer support networks” and a more reluctant view on entrepreneurship due to their critical perspective on the wider industry. However, it was noted that despite the difference in strategizing and perspectives in the two music scenes, the two sets of local musicians were equal in their difficulties in building financially sustainable careers in their respective industries. It was also noted that the large number of young people seeking to pursue careers in music is inversely proportional to the actual opportunities offered in the industry, and this imbalance is reinforced by the increase in digitalisation and the consequent lowered barriers to entry (Everts & Haynes, 2021).

The musicians’ reluctance to accept the “entrepreneurship label” has been noted elsewhere as well. In a qualitative study, it was found that a majority of freelance musicians regard themselves as entrepreneurs, although it is mostly out of necessity (Albinsson, 2018). This type of freelancing entrepreneurship is new to not only musicians and the music industry, but also the general view of employees and employers. Most notably, this type of worker does not fit into previous perspectives on “full-time professions of the European welfare state system” (Ellmeier,

2003), as who was formerly an employed cultural worker has transitioned into a “cultural entrepreneur” or a “sole service supplier in the professional cultural field” (Ellmeier, 2003).

2.2.3. Impact of COVID-19 on Music

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an immense impact on the music industry, both recorded and live. Consumption of recorded music has reached an all-time high with wide-spread lockdowns keeping listeners inside, and live music consumption reached zero with restrictions removing opportunities for gathering people physically. One of the early and most natural solutions to harsh restrictions on physical events was the transition to online events, e.g. live-streaming music performances. According to studies made on consumer behavior and intentions to use online services, performance expectancy and social influence were the most pivotal determinants of consumer intention to use online services (Silva et al., 2022).

The pandemic has also generated significant impacts on future consumer behavior. The pandemic has prompted changes in the attitudes of regional event attendees, as evidenced by a survey conducted during and after lockdown. Respondents reported comfort in following COVID-19 safety precautions at events, even after lockdowns had ended, with the exception of mandatory mask-wearing which held negative connotations. However, consumers have gotten comfortable with the lower seating capacities during the pandemic, leading to discomfort with the increase in seating capacity post-pandemic (Hooshmand et al., 2023).

The profound impact of the pandemic on the live music industry, especially the financial viability of the industry, can be fundamentally linked to spatiality and live music venues. The continued existence of the industry has been noted to be dependent upon functional live music spaces that meet the needs of audiences, as well as musicians and other live music professionals. The changing realities of live music spaces and venues during and after the pandemic, such as restrictions of capacity, shorter operating hours, and restrictions regarding social distancing, suggests that the post-COVID “business as usual” attitude might not be realistic for many spaces (Taylor et al., 2020).

The financial significance of live music has its roots in this discourse of spatiality, and the pandemic has highlighted the difficulties of sustaining a career during such crises (Taylor et al., 2021). The pandemic restrictions have highlighted artists' dependence on live music events as their main income stream, particularly given the rise of music streaming platforms and the low compensation for musicians' intellectual property from these (Taylor et al., 2021; Denk et al., 2022).

The closure of academic and educational institutions during national lockdowns has also disrupted music teaching income. In one study, many of the musicians interviewed had lost this additional income due to cuts from schools and universities, or due to private students canceling their lessons due to the online format required during the lockdown (Taylor et al., 2021). This created a precarious situation where these musicians' lost all streams of income during a global lockdown where they had difficulties finding other sources of income. With a student perspective in mind, research also found that students were less likely to choose music studies, as they to a larger degree chose university studies with more long-term financial security. This consequently affected universities focusing on music studies, which were forced to tighten their budgets or close down (Rigg & Bofinger, 2022).

A strong increase in concert ticket prices has also been noted. Although the prices were climbing pre-pandemic, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the increase in pricing. One of the major reasons listed were the increased costs of road and production crew. Many music professionals left the industry during the pandemic to find more traditional work elsewhere with more regular income and working hours, and with the subject of return being brought up, they have higher demands on working hours and fair compensation. There are also other factors at play, such as an inflationary global economy and promoters having to pay for cancellation refunds (Rigg & Bofinger, 2022).

2.2.4. Gap in Research & Contextualization

The live music industry is not an especially researched field, and despite some interesting findings, existing research does not on all points cover the scope of our thesis. Research on live music in Stockholm was lacking, and therefore research was drawn from literature on other

smaller musical segments in other countries, such as the independent music scenes in Britain and the Netherlands. We also made use of research on other fields, such as with a focus on visual artists instead of musicians, in order to further support the conclusions of our main literature.

There is research on the consequences of COVID-19 on the live music industry, however a lack of focus on the Swedish and Stockholm markets specifically. This is of interest, especially as Sweden differed from all other western countries in our public and governmental approach during the pandemic. Although there has been research on the consequences of the pandemic on the industry, there has also been a lack of insights into the consequences on musicians due to the pandemic - a focus that this thesis is more in line with.

A lack of insights into the industry and market as a whole has also been noted due to the lack of larger-scope industry analyses, regardless of geographic region, within our thesis scope. Research such as Everts et al. (2022) and Everts & Haynes (2021), did touch upon the industry, however maintained a focus on musicians and their work only, without developing any wider industry analysis to further investigate the factors affecting musicians.

Although the research reviewed in this thesis does not cover the specific scope of the question at hand, it does help contextualize the topic of the following results and analysis.

2.3. Purpose & Issue

We seek to contribute to the research on the live music industry by providing insights on musicians' perspectives in Stockholm. Our research also provides value by acknowledging the aftermath of the pandemic on the industry and musicians' livelihoods to understand the challenges and opportunities that consequently have arisen. A wider industry analysis will therefore contribute to the research field by providing a broader perspective on the factors that affect musicians and the industry as a whole. However, the importance of music, as discussed in section 2.2.1, is the fundamental reason for why these questions should be asked, and why there is a value in seeking to deeper understand the live music industry.

The aim of this thesis is to answer the research questions of (1) *What are the key characteristics and trends of the live music industry in Stockholm at present?* and (2) *In what ways does the current condition of the live music industry in Stockholm impact the experiences and livelihoods of musicians?*, by combining the perspectives from industry active participants with previous literature and current media publications. The purpose is to provide a detailed analysis of the live music industry where the voice of musicians, artists, bookers, and other industry participants are generously being considered. We hope this report can support decision-makers, e.g. politicians, producers, live-music business executives, and venue owners, in constructive future decisions, as well as support live music companies, musicians, and other actors to better act and strategize in accordance with our results and PESTLE analysis. The thesis may also act as a “2023 industry analysis” for future benchmarking.

Research Scope

We have limited ourselves to the live music industry, where we include all music performed in front of a live audience, including both smaller venues and events, as well as those produced by larger companies, such as musicals. To narrow down the research, we have limited ourselves to interviewing “musicians” and other “industry professionals”. Musicians are, for the purpose of this paper, defined as “*people who, on a professional basis, perform music live to a physically present audience*” and include instrumental musicians, artists, musical artists, DJs and singers. Industry professionals may include many types of positions, e.g. venue owner, artist booker, PR-manager and more, however it is limited to only a few positions due to them only acting as complementary respondents to the musicians in focus (see Table 1 for interviewees details).

The market of live music involves a large ecosystem with more actors than those who are analyzed and discussed in this thesis, including e.g. record labels, producers, sound engineers and more. It is therefore important to note that the general aspects discussed in the thesis may affect several actors in the market, and not only the ones discussed. Furthermore, the live music industry also involves people who often work on a project basis, and use their music career as a complement to another main line of work. Therefore, the thesis is limited to only examining insights from people who work with live music as a main occupation.

As the live music industry can differ a lot between countries and cities depending on e.g. politics, market size and culture, the research is also limited to the Stockholm area in Sweden. This is due to our aim of providing qualitative and detailed results.

3. Theory

In order to ease the understanding of the emerging concepts during the Analysis section, some models and frameworks will be presented. The PESTLE framework is generally used as a framework for strategic market analysis by companies striving to understand the external environment they are operating in, often with a focus on the marketing environment (Baines et al., 2019). However, for the purpose of this thesis, the PESTLE framework is used as a means to give an overview of the live music industry in Stockholm, outlined by the six categories in the framework; political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal, and environmental. The framework helps structure the interviews, findings, and analytical arguments.

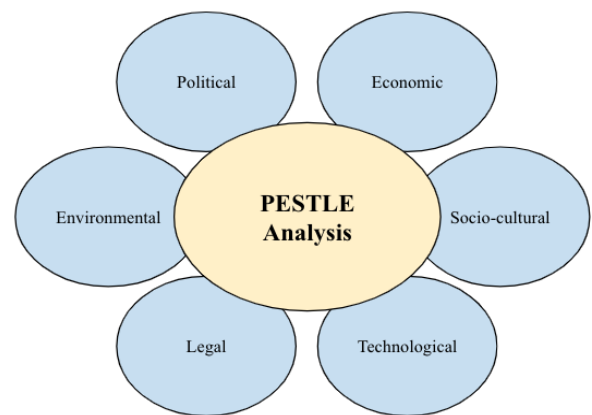


Figure 1: The PESTLE Framework

In order to visualize dynamics between parties and factors in the live music industry, a variety of models have also been applied. The models have been adapted to the topic and analysis, and aim to ease the understanding of the various concepts that emerged from the interviews. There are three variants of supply and demand models applied: one that explains the laborers wages (Figure 4), one inspired by the AD-AS model (Figure 6) that shows the change of consumer demand and prices as a result of the inflation, and three connected AD-AS models (Figure 8) to visualize the changing supply and demand as a consequence of the pandemic (Mankiw, 2019). An application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Figure 5) is also used to visualize consumer spending and willingness to spend, based on consumers' low prioritization of live music compared to their other needs (Maslow, 1943). A push-pull model (Figure 7), often used in logistics and supply chain management (Harrison, 2007), is used to show the push strategy

generally applied by live music productions in Stockholm, and how this has created a further imbalance in supply and demand. The final model (Figure 9), visualizing the excess of supply in contrast to demand through the live music supply chain, is a summarizing model aimed to give an overview to the analyses made, and therefore covers the realized concepts from several of the previously mentioned models used throughout the analysis.

4. Methodology

This section includes a description of the chosen research method and how it was decided upon. Continuously, it describes in-depth how the data was gathered and reviewed, and lastly discusses the trustworthiness of the chosen methodology.

4.1. Selection of Methodology

To most effectively grasp the current state of the Stockholm live music industry, the research is based on previous literature, recent media publications, and empirical gathering through interviews with people connected to the live music industry in Stockholm. As the subject can be very relative to individuals' social reality, the dominant social aspects of the research is classified as non-quantifiable, hence a qualitative research method was expected to be most effective (Bhangu, Provost et al. 2023). Thus, the thesis' findings and conclusions are mainly gathered from the connections drawn between the interviews, however analyses have also been conducted by connecting interview insights to factual industry knowledge from literature and media publications. The weighting toward interview insights is partly due to the aim to humanize and receive a general perception of the topic (Bhangu et al., 2023), but also as a consequence of the lack of related research to the current nature and geographical constraint of the topic.

4.2. Research Strategy & Execution

The first methodological step was made through researching previous literature on a broader level of the topic. The strategy was to grasp the previous research, and connect the relevant topics to the findings later to be gathered through the qualitative research method. Secondly, empirical data was gathered through individual interviews with participants active in the live

music industry in Stockholm. The third step was to connect and combine the dots from every interview to previous literature and conduct the final analysis and conclusions.

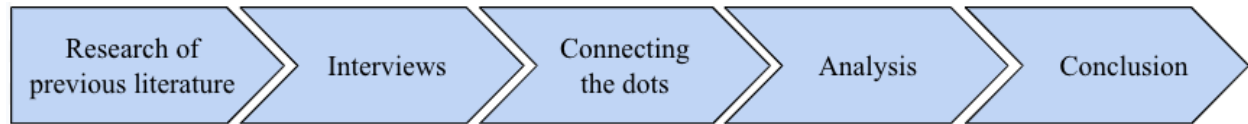


Figure 2. Executional order of methodology

4.2.1. Saturation of Themes

28 interviewees were prepared in order to ensure credibility, however post the 14th interview, no new emerging concepts were explored. Hence, we concluded that saturation was reached after 14 interviews and could thus rely on that no new data would produce valuable insights (Bryman & Bell, 2013).

4.2.2. Identifying the Research Strategy

Before building a methodological strategy, we found it, as suggested by Bhangu et al. (2023), important to ask ourselves what the authors refer to as “ontological and epistemological” questions. These refer to “how” and “why” type of questions, which aims to identify and contribute to the occurrence and persistence of the phenomenon of a topic, and helps in finding a suitable methodology (Bhangu et al., 2023). This strategy resulted in internal discussions of our personal knowledge and theories of the topic which contributed to our formulation of research strategy.

4.3. Data Gathering

4.3.1. Previous Research

The literary research was made through the SSE library database, and complemented with articles from The Royal Musical Institute’s (Kungliga Musikhögskolan) database. To retain focus on the more current industry environment, some research is also extracted from recent Swedish media publications and carefully reviewed to ensure its credibility.

4.3.2. Semi-structured In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were decided as the qualitative data collecting method as it allows for unplanned ideas to emerge whilst remaining aligned with the research topic (Bryman & Bell, 2015). If the questions were fully structured or if the interviews were to be conducted in text-format, it would induce the risk of losing valuable, spontaneous insights. The respondents in turn were decided upon based on specific requirements, described in section 4.3.3. In order to ensure an industry representative sample, the respondents were also of different demographic characteristics such as age, gender and education. The sample also included people with different work areas of the industry (as shown in Table 1) in order to receive a broad perspective and insights from different corners of the industry.

| Line of work | Age range | Characteristics | Reference |
|------------------------|-----------|--|-----------|
| Industry Professionals | 35-45 | Artist & strategy manager and founder at music related creative bureau | R1 |
| | 18-25 | Board member of Svensk Live & DMA, artist booker, lecturer, festival organizer | R2 |
| | 45-60 | Previous venue owner, artist booker, and sound engineer at a small venue in Stockholm | R3 |
| Musical Artist | 25-35 | Educated musical artist, currently singer on music tour | R4 |
| | 25-35 | Educated musical artist, currently on musical tour | R5 |
| | 25-35 | Educated musical artist, currently unemployed | R6 |
| | 25-35 | Educated musical artist, currently working in another industry | R7 |
| | 18-25 | Educated musical artist, currently singer on music tour | R8 |
| Musician / Artist | 18-25 | Previously member of famous artist group, currently freelancing artist | R9 |
| | 18-25 | Educated musician, currently freelancing musician | R10 |
| | 25-35 | Educated musician, currently freelancing musician | R11 |
| | 45-60 | Educated musician, renowned guitarist, music teacher, currently freelancing musician and teacher | R12 |
| | 25-35 | Educated music producer, currently freelancing DJ, musician and artist | R13 |
| | 25-35 | Educated musician, currently freelancing musician | R14 |

Table 1. The respondents individual traits

The 14 respondents were either previous colleagues, friends and acquaints, or industry professionals who we believed had valuable insights. A few were also provided through the snowball effect (Bryman & Bell, 2015), where the respondents connected us with other relevant people to interview. The vast majority of interviews were held through video conference and lasted for 40-60 minutes depending on the detail of discussion and ability to answer the questions. During the interviews, one of us asked questions and kept the discussion going, whilst the other one took notes and recorded the whole conversation. The recorded interview(s) were also transcribed during and, if necessary, after the interview. After each interview, we discussed the respondents' answers to ensure we had a common interpretation, and only went back to interviews where we had different interpretations. Depending on type of work, the questions also varied in order to better suit the respondents expertise. The interviews were also held in the respondents' and our own native language, Swedish, in order to avoid any possible limitations from language barriers. Research suggests that it is recommended to remain with the original language as long as possible (van Nes et al., 2010), hence the translations of quotes and interpretations were made right before the writing process. The two general questionnaires', translated from Swedish to English, can be found in the Appendix.

4.3.3. Interviewee Profile Requirements

The required profile(s) for the interview subjects included several factors. Firstly, they were to be professional and active within any of the specified fields of the live music industry of Stockholm. That is, being a professional and active musician or being an industry professional. A 'musician' to this report's definition is, as described in section 2.3, either an instrumental musician, artist, musical artist, DJ or singer. 'Industry professional' includes e.g. an artist-booker, venue owner, or person in a professional and relevant position with significant knowledge and expertise of the topic. Secondly, all interviewees were to be active in, or greatly knowledgeable of the Stockholm live music industry.

4.3.4. Anonymity

This thesis conserves the anonymity of all respondents, as required by the Stockholm School of Economics.

4.4. Methodology Discussion

This section includes a discussion of the trustworthiness of the thesis, using the four quality criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.4.1. Trustworthiness

Credibility

There are four suggested strategies for credibility, whereas it is up to the researchers to determine which strategy, or strategies, are most suitable (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For this thesis, the two main strategies applied are *prolonged engagement* and *persistent observation*. Prolonged engagement has been applied through one of the researchers on-going professional work as a musician for several years, providing a wide scope of the topic. The aim with prolonged engagement is to build trust with participants and become aware of the breadth of variation of the phenomena (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which was achieved through most participants being previous colleagues or friends within the field. Complementary to prolonged engagement, persistent observation was applied in order to provide knowledgeable depth. All data was regularly discussed and revised, and a couple of field studies to larger and smaller live music events were conducted in an attempt to further engage in the heart of the market. However, as these field trips were engaging and arguably motivational, it had no deeper impact on the study and was therefore excluded as a part of the methodology. Some participants have also been observed “behind-the-scenes”, e.g. during working-hours off-stage, to gain insights on a deeper level.

Transferability

The findings in this thesis can not be generalized due the qualitative method of data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), but is rather a perspective contributing to a narrowed topic. Nonetheless, the findings may be applicable in different geographical contexts, especially in different cities in Sweden, as several aspects are similar or equal around the country, e.g. regulations, inflationary impact, and competition. Though it is difficult for the authors behind a qualitative research to determine transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the findings may as

well be applicable in other countries with similar market structures, and possibly even cross-industrially in industries with similar structures, e.g. events or theater.

Dependability

The distribution of respondents is 6 instrumental musicians, 5 musical artists and 3 non-musician industry professionals. We aimed to include the three industry professionals as a complement to our interviews with musicians in order to gain a wider perspective on the industry as a whole. Although the distribution of musicians is slightly slanted towards instrumental musicians, it could definitely be argued that the distribution is quite even between the two “categories”, especially taking into account that most musicians working in the industry are not limited to their specific professions and often take on other roles as needed (Everts et al., 2022). Thus we argue that although the distribution is not completely even between our musicians, their experiences nevertheless reflect the industry fairly. To increase dependability, the study has also been reviewed and simultaneously discussed with a supervisor at Stockholm School of Economics.

Confirmability

To reveal possible disagreements or incorrect interpretations, the findings of the study were discussed with some of the respondents. If the authors appeared out-of-line, the findings were discussed and only revised if concluded to be wrongly interpreted. The interview data was also connected and compared to previous literature and current media publications to strengthen the confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although it is possible that the authors’ personal values and beliefs may have afflicted the confirmability of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2015), the authors have endeavored to be completely unbiased and disregard all personal motivations when constructing the findings.

4.4.2. Limitations

One early discovered limitation regards the lack of previous research on the live music industry, especially broader analyses on specifically live music. It has required us to complement our pre-study with similar studies within other geographic areas than Stockholm and Sweden, and with papers regarding live music from other perspectives. As this has led to a limited overview of our setting of the topic apart from our own discoveries, it has also led to the opportunity to

contribute with analyses and results that have never previously been researched. Another limitation regards the demographics of our respondents; the majority of respondents are quite newly professionally active, and may have a less detailed understanding of the industry as a whole. Although a few respondents have more experience than others, our results portray the most recurring themes from the interviews, possibly providing results weighted towards the perspectives from newly professionals due to their majority. Nonetheless, the perspectives generally had no significant difference depending on demographics, and we therefore argue that our results can be regarded as valid for the industry as a whole.

5. Research & Data

As a method of reaching a high level of qualitative rigor and trustworthiness, the data has been reviewed and themed using the Gioia methodology as a frame for structuring (Gioia et al., 2013). Before gathering the qualitative data, some theories had emerged through research of previous literature and various publications which aided in formulating the questions. The new data gathered from the 14 semi-structured interviews provided new ideas of the previous theories, which have been open-coded into first order categories and second order themes. The categories and themes are then further categorized into two overarching dimensions which aim to, on the broadest possible level, explain the results of the research. The first overarching dimension includes second order themes aligned with the PESTLE framework whilst capturing the main concepts from the data. The second overarching dimension is built upon the psychological patterns that emerged, and were considered outside of the more practical PESTLE framework. The first order categories were realized by reviewing the emerging patterns by connecting their relevance and recurrence to our research questions. The aim was to gather the most prominent categories and themes from the data that could answer the research questions of (1) *What are the key characteristics and trends of the live music industry in Stockholm at present?* and (2) *In what ways does the current condition of the live music industry in Stockholm impact the experiences and livelihoods of musicians?*. The categories, themes and respective representative quotes can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Dimensions, Themes, Categories and Quotes

| Second-order themes and First-order categories | Representative quotes |
|--|--|
| Overarching dimension: PESTLE analysis of the live music industry in Stockholm | |
| 1. Political / Unrewarding efforts | |
| A. Lack of knowledge | A1. I am not very aware of the subject (R3) |
| B. Insufficient subsidies | A3. Our company received a huge subsidy because we had a great pitch and barely any other live music-companies applied. (R1) B1. The recent subsidies towards live music have been wrongly distributed. Most subsidies went to niche music groups or genres, leaving pop-culture musicians with little or zero financial support. (R12) B2. There are not many money incentives to apply for if you're not a child or an established actor on the market. (R2) B3. Subsidies lacks control, some actors receive a lot whilst others receive nothing (R12) |
| C. Diminishing political support | C1. Subsidies to cultural schools and community colleges have diminished since the new [2022] government (R12) C2. The government now focuses more on a business driven community rather than a culturally enriched community (R12) |
| 2. Economic / Challenging economic landscape | |
| D. Insufficient funds | D1. The minimum wage for musicians is 5500 [SEK] per gig, and it is very rare to receive that amount (R10) D2. You have to work an extreme amount even to get a decent monthly salary, and salaries have not changed since around the 80's. (R12) |
| E. Effect of inflation | D3. It has become more common that the first cost saving incentive by large companies and artists is to remove musicians. (R11) E1. Ticket prices increase, causing consumers to not prioritize live music. (R2) E2. Salaries have generally never been this low, whilst living costs have increased. (R10) |
| F. Post-COVID effects | E3. Private companies have been much more damaged than state-owned institutions due to unfair dividing of financial support (R4) F1. People are still afraid and also unaccustomed to attending live events. (R4) F3. Everyone wants to recoup the economic losses from COVID, so there are more productions now than ever whilst prices are at a peak as well. (R10) |
| 3. Socio-cultural / Unsophisticated market | |
| G. Unstructured job applications | G1. [Musicians] It is uncommon with an application process, it is usually just based on social chemistry. (R14) G2: [Musical artists] You send in a photo and CV and then audition. But it is mainly about contacts. (R4) |
| H. Supply > Demand | H1. There are way more musicians than there are job opportunities. (R13) H2. One could argue that there are currently too many productions. (R12) |
| I. Unqualified decision-makers | I1. Within musicals, most directors are dancers and not directors, causing a wrongful assessment of broader talent. (R8) I2. Politicians and officials are generally incompetent within the area unless they have industry experience. (R2) |
| J. Industry uncertainty | J1. You always have to look for your next job, you can never relax. (R4) |
| 4. Technological / Technological speculations | |
| K. Changing consumer behavior | K1. People have become comfortable, and if they can experience a similar solution from their sofa, they probably will. (R6) |
| L. Live music will live on | L1. Live music gives a certain feeling to the customer and will never be exchanged by for example AI. (R10) |
| M. New offerings on the market | M1. Live music will become more online integrated, for example with QR-codes leading to related information or videos (R2) |

5. Legal / Few and aggravating laws and regulations

- N. Lack of employer regulations
- O. Noise laws
- P. Closing of small venues

M2. New technologies such as AI will be great for promotional purposes, but it will not take over the live music experience. (R12)

N1. There are no regulations regarding work environment, employment or insurance that helps. You are rather free and unprotected as a freelance musician. (R12)

O1. Some venues have to close down because of neighbors complaining about loud noises. (R13)

P1. Small venues are disappearing because of doubtful owners. [...] Small venues will probably be gone in the near future. (R3)

6. Environmental / Unusual with environmental efforts

- Q. Unprioritized by musicians
- R. Cultural within subgenres

Q1. The industry have a lot of climate activist, but I have never heard anyone considering environmental issues in any production (R10)

R1. Some sub genres have environmental issues incorporated in their culture. (R5)

Overarching dimension: Musicians' psychological aspects

7. Dissatisfaction with market standards

- S. Varying work motivation
- T. Higher education is less important to employers
- U. Underestimation of work effort
- V. Negative future expectations
- W. Social expectancy

S1. Motivation to work is extremely high, but the constant job uncertainty is also extremely stressful. (R5)

T1. There are so many skilled, newly educated musicians that are unemployed. Education was important for employment before, but no longer. [...] There are so many musical artists who paid a large tuition for education who never even get the chance to work. (R5)

T2. Some jobs require education, but it is no longer necessary. (R13)

U1. It is important for employers to understand that the working hours are a lot more than just the hour of performance. It can seem like requiring 5500 [SEK] for a gig is a lot, but there is so much unseen effort behind it. (R10)

V1. The government does not seem to care too much about culture, so it will negatively affect the cash flows of the industry. (R2)

W1. You are expected to be less demanding compared to academically educated people. You are supposed to be pleased with any position, salary and employer. (R5)

8. Immense satisfaction with career choice

- X. Passion drives satisfaction
- Y. Unwillingness to change industry
- Z. Positive future expectations

X1. If I did not feel like the industry fulfilled my needs, I would have stopped. Even though it is hard, I have so much fun. (R6)

X2. I would rather do what I enjoy for minimum wage than work with something unenjoyable for more wage. (R9)

X3. You are often unemployed and you never know when the next job opportunity shows up, but my passion keeps me going. (R4)

Y1. I would never recommend the industry to anyone, but I would never exchange my career choice for something else. (R2)

Y2. Even though the industry is uncertain, I cannot imagine a life in another industry. (R8)

Z1. There are a lot of old decision-makers with old ways of thinking. When the new younger generation takes over, things will hopefully change to the better. (R5)

Z2. Live music will always exist, but its format may change. [...] There are currently so many online music platforms which may cause a reaction if people become tired of it. I believe people are getting more interested in the live scene again. (R12)

Z3. Live music is becoming more popular which must be mirrored in government budgets, not only for big actors but also smaller actors to provide variation. [...] Hopefully, decision-makers will realize the importance of keeping music culture alive. (R14)

Categories, Themes and Aggregated Theoretical Dimensions

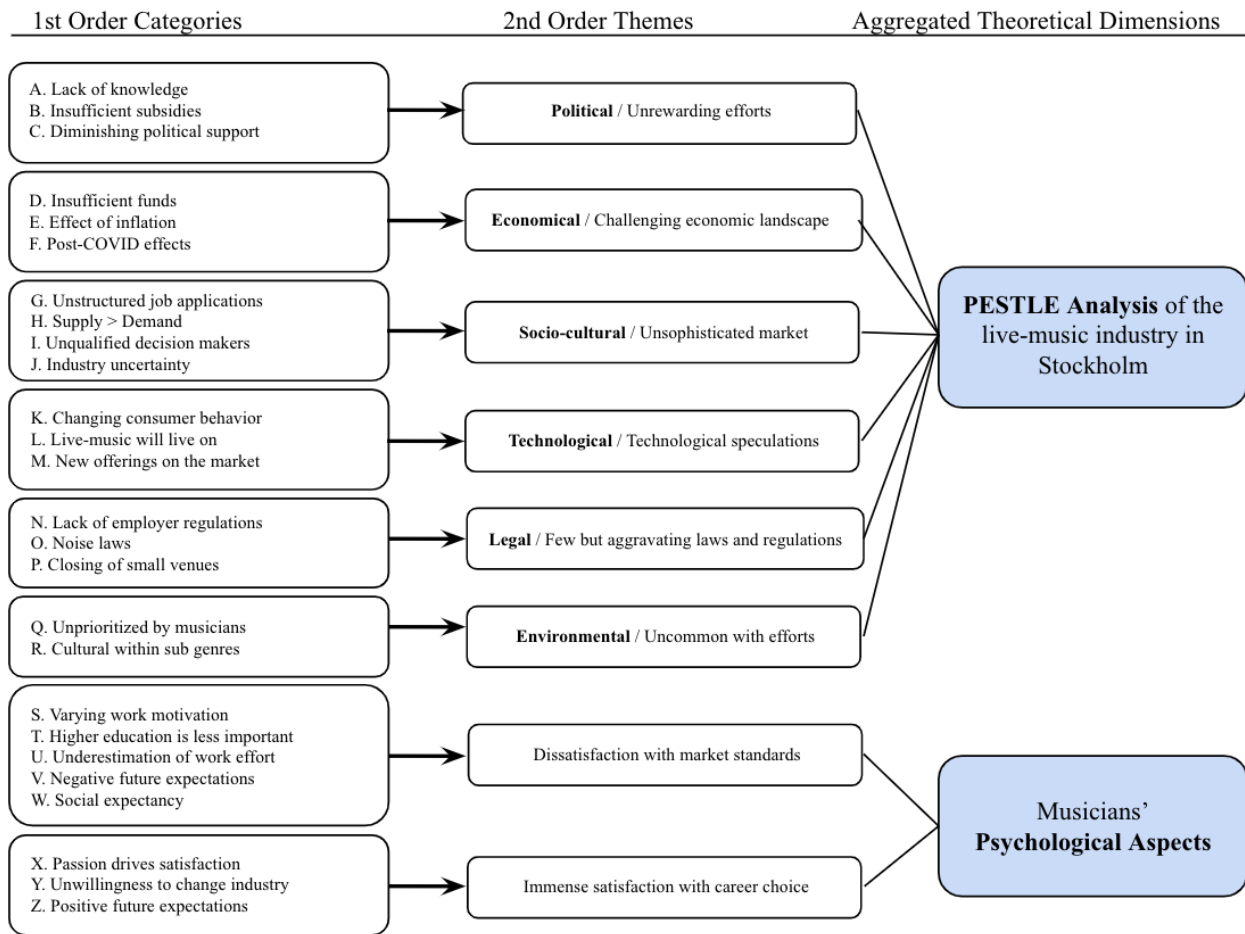


Figure 3: Data structure

6. Analysis

This section presents the findings and provides analyses of the first order themes regarding both the PESTLE analysis and the psychological aspects of musicians in Stockholm. The parts include a deeper recognition of the themes, with some aspects being analyzed and visualized with relevant models. The analysis is presented according to the structure of the previously presented Gioia methodology.

6.1. PESTLE Analysis of the Live Music Industry in Stockholm

6.1.1. **Political** / Unrewarding Efforts

Lack of knowledge

Knowledge regarding political aspects of the industry appears to be very rare, especially among the younger interviewees. Whether this is a result due to lack of interest, a prioritization issue, bad communication efforts from politicians, or something else, is unclear. However, as political questions were generally difficult for the participants to answer, it can be concluded that the political efforts toward the live music industry in Stockholm are either barely receiving public attention, or the industry-workers share no interest or willingness to participate in the subject.

Insufficient subsidies

Although many industries suffered financial losses during the pandemic, the live music industry was particularly affected. The live music industry has always been a financially struggling industry, but with the pandemic, the Swedish government and other cultural institutions provided very large subsidies to aid for the sudden economic losses (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2022). There are still subsidies for the live music industry even after the pandemic, so we aimed to understand how these subsidies have been distributed and managed.

The most prominent finding is that the vast majority of respondents argued that the subsidies have been very poorly managed, with several respondents suggesting that the predominant share of money goes to niche music genres, specifically ‘art music’, leaving large actors within popular culture without any support. R12, for instance, said: “the recent subsidies towards live music have been wrongly distributed. Most subsidies went to niche music groups or genres, leaving pop-culture musicians with little or zero financial support”.

Many respondents had a similar view on the topic, but it was also argued that the problem is not the predetermined genres that receive subsidies, but rather the lack of control over the distribution itself. Respondent R12 discussed how the governmental institutions had to transfer employees from non-cultural grant institutions to cultural grant institutions to be able to handle

the huge increase of applications during the pandemic. This caused a lack of cultural knowledge among the subsidy distributors which led to wrongly distributed subsidies, according to R12.

On the other hand, respondent R1 had a different view on the topic which changes the conclusion of the theme. He suggested that there in fact were a lot of available subsidies, but that barely any music-related company applied. He said that his company received a large subsidy because they “had a great pitch and barely any other live music companies applied”. Furthermore, respondent R3 argued that some grant institutions handled subsidies with excellence, whereas others were disastrous.

R1’s and R3’s opinions cause disruption in the idea of the reason behind insufficient subsidies, leading to the two theories of either (1) *Subsidies are poorly managed and wrongly distributed by delegators*, or (2) *Insufficient subsidies are due to lack of applications and applicant effort*. However, it is important to mention that both R1 and R3 applied for subsidies toward ‘non-musically-performing companies’, i.e. neither of them are musicians as their companies work more with management, production, and bookings, and they may thus have had less competition compared to all independent musicians applying. The most reasonable conclusion is thus that the major subsidy insufficiency problem is towards musicians, whereas live music related companies seem to have less of an obstacle.

Diminishing political support

Even though the live music industry suffered severe economic losses during the pandemic, the new government, elected at the end of 2022, has lowered the budget toward the culture, including support toward live music. The cultural budget will during 2023 decrease with SEK 1b, meaning a decrease from about SEK 10Bn to SEK 9Bn, however these cuts are mainly due to the abolishing of pandemic-related subsidies (Regeringen, 2022). One severe cut is toward cultural schools and community colleges, with a 50% cut from SEK 200M to SEK 100M. This significant cut was discussed with R12 who suggests that it will lead to less opportunity for young musicians in the beginning of their career. Furthermore, R12 suggested that the reason behind the cuts is that “the government now focuses more on a business driven community rather than a culturally enriched community”.

On a general note, even though not all respondents were able to answer in detail about the Swedish government's political efforts toward live music, every respondent had a negative response toward the political support. Thus, even though the suggested recent increased sentiment toward culture from politicians (Lindstedt, 2023), it can be concluded that the general idea among industry-workers is that Swedish politics are not in favor of the growth of live music.

6.1.2. **Economic** / Challenging Economic Landscape

Insufficient funds

Every respondent agreed that the industry is very financially challenging to work in as salaries tend to be very low. R10 discussed that the minimum wage for live music performances is 5500 SEK, but that it is “very rare to receive that amount”. Some respondents suggested that the low salaries is an effect of companies' economic losses from the pandemic, however others argue that the salaries simply have not changed for a large number of years. R12, who has been a musician for about 40 years, revealed that salaries actually have not changed since the 80s.

R12 also mentioned that “you have to work an extreme amount even to get a decent monthly salary”, which is easier said than done. Not only can it be physically and mentally exhausting, but most respondents are also very concerned about the difficulty of finding a job. Many respondents explained how they are often unemployed and how they have to take jobs in other industries to make ends meet. According to R11, the demand for musicians has also decreased with the uprising of digital tools. As many live music companies currently struggle financially, R11 suggests that “it has become more common that the first cost saving incentive by large companies and artists is to remove musicians [in exchange for more cost-saving digital tools]”.

Our main theory behind the cause of the low wages regards the high supply of labor, i.e. musicians, in contrast to the low demand for labor due to the low supply of work opportunities. From a macroeconomic perspective, it is suggested that when there is a high supply but low demand of labor, it results in low wages (Kwon, 2014).

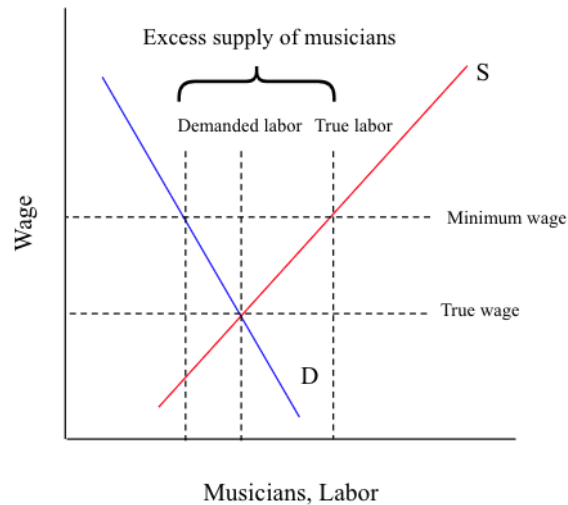


Figure 4: Supply and demand of musicians in Stockholm

Figure 4 above is not created from numerical data, but only visualizes the discussed theory of how the excess supply of musicians leads to the currently low wages in the live music industry in Stockholm, and can explain the general struggle of making ends meet for its musicians.

Even though salaries tend to be low, most respondents have experience with productions that have been able to offer “fair” salaries, i.e. equal to or above the minimum wage. Thus, it suggests that insufficient funds does not have to be a general fact among all actors on the market. It was also often mentioned how the salaries reflect the amount of work you have on stage, but also to what extent you are renowned among the audience. Leading roles tend to receive higher salaries than smaller roles, and famous musicians tend to receive higher salaries independent of amount of work.

Effect of inflation

The currently high inflation rate is another very relevant factor affecting the live music industry. Most respondents agree that the increased price of living has caused a decreased consumer demand for live music, as consumers deprioritize entertainment spending. Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a framework, the reason behind consumers' general prioritizations of consumption can be visualized and more easily understood. Humans have certain needs that are of different importance, which thus creates a list of priorities (Maslow, 1943), as visualized in Figure 5. Figure 6 shows the imbalance in consumers' wanted prices in the live-music industry.

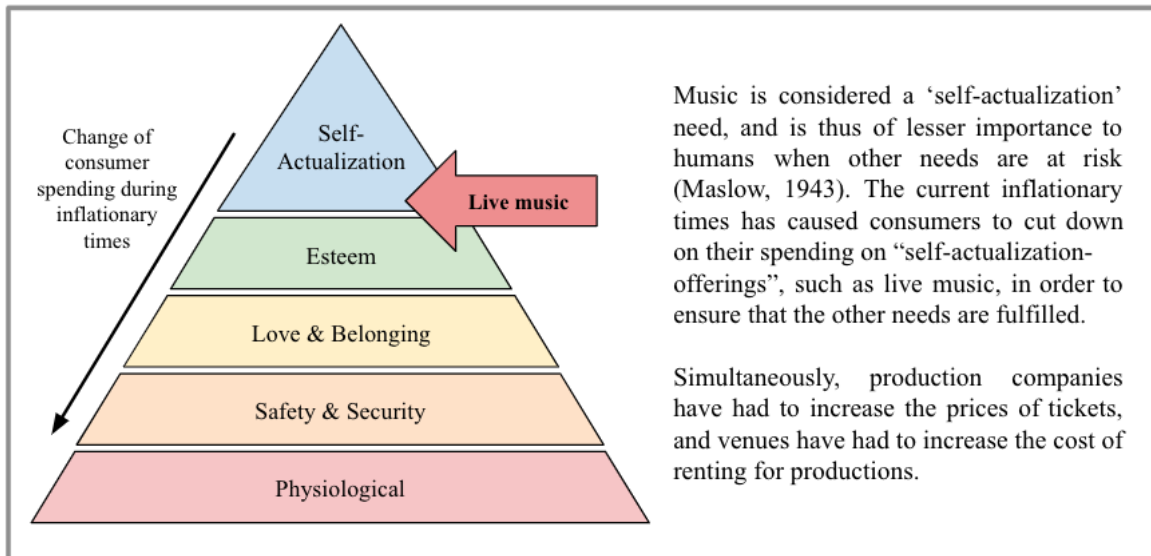


Figure 5: Consumers' change of spending - based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs

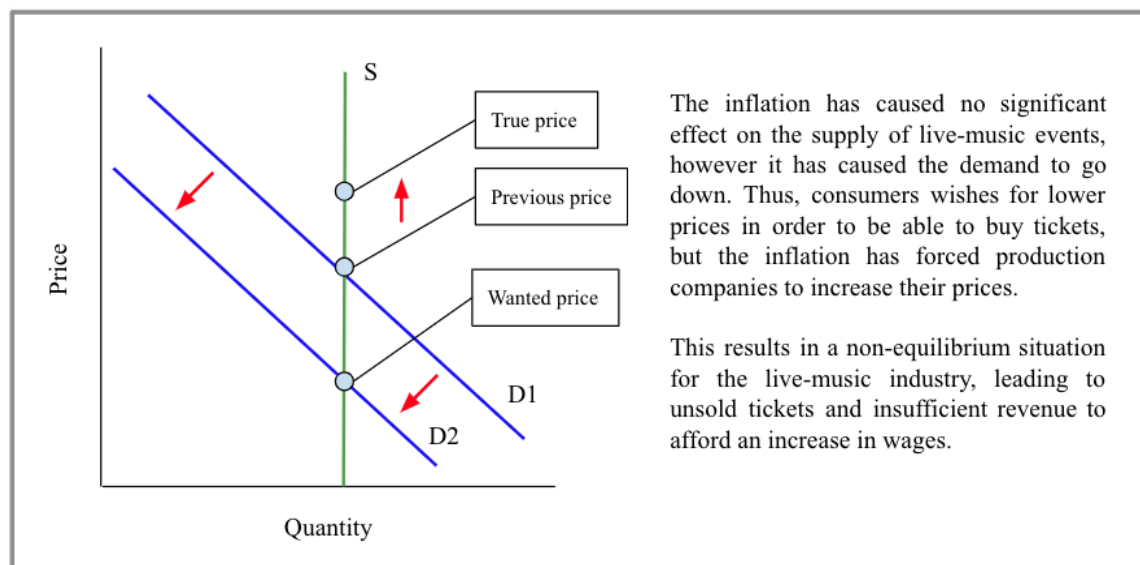


Figure 6: The change of consumer demand and prices as a result of the inflation

As consumers' demand for live music has decreased, the industry workers have in different ways been affected. Musicians are mostly concerned with how their own cost of living has increased, whilst salaries have remained on the same level, or in some cases decreased. As described earlier, it is very rare to receive the minimum wage for performances, and the inflation has lowered musicians' negotiating power even further, something that R10 has emphasized; "you had to fight

for 4000 [SEK] a few years ago, and now it has become even more difficult as prices have increased and employers can not afford more”, he said.

As musicians have had to accept the low salaries during the current inflationary times, production companies, venues, and other live music related companies have had to deal with increased operational costs. The vast majority of culture subsidies are granted to government-owned cultural institutions, which R4 emphasizes as “*unfair as they have different prerequisites*” due to being governmentally owned and therefore financially supported. This creates an environment where some production companies can better deal with their increased costs, whereas others have to deal with a more cost challenging environment.

Post-COVID effects

Even though the societal restrictions from the pandemic have been removed and COVID-19 no longer is considered a threat to public health, all respondents suggest that it has caused repercussions in the industry. The most recurring theme regards the explosion of productions that are available on the market after the restrictions were removed. R10 said that “everyone wants to recoup the economic losses from COVID, so there are more productions now than ever whilst prices are at a peak as well”. Hence, every production company wants to make up for the economic losses during the pandemic, leading to a massive variety of live music productions available and up-and-coming around Stockholm.

However, even though demand naturally increased as consumers were allowed to attend live music events again, it seems as if production companies overestimated the demand. Several respondents discussed how consumers are still afraid of COVID-19, but are also unaccustomed to attending live events. Furthermore, it is suggested that consumers have become more comfortable as a consequence of being forced to stay home, and thus buy less live music tickets now than before the pandemic. Hence, what happened after the restrictions were removed was that production companies anticipated a large customer demand, and pushed the supply onto the market. The opposite approach would be a pull strategy, where supply would be driven by the actual customer demand instead of a forecasted demand (Harrison, 2007). Our analysis from the responses is that live music companies generally operate with a push supply strategy, as

visualized in Figure 7, which is one strategic factor explaining the cause for unsold tickets, not only post-pandemic, but in general.

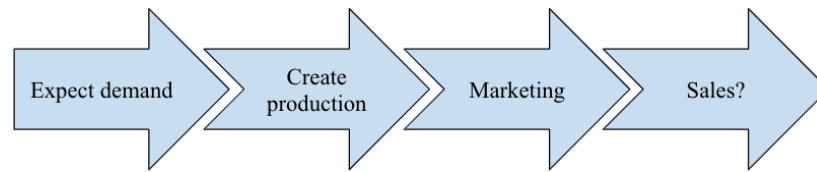


Figure 7: Push strategy of live music productions

Since all live music production companies, musicians, artists etc. expected a greater demand after the restrictions were removed, an explosion of productions occurred and is still ongoing. The pandemic caused an aggregate demand shock, forcing demand for live music to hit zero with supply to follow. The respondents argued that everyone thought that demand would reach higher levels post-pandemic than pre-pandemic, however as described above, that was not the case. The graphs in Figure 8 below visualizes the demand and supply progress from pre-pandemic until today, and acts as a visual aid to explain the discussed current gap between supply and demand caused by the aftermath of the pandemic, as interpreted by the respondents.

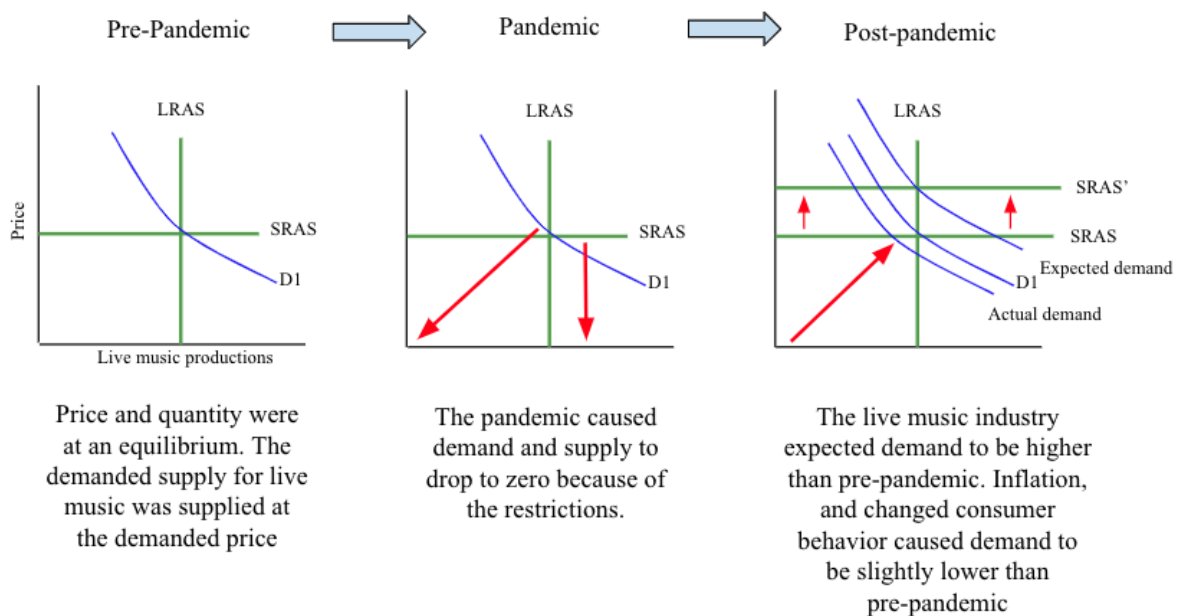


Figure 8: AD-AS Model applied to pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic

Our theory based on this analysis is that the current gap between the supply and demand is the main cause for the large amount of unsold tickets compared to pre-pandemic. The prevalent issue of a decrease in sold tickets has been suggested by several of the respondents. Whether demand

eventually will increase to meet the short-term aggregate supply, or if short-term aggregate supply will meet the demand is difficult to tell. However, what several respondents suspect is that supply will remain at this level for many years forward. R2 said that “productions stacked up during the pandemic, and the large amount of productions will continue to exist in the upcoming years”, which based on this theory can only imply that the live music industry will continue to suffer economic losses unless demand suddenly increases significantly.

6.1.3. **Socio-Cultural** / Unsophisticated Market

Unstructured job applications

The structure for job applications in the live music industry differs in many ways from other industries. Perhaps the most prominent analysis is that there seldom is any structure for figuring out which productions are hiring musicians, or how and where to apply. All musical artists explained similarly that the process usually involves sending a CV, going on audition(s), and then either getting accepted or rejected. However, most of them emphasized the importance of knowing the director, or any other decision-maker within the production, to even have a slight chance of getting a job. R8, for instance, said that “we [musical artists] know when productions are looking for musical artists, but the ones who get callbacks and eventually the job usually just happen to know the right people”.

Knowing the right people seems to be the general case to get a job for all types of musicians. The instrumental musicians explained similar to musical artists that there is barely any structure, but rather about contacts and social chemistry. Some respondents explained that you often get a job by coincidence, whilst others talked about more strategic approaches, i.e. actively participating in social gatherings, being socially competent, or sending out emails. However, most respondents could not explain how the actual process goes, but rather the qualities needed to be offered a job.

There is no real application process, it just happens naturally. If I, for example, substitute for a friend and it appears that the social chemistry among the group works, they may offer me more jobs in the future.

(R14)

Apart from the application processes within the live music industry being unstructured, another conclusion is that nepotism seems to be a well-established, and perhaps even a socially accepted practice. Perhaps nepotism is another cause for the high rate of unemployment as it risks letting the same workers continuously being employed, preventing other musicians from being offered a job.

Supply > Demand

It has become clear from the interviews that there is an excess of supply of both labor, but also live music offerings in relation to demand. As the interviews have provided several factors explaining the different issues within the live music industry, we have come to the conclusion that excess supply is the overarching problem. The respondents have discussed issues within several of the tiers in the live music supply chain. First, there is an excess of labor as to what is demanded. The reason behind the excess supply, according to the respondents, is partly due to an excess of educated workers whilst uneducated people, e.g. famous people, get hired in their stead for marketing and publicity purposes. The excess of employers, i.e. productions, in contrast to available forums and consumer demand is motivated by the explosion of productions after the pandemic, as explained in section 6.1.2. The lack of forums mainly include smaller venues which during recent times have had to close down, which will be discussed in section 6.1.5. Figure 9 below visualizes the different tiers within the supply chain and their respective size in contrast to each other, and gives an overview of the industry-wide challenge of unbalanced supply and demand.

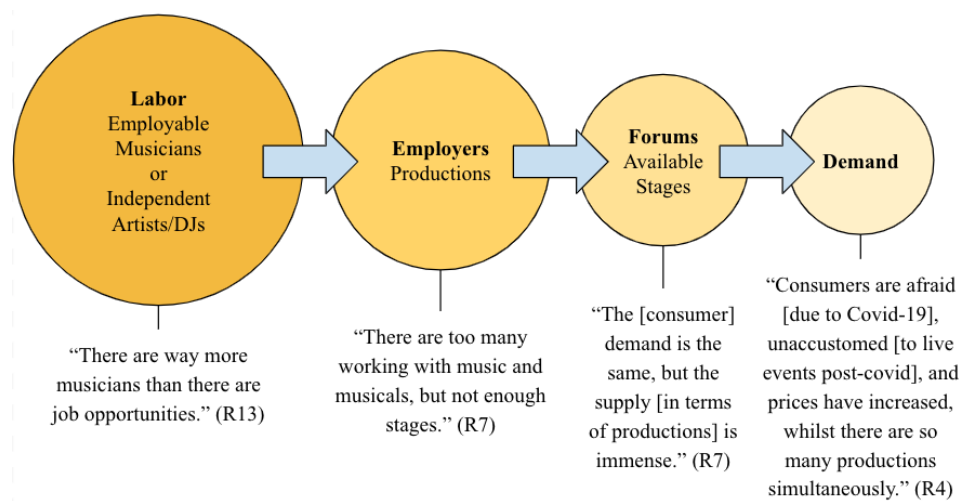


Figure 9: The excess of supply in contrast to demand in the supply-chain

Unqualified decision-makers

Whether decision-makers in general are unqualified for their position in the industry appears to be relative to every respondents previous experiences. However, some common themes were identified, including musical artists suggesting that it has become very common for professional dancers to work as directors. They suggest that these unqualified directors lead to lesser artistic quality of productions, but also how the directors misjudge job applicants due to their lack of knowledge within music and acting. R4 emphasized the situation, and said that “before, you had to be qualified to land a role, but now when choreographers are directors, it is common with wrong assessments”.

Apart from directors, the general idea among the respondents is that decision-makers are often unqualified, but that there is a broad variety of competence within the industry. Some discussed how producers seldom have an education within the field and often lack necessary knowledge of their role’s responsibilities. Others mentioned that internships are common in important roles as a cost-saving measure, but explained how it leads to less structure due to their lack of experience. Several respondents also discussed their dissatisfaction toward politicians, with the main argument that the only qualified cultural politicians are those who originate from the music industry. However, a few respondents suggest that there are a lot of competent decision-makers as well and that the live music industry is no different than any other industry. R7 even said, “It’s more of the opposite. Many who work in this industry are knowledgeable and genuinely care”.

Industry uncertainty

All these discussed factors lead to the perhaps most prominent theme among all musicians, the industry uncertainty. It is rare to have a long-term job, as most jobs only last for a few months. This leads to a general uncertainty of future income, and requires musicians to be in constant search for new job opportunities. R6 emphasized this, saying that “you are often unemployed, and you never know what or when your next job is gonna be. [...] People are always applying for new jobs, but the uncertainty is very stressful”. As previously concluded, the reason behind the uncertainty is, according to the respondents, the lack of job opportunities in contrast to available labor.

Furthermore, with salaries generally being low, workers often have to look for alternative income sources on the side whilst working or applying for jobs within their profession. However, in contrast to Everts et al.'s similar research where 82% of respondents had another source of income, only 43% of our respondents did. Based on the respondents' answers, this does not mirror the whole industry but is rather a coincidence; the live music industry in Stockholm is more likely to be similar to Everts et al.'s (2022) results. Several respondents explained that they have just recently managed to make a living solely from the industry, but have always had other sources of income before. However, it is possible that our results provide evidence that even though the Stockholm live music industry is uncertain, it is a more available market for musicians compared to the Netherlands or Britain, studied by Everts et al. (2022). Yet, regardless if this is true or not, it does not deny the general feeling of uncertainty experienced by the musicians in Stockholm.

6.1.4. **Technological** / Technological Speculations

Changing consumer behavior

As a consequence of the pandemic, several respondents discussed how consumer behavior has changed in various ways and how it may affect digital alternatives to live music. It is suggested that consumers have become more lazy and digitally connected, leading to new opportunities to consume music which may compete with the live experience. Even though consumer behavior may have changed to be more open to stay-home music experiences, the general idea is that it currently has little to no effect on the live music industry. However, some respondents suspect that this may change in the future when live-streaming becomes a more established channel.

I hope live-streaming won't become more popular, but unfortunately I believe it will. People have become comfortable, and if they can experience a similar solution from their sofa, they probably will. (R6)

Live music will live on

Even though some respondents believe digital alternatives to live music will rise in popularity, the vast majority of the respondents does not fear that live music will suffer as a consequence.

On the contrary to the previously stated theme of a changing consumer behavior toward laziness and attraction to stay-at-home solutions, other respondents suggested that consumer behavior rather has gone the opposite way after the pandemic. R4, for instance, suggested that “everyone is tired of live-streaming after the pandemic, it is not the same thing as live music”.

These respondents argue that live music cannot be compared to digital music experiences, and will therefore not be exchanged; the live-experience with an audience, a live-band, and live-sound gives a certain feeling that consumers demand. However, it should be noted that it is likely that the respondents' opinions are biased since their profession concerns live music.

New offerings on the market

Whether new technologies will affect the demand for live music or not does not deny that it is likely to have an impact on the operations around it. Every respondent agrees that new offerings such as live-streaming and AI will in some way complement or be integrated into the industry. Some respondents suggested that AI will be a more cost-effective tool than hiring e.g. sound engineers or backline technicians, leading to less work opportunities in the industry in general. Another suggestion is that “live music will become more online integrated, for example with QR-codes leading to related information or videos”, suggested by R2.

Several respondents also mentioned the new “hologram-method” used to revive the Swedish band ABBA in concert in London as an upcoming offering. It is suggested that hologram-concerts may become a more established way of experiencing live music in the future. R7, for instance, said that “holograms will be a challenger to musicians as it will enable companies to generate sales from consumers who grew up with artists or bands that no longer perform”.

6.1.5. Legal / Few and Aggravating Laws and Regulations

Lack of employer regulations

Not many respondents have experience of certain laws that affect their profession. Perhaps this is correlated with other respondents suggesting that there in fact are barely any laws or regulations

around the musicians' work. Respondent R12, who has been in the industry since the 80's, discussed how certain live music related companies can "act as they please", and was also very critical to the lack of insurances and regulations around the working environment for musicians; "there are no regulations regarding work environment, employment or insurance that helps. You are rather free and unprotected as a freelance musician", he said. Based on the respondents, it can thus be concluded that another factor affecting the general uncertainty in the industry is the lack of regulations that benefit and protect the rights of freelance musicians, meaning most musicians.

Noise laws

Even though many respondents were unable to mention any conflicting laws within their work, those who had something to say mostly discussed the "noise-laws". The noise regulations imply that live music is not allowed to exceed a certain decibel in order to not disturb neighbors. It can be very difficult for venues to fulfill this regulation, especially since they have to make all the sound-isolating investments themselves, and some venues are even unable to reach such sound levels due to the architecture of the building. R3 discussed how it can be very financially challenging to make sound-isolating investments since venues already have difficulties with gaining capital. On top of this, each noise complaint must be investigated by authorities through measuring volumes, which is an expense that the venues' themselves must pay for.

Stockholm has to solve this problem. Perhaps the law does not have to change, but the government must understand the problems that arise because of the law and figure out how to help the venues to follow it. (R3)

Closing of small venues

During recent years, more and more small venues have closed, jeopardizing opportunities for new musicians and artists to begin their live-career. The closing is partly due to complaining neighbors arguing with the noise-law at their side, but also due to the Alcohol Act (Socialdepartementet 2022) that requires venues to receive permission to serve alcohol. The permission also gives direction within which hours that alcohol serving is permitted. Certain standards must be met to receive such permission, and if the licensing authority suggests a venue does not meet those standards, they have the authority to decline the permission and also require earlier closing times. Losing the permission is likely to lead to closure, as consumers generally

request alcohol in connection to live music events. R3, who until recently owned a small concert venue in Stockholm, discussed how the combination of the noise law and the Alcohol Act led to their closure.

The Alcohol Act was established to catch criminals but it is being used to cancel small venues who have just been [financially] unlucky. Our venue was closed because of the Alcohol Act and due to noise [complaints]. (R3)

R3 also discussed how the government sets the same legal demands on small venues and large venues, even though they have completely different circumstances. These different circumstances, e.g. capital, location, resources, and capabilities, makes such demands much more challenging for smaller venues, which suggestively is the cause for the diminishing amount of small venues in Stockholm. The closing of smaller venues causes a negative effect on the live music assortment and variety for Stockholms live music consumers, but the smaller venues are also an essential platform for unestablished bands, musicians, and artists to reach an audience and try out material; “if small venues ceases to exist, that opportunity disappears for musicians”, as suggested by R3.

These legal challenges lead to unwillingness to invest in smaller venues, and according to R3, will lead to fewer, or even the ceasing of small venues in the future. Some stages are currently starting to move outside the inner-city borders of Stockholm, consequently creating a less centralized and culturally lively Stockholm. Venues outside of the city-center will likely also be less valuable for young musicians trying to build a career, as it is less attractive for consumers to travel long distances for smaller live music events. The closing of small venues was also emphasized by several other respondents.

6.1.6. Environmental / Uncommon with Environmental Efforts

Unprioritized by musicians

Environmental work was in the interviews often cited as difficult to integrate with the interviewees’ roles as musicians. The musicians cited their main environmental footprint as

emissions from transport, which was difficult to compromise on due to their need to get to venues and gigs. R3 also mentioned that in contrast to large international artists, “the [smaller] bands can’t afford to fly; they’re driving around in cars or traveling by train”.

In a more general sense, some respondents mentioned that stage lights with a smaller environmental footprint had been introduced on some gigs and shows they had worked on, and others brought up environmental work at festivals where it is common with recycling stations for attendees to recycle their trash. Both of the bookers interviewed felt that the industry in general is conscious over the environmental effects caused by live music, however small actors do not have as much of an environmental footprint, nor do they have as much influence or capital with which to reduce it.

Cultural within sub-genres

Although the live music industry in general was not cited to be particularly active in its environmental work, one respondent noted that in certain music cultures, such as the hardcore wave, the environment holds an especially strong role as a defining value of the sub-culture. In these concerts and festivals leaning towards hardcore, it is common for only vegan food to be sold and for attendees to take a strong responsibility in ensuring the location of the event, especially if outdoors, is taken care of and left unaffected by the event.

6.2. Musicians’ Psychological Aspects

6.2.1. Dissatisfaction With Market Standards

Varying work motivation

We have concluded that the work motivation varies between individuals due to their relative circumstances and psychological state. Those who are motivated argue that their motivation is rooted in their passion for the industry, even though they all suggest that it is a challenging environment. Respondents are generally very motivated to work, but unmotivated to keep struggling on the uncertain, job-applying side of the industry.

Everyone I know in the industry has a tough time with regular unemployment and uncertainty, but stays put because of their great passion for the work. [...] The motivation to work is very high, otherwise we would not continue in this industry. (R4)

However, most respondents had negative descriptions related to motivation. Discussions regarded the exhaustion and psychological challenges that arise after a long time period of declined job-applications, little or no salary, and the on-going inner conflict between choosing to follow one's passion, or to apply for jobs in other industries in order to ensure a more stable financial income. The respondents are well aware of the harsh environment and must often remind themselves of their personal reason for continuing, or even ignore the reality as a technique to overcome its burden. R13 even suggested that “you have to train yourself to be naive in order to keep up the motivation”.

Higher education is less important

Within most industries, higher education has, as a predictor, shown to greatly affect the chances of being employed (Ali & Jalal, 2018). However, within the live music industry, education is important to gain necessary skills, but less important for employment according to the respondents. Most of our respondents have higher education within their field, and therefore suggest that it is very unmotivating to lose an employment opportunity to someone suggestively less skilled. Some employers require applicants to have higher education, but several respondents discussed how it has become less common. Everyone agrees that it is important to have the necessary skills, but the certificate of higher education itself is of lesser importance. This problematizes the importance of education within the music-industry emphasized by Rodblom & Nyman (2020), as it might diminish the incentive to undergo higher education within the field. If this continues, our hypothesis is that the industry workers will be less skilled in the future, and the general quality of live music will decrease; something that respondent R4 discussed is already visible in the industry: “You can notice a qualitative difference in professional productions if the musicians are educated or not”, she said.

Underestimation of work effort

Several respondents discussed how employers and bookers generally underestimate the work required around the actual performance, and therefore have a distorted view of what is fair work compensation. Behind e.g. a one hour performance, there is hours of practice, transportation costs, purchasing and maintenance of expensive gear, and planning. The recommended minimum wage of 5500 SEK can suddenly appear as very little if you accumulate the hours put into a job.

It is important for employers to understand that the working hours are a lot more than just the hour of performance. It can seem like requiring 5500 [SEK] for a gig is a lot, but there is so much unseen effort behind it. (R10)

However, the interview with R3, one of the artist bookers, provided a different perspective on the topic. R3 suggested that artists and bands in Stockholm generally expect the venues to pay them fairly even though there is no guarantee that they will generate sales for the venues. Musicians and venues must “split the risk”, and musicians cannot expect to get well-paid if they have no leverage, e.g. social fame, that guarantees a sales-generating audience. R3 further explained that such monetary risks are “impossible for small venues to take”.

Referring back to the musicians’ perspective, some respondents actually discussed how they do not expect much payment from smaller venues. A common theme was how musicians generally do not have fixed monetary requirements, but that the expected payment rather is relative to who the employer is and what economic conditions they have. Thus, it appears that there either is a miscommunication between bookers and musicians, or perhaps R3 had experiences that do not mirror the general truth of the industry.

Negative future expectations

Regarding future expectancy, about half of the respondents had reason to believe that the future will be even more challenging. One factor is the previously analyzed low efforts from politicians, which respondents argue will cause more closed venues, lowered budgets, and even less money in the system. This particularly pertains to less established musicians and venues, whereas large venues and famous musicians are expected to have an increasing success.

Regarding the work of musicians, the negative responses about the future regarded assumptions of how the challenging work environment will remain, and how employers will keep taking low risks by preferably hiring famous people before professionals. Our own analysis, based on the responses, suggests that the increasing supply of professional musicians and productions will lead to an increase of unemployment and less industry profitability. The major contradiction would be if demand vastly increases in the upcoming years. Furthermore, as some respondents suggest, a diminishing of existing small venues consequently leading to a challenging environment for newly started musicians and bands seem to be a likely outcome. At least if governmental decisions continue the trend of being challenging toward small venues and unestablished musicians.

Social expectancy

One interesting aspect brought up by a few respondents suggests that musicians and workers of the industry are expected to have less demands and work expectations compared to academically educated persons within other industries. R5, for instance, said that, “you are expected to be less demanding compared to academically educated people. You are supposed to be pleased with any position, salary and employer”. As no arguments were presented as to why this might be the case, our analysis suggests that this could be a result of the excess supply of labor. The immense supply of professional and skilled labor leads to a lack of leverage to make demands on the employer because of the low barrier to exchange employees.

6.2.2. Immense Satisfaction With Career Choice

Passion drives satisfaction

It can be summarized that the general perception of the industry is that it is very challenging, and that conditions are far from favorable for its workers. However, when respondents were asked if they are satisfied with their career choice, every respondent was satisfied, mostly even to a great extent. Everyone's reason behind this fascinating phenomena, is based on their ingrained passion for their work and the immense satisfaction and self-actualization achieved when performing. Even if this case arguably is an extreme situation of satisfaction independent of environment, the

phenomenon can in part be seen in the concept of ‘motivation crowding effect’ as well. ‘Motivation crowding effect’ suggests that external incentives, such as monetary incentives like bonuses and high wages, have the possibility of undermining intrinsic motivation (Frey & Jegen, 2001). This crowding-out effect is especially strong when intrinsic motivation is strong, such as in ethically leaning work, or work where passion holds a strong component (Festré & Garrouste, 2015), such as in music. ‘Motivation crowding effect’ can therefore explain why musicians’ strong intrinsic motivation and satisfaction with their work is unrelated to their financial compensation.

This phenomenon can also be seen in literature, as noted in Everts et al. (2022), and shows that the unstable and insecure nature of working as a musician in the music industry is outweighed by the satisfaction of being able to pursue their musical goals. The theory might also explain why some musicians prefer making non-commercial and “artistic” music (“l’art pour l’art”) (Everts et al., 2022), as they view financial and commercial success and compensation as “sully” their artistic work and inherent passionate motivation for their artistic craft, again mirroring the sentiment in the ‘motivation crowding effect’ (Frey & Jegen, 2001).

Unwillingness to change industry

Regardless of its challenging environment, the majority of respondents were also unwilling to change industry and line of work. Only five interviewees worked or studied within another industry, however only one of them did it full-time. One of the five interviewees studied to become a music teacher, another worked part-time as a music teacher, and two worked or studied within another industry only to make ends meet during times of unemployment within the live music industry. The rest of the interviewees were unwilling to change main occupation. Hence, it can be suggested that most musicians and live music workers have accepted the unwritten, challenging terms of the industry, and are determined to continue despite the struggle.

Positive future expectations

Around half of the interviewees were noted to have positive expectations on the future of the industry. The most recurring themes on the topic included: the integration of the younger generation with new ideas and values, an expected increase in demand due to tiredness of digital music, and a general hope that politicians will understand the importance of culture in society.

However, most future expectations were based on hopes and wishes without underlying arguments. The more argumentative expectations included: the impossibility to exchange live music and therefore demand will always exist, suggestions that live music is becoming increasingly popular among consumers, and that there are an increasing amount of social incentives against the use of digital platforms, possibly benefiting live-experiences. One of the bookers, R3, also explained that “people are talking very differently about workers' well-being after the pandemic”, as an argument for why the psychological challenges are improving in the industry. It is also suggested in literature that the future looks bright for musicians. An article from 2020 used Strategic Foresight and Hajkowicz’s Global Megatrends as a guiding framework to conclude that live performances will be of great value and be increasingly demanded in the future (Tolmie, 2020).

7. Discussion

Using PESTLE as a framework during the interviews, it eventually became clear that live music industry workers are more affected and concerned by some aspects than others. The economic and socio-cultural aspects seem to be the most common topics of discussion within the industry based on the respondents' detailed reflections on those aspects. Our theory is that the major finding of supply and demand being unbalanced in the industry on several levels, mainly affects economic and socio-cultural measures.

While our research has managed to formulate an in-depth industry analysis from musicians’ and industry professionals’ perspectives, as well as defined several factors affecting the labors’ work environment, the findings regarding supply and demand have provided a theory that may explain the root of the challenges in the live music industry. During the analysis, we explained how the vast supply of labor in contrast to the low consumer demand is the cause of low wages, unemployment, and unsold tickets. Thus, our theory suggests that as long as supply exceeds demand, the challenges will remain.

Differentiated from what we learn in economics theory where supply and demand moves towards an equilibrium, the live music industry appears to move further away from it on several levels.

Firstly, the already existing excess of labor is increasing with the rise of non-educated actors getting employed, causing an even broader gap between available labor and work opportunities. Secondly, the aftermath of COVID-19 has led to an explosion of productions, which overwhelms the amount of available stages, but more importantly the consumer demand. Unexpectedly by the industry, consumer demand appears to have decreased after the pandemic compared to pre-pandemic, whilst production companies have applied a push strategy, hoping to restore the economic losses from the pandemic by producing even more. The consumers on the other hand are not willing to pay increased prices for music events, partly due to the increased financial stress of the inflationary economy, and partly due to their decreased habit of attending live events post-pandemic. This leads to unsold tickets, leading to less profitable or even unprofitable employers, which eventually leads to even less work opportunities for the ‘passionate labor’ if it continues down this road. If the gap between supply and demand continues in opposite directions, the industry circumstances will probably become even harsher. It might be time for politicians to further prioritize the live music industry and establish regulations or insurances that create a more balanced and fair working-environment for musicians.

But on the other hand, why is it that this challenging situation has occurred? We learned from the respondents that unqualified decision-makers are common, and we cannot avoid asking if it might be the cause for the challenging environment. Is it the overall structure and ecosystem of the live music industry that is a difficult playground to begin with, or is it the decision-makers that simply are unable to grasp the roots of the challenges and thus are unknowledgeable of any solution?

A point of discussion is also the structuring of findings and arguments throughout the thesis. A PESTLE model was used to ensure coverage of several aspects within the industry when conducting interviews, but was used to a higher degree in structuring findings in the post-interview process. A market and industry analysis, such as this one, poses challenges partly in organizing findings in a comprehensible and transparent way. Throughout the interviews, we noted that our findings not only deviated from the PESTLE categories at times, but that the ecosystem discussed in interviews and in our analysis section was also too complex to be completely covered by a PESTLE. This could be seen as a limitation of using the PESTLE

model, however when noting themes not consistent with the PESTLE categories, i.e. the psychological aspects discussed by our musicians, we chose to include them outside of our more environment-focused PESTLE analysis. By using this separation in our themes, the phenomenon found in our interview study were included in our analysis despite their divergence from initial categories. It can thus be noted that there are factors that affect the state of the industry apart from environmental themes, such as those used in PESTLE. Perhaps the psychological aspects not only shape the musicians' perspectives, but also impacts the workers' culture within the industry. The negative perspectives on the industry does not necessarily have to be based on experiences, but could also be a consequence of the industry's culture.

Independent of what causes the industry's challenges, it is a fact that its workers go through a struggle. Every respondent had several concerns about their profession, and a general dissatisfaction toward the environment of the industry was clearly concluded. But nonetheless, every respondent was extremely satisfied with their choice of career. During the interviews, we found it remarkable how respondents' could discuss their dissatisfactions, complaints and psychological distress from the industry, but then eventually - most of the time without thinking - reveal how satisfied they are with their choice of career. It is a truly fascinating phenomena how one's passion can overcome such immense practical challenges. We suggest that this phenomena is another indirect cause for the challenges in the industry as well. Since the majority of the labor is satisfied with the industry standards, there is no incentive for decision-makers to attempt changing the workers' environment. One can thus ask: if musicians continue to resign themselves to the challenges of the current live music environment, will the industry ever improve for musicians?

8. Further Research

While our research filled a niched gap within current research of the topic, our process has inspired us to provide several suggestions to further research. The niched topic itself could be further distinguished to understand the differences in detail between specific types of live performances; for example by differentiating the research into more distinct categories, e.g. live music on small venues, live music on large venues, festivals, established artists, troubadours, or

producers. Similar research could also be conducted in different geographical areas, enabling comparisons between cities and countries. We also argue that a qualitative research method with the perspectives of the labor force in focus, generates results which seldom are brought up to light. Hence, it could be interesting to research the state of other industries from the perspective of its labor.

9. Bibliography

ALBINSSON, S., 2021. Musikindustrin och musikpolitiken i Sverige 1919–2019. *Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidsskrift*, 24(2), pp. 221-236.

ALBINSSON, S., 2018. Musicians as entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs as musicians? *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 27(3), pp. 348-357.

ALI, M.S. and JALAL, H., 2018. Higher Education as a Predictor of Employment: The World of Work Perspective. *Bulletin of education and research*, 40(2), pp. 79.

BAINES, P., FILL, C., ROSENGREN, S. and ANTONETTI, P., 2019. *Marketing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

BHANGU, S., PROVOST, F. and CADUFF, C., 2023. Introduction to qualitative research methods – Part I. *Perspectives in clinical research*, 14(1), pp. 39-42.

BRUNER, R., 2021. The Livestream Show Will Go On. How COVID Has Changed Live Music Forever. *Time (Chicago, Ill.)*, 197(15),.

BRYMAN, A. and BELL, E., 2015. *Business research methods*. 4 edn. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

BRYMAN, A. and BELL, E., 2013. *Företagsekonomiska forskningsmetoder*. 2 edn. Stockholm: Liber.

COLLINS, A. and COOPER, C., 2017. Measuring and managing the environmental impact of festivals: the contribution of the Ecological Footprint. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(1), pp. 148-162.

CORNER, A., 2021, Apr 27. ‘Time to shake things up’: music industry confronts climate crisis as gigs resume. *The Guardian*.

DAMMBERG, H., 2022. Regeringen vill effektivisera folkbildningen – oro för nedskärningar. *Sveriges Radio*.

DENK, J., BURMESTER, A., KANDZIORA, M. and CLEMENT, M., 2022. The impact of COVID-19 on music consumption and music spending. *PLoS ONE*, 17(5),.

ELLMIEIER, A., 2003. Cultural entrepreneurialism: on the changing relationship between the arts, culture and employment1. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 9(1), pp. 3-16.

EVERTS, R. and HAYNES, J., 2021. Taking care of business: The routines and rationales of early-career musicians in the Dutch and British music industries. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 24(5), pp. 731-748.

EVERTS, R., HITTERS, E. and BERKERS, P., 2022. The working life of musicians: mapping the work activities and values of early-career pop musicians in the Dutch music industry. *Creative Industries Journal*, 15(1), pp. 97-117.

FALK, F., 2022. Regeringens budget slår hårt – oro på skånska folkhögskolor. *Sveriges Radio*.

- FAUGHNDER, R., 2021, Jun 24,. What Zoom fatigue? Pandemic virtual concerts may have changed live music forever. *latimes.com*.
- FESTRÉ, A. and GARROUSTE, P., 2015. THEORY AND EVIDENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY AND ECONOMICS ABOUT MOTIVATION CROWDING OUT: A POSSIBLE CONVERGENCE? *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 29(2), pp. 339-356.
- FLEISCHER, R., 2018. Vad betyder det att musik är "live"? In: J. BJÖRKMAN and A. JARRICK, eds, *Musikens makt*. Göteborg: Makadam förlag, pp. 217-231.
- FREY, B.S. and JEGEN, R., 2001. Motivation Crowding Theory. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 15(5), pp. 589-611.
- GIOIA, D.A., CORLEY, K.G. and HAMILTON, A.L., 2013. Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), pp. 15-31.
- GUILLOU, A., 2022, Nov 23. Livebranschen oroad efter konkursen: "Många har det tufft". Sveriges Television.
- HAIDL, K., 2022, Jun 17,. Så påverkas livebranschen av inflationen. Dagens Nyheter.
- HARRISON, A., 2007. Logistics Management and Strategy. Strategic direction (Bradford, England), 23(3),.
- HOOSHMAND, R., SUNG, B., JEFFERIES, K., JEFFERIES, R. and LIN, J., 2023. The impact of COVID-19 on regional event attendees' attitudes: a survey during and after COVID-19 lockdowns. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 14(1), pp. 73-91.
- JEANNOTTE, M.S., 2021. When the gigs are gone: Valuing arts, culture and media in the COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 3(1), pp. 100097.
- KORSTJENS, I. and MOSER, A., 2018. Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *The European journal of general practice*, 24(1), pp. 120-124.
- KWON, H.S., 2014. Economic Theories of Low-Wage Work. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 24(1), pp. 61-70.
- LINCOLN, Y.S. and GUBA, E.G., 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. 3. print. edn. Beverly Hills [u.a.]: Sage Publ.
- LINDSTEDT, M., 2023, Feb 14. Trendbrottet: Livescenerna i Stockholm ökar. Sveriges Television.
- LINDSTRÖM, S., 2016. Artists and multiple job holding-breadwinning work as mediating between Bohemian and entrepreneurial identities and behavior. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, 6(3), pp. 43-58.
- LONSDALE, A.J. and NORTH, A.C., 2011. Why do we listen to music? A uses and gratifications analysis. *British Journal of Psychology*, 102(1), pp. 108-134.
- MAGNI, F., 2023. Value creation and appropriation in the live music industry: a population ecology analysis of live music ticket pricing. *Journal of media business studies*, 20(2), pp. 137-157.
- MANKIW, N.G., 2019. *Macroeconomics*. 11 edn. New York, NY: Macmillan International Higher Education.
- MASLOW, A.H., 1943. A theory of human motivation. *Psychological review*, 50(4), pp. 370-396.
- MONTORO-PONS, J. and CUADRADO-GARCÍA, M., 2016. Unveiling Latent Demand in the Cultural Industries: An Application to Live Music Participation. *International journal of arts management*, 18(3), pp. 5-24.
- NAUMANEN, C., 2017. *Maktens Musik: En vitbok om popmusiken och den svenska kulturpolitiken*. Svensk Live.
- NICHOLLS, K., 2022, Aug 10. Climate and Environment: Sustainable Practices and Challenges for Touring Musicians. Musicians' Union.

- PEREZ-MONTEAGUDO, A. and CURRAS-PEREZ, R., 2022. Live and online music festivals in the COVID-19 era: analysis of motivational differences and value perceptions. *Revista brasileira de gestão de negócios*, 24(3), pp. 420-438.
- PORTNOFF, L., 2022. Musikbranschen i siffror 2009-2021. Musiksverige.
- PORTNOFF, L. and INGLER, A., 2020a. De ekonomiska effekterna av Covid-19 i musikbranschen. Musiksverige.
- PORTNOFF, L. and INGLER, A., 2020b. Musikbranschen i siffror: Statistik för 2009-2019 samt estimat för 2020. Musiksverige.
- REGERINGEN, 2022. *Budgetproposition 2022: Utgiftsområde 17 Kultur, medier, trossamfund och fritid*.
- RENTFROW, P.J., 2012. The Role of Music in Everyday Life: Current Directions in the Social Psychology of Music. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 6(5), pp. 402-416.
- RIGG, J. and BOFINGER, I., 2022. The Recovery of the Live Music Industry – An imperative to the Future of Tertiary Music institutions in Australia. UBSS.
- RODBLOM, J. and NYMAN, O., 2020. Musikbranschens kompetens och utveckling 2020-2025. Musiksverige.
- RYDBERG, N., LINDSTEDT, M. and DAVID, J., 2022. Var tredje livescen i Stockholms innerstad har försvunnit. Sveriges Radio.
- SILVA, J.H.O., FAVORETTO, C., AMANCIO, I.R., GANGA, G.M.D., LIZARELLI, F.L. and MENDES, G.H.S., 2022. Consumer behavioral intention to use restaurant, concert and education services online during and after the COVID-19 pandemic: evidence from Brazil. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 14(3), pp. 504-523.
- SOCIALDEPARTEMENTET, 2022. Alkohollag . Regeringskansliet.
- STATISTISKA CENTRALBYRÅN, 2022. *Sveriges ekonomi - Statistiskt perspektiv*. scb.se: .
- TAYLOR, I.A., RAINE, S. and HAMILTON, C., 2021. Crisis as a Catalyst for Change: COVID-19, Spatiality and the UK Live Music Industry. *IASPM Journal*, 11(1), pp. 6-21.
- TAYLOR, I.A., RAINE, S. and HAMILTON, C., 2020. COVID-19 and the UK Live Music Industry: A Crisis of Spatial Materiality. *The Journal of Media Art Study and Theory*, 1(2), pp. 219-241.
- TIDNINGARNAS TELEGRAMBYRÅ, 2022, Jun 11,. Matpriserna steg rekordmycket i maj: ”Det blir värre”. Dagens Nyheter.
- TOLMIE, D., 2020. 2050 And beyond: A futurist perspective on musicians' livelihoods. *Music education research*, 22(5), pp. 596-610.
- UTBILDNINGSDEPARTEMENTET, Nov 21, 2022-last update, Utbildningsdepartementets samlade budgetsatsningar 2023. Available: <https://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2022/11/utbildningsdepartementets-samlade-budgetsatsningar-2023/> [Apr 3, 2023].
- VAN DER HOEVEN, A. and HITTERS, E., 2019. The social and cultural values of live music: Sustaining urban live music ecologies. *Cities*, 90, pp. 263-271.
- VAN NES, F., ABMA, T., JONSSON, H. and DEEG, D., 2010. Language differences in qualitative research: is meaning lost in translation? *Eur J Ageing*, 7, pp. 313–316.

10. Appendix

Interview Questions

The interview questions were originally in Swedish, but have been translated for the purpose of non-swedish-speakers to understand the thesis.

To: Musicians

- 1) Are you employed or work as a freelancer?
- 2) Are you educated within your work area?
- 3) Sweden, and more specifically Stockholm, is internationally renowned as a strong force within music. Do you agree? Why/why not?
- 4) How would you describe the industry as of today?
- 5) How do you get jobs?
 - a) How do you know of available jobs?
 - b) Is there generally a structure to how to apply for jobs?
- 6) Are there many productions as of currently?
 - a) What type of live productions are currently mainly being produced?
 - i) Have you noticed any change?
- 7) Is it easy or difficult to get a job?
 - a) Do you feel that there is a lot of competition?
 - b) Are there many available jobs?
- 8) Do you feel that the pay is fair?
 - a) If not, what is expected/fair pay?
- 9) What is your take on consumers' interest in live music?
 - a) Has the interest increased/decreased?
 - b) What are consumers interested in? Has it changed?
 - c) How do you think consumers find new live music events to attend? Do you think they actively look for new things?
- 10) Do you feel that decision-makers in the industry often are unqualified for their role/assignment?
- 11) How have industry stakeholders been affected by the current state of the industry, e.g. with inflation and post-COVID? Have some been more affected than others?
- 12) How would you say the general motivation looks like, personally and for everyone in the industry?
- 13) Do you have any expectations about the industry in the future?
- 14) Is it important for you which specific scene you perform on? Why/why not?
- 15) How do you attract consumers to live-events that you are involved in?
- 16) Do you think that Stockholm/Sweden's politics are supportive of live music? Why/why not?
- 17) Have you received any subsidies during the recent harsh periods?
 - a) If yes, why do you think you received it?

To: Live music related position

- 1) How would you describe the industry as of today?
- 2) Are there many productions as of currently?
 - a) What type of live productions are currently mainly being produced?
 - i) Have you noticed any change?
 - b) How do you think it will change in the future?
- 3) What is your take on consumers' interest in live music?
 - a) Has the interest increased/decreased?
 - b) What are consumers interested in? Has it changed?
 - c) How do you think consumers find new live music events to attend? Do you think they actively look for new things?
- 4) How have industry stakeholders been affected by the current state of the industry, e.g. with inflation and post-COVID? Have some been more affected than others?
- 5) Do you feel that decision-makers in the industry often are unqualified for their role/assignment?
- 6) (If venue owner or booker) Do you think consumers come to your venue because of the venue's attractiveness or because of the current performers?
- 7) How do you attract consumers to live-events that you are involved in?
- 8) How would you say the general motivation looks like, personally and for everyone in the industry?
- 9) Do you have any expectations about the industry in the future?
- 10) Do you think that Stockholm/Sweden's politics are supportive of live music? Why/why not?
- 11) Have you received any subsidies during the recent harsh periods?
 - a) If yes, why do you think you received it?
 - b) Do you think that the way subsidies have been handled has been handled correctly?
 - c) Do you think there have been enough subsidies?
- 12) Do you think that the worldwide economy affects the live music industry in Stockholm? How?
- 13) Do you think COVID-19 has affected the industry as it looks today?
- 14) Why do the industry look like it does as of currently do you think? What factors mainly affect its current state?
- 15) Which role do you think technology will have in the industry in the future?

- b) Do you think that the way subsidies have been handled has been handled correctly?
 - c) Do you think there have been enough subsidies?
 - 18) Do you make a living only from this industry or in any other way as well?
 - a) If yes, what are the major differences between the industries?
 - 19) Do you think that the worldwide economy affects the live music industry in Stockholm? How?
 - 20) Do you think COVID-19 has affected the industry as it looks today?
 - 21) Which role do you think technology will have in the industry in the future?
 - 22) Are there any laws or regulations that eases or aggravates your work within the industry?
 - 23) Is environmental sustainability something that is considered during live music performances?
 - 24) Are you pleased with your choice of career? Why/why not?
 - 25) Is there anything that you would like to bring forth? Anything of importance that we missed talking about?
 - 26) Is it OK if we reach back to you if any further questions appear?
- a) Do you have any thoughts regarding the ticket buying systems?
 - b) Do you have any thoughts regarding live-streaming of live music? Is it relevant for your line of work?
 - 16) Are there any laws or regulations that eases or aggravates your work within the industry?
 - 17) Is environmental sustainability something that is considered during live music performances?
 - 18) Sweden, and more specifically Stockholm, is internationally renowned as a strong force within music. Do you agree? Why/why not?
 - 19) What main challenges do you see for live music in Stockholm?
 - 20) Is there anything that you suggest is very good with the live music industry in Stockholm?
 - 21) Are you pleased with your choice of career? Why/why not?
 - 22) Is there anything that you would like to bring forth? Anything of importance that we missed talking about?
 - 23) Is it OK if we reach back to you if any further questions appear?