

Social Soundscapes: The Impact of Social Media on Live Concert Experiences

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INTRODUCTION

Motivation for project and problem definition

With the rise of the digital age, the landscape of live music experiences has undergone a profound transformation, revolutionizing how audiences interact with and perceive live concert performances. Traditional concert dynamics have become completely intertwined with modern technology, directly influencing how audiences engage, capture, and share these moments. The convergence between live and online realms has completely redefined the concert experiences, blurring the lines between the physical and digital worlds. Following the widespread adoption of smartphones and social media platforms, concert attendees now have unprecedented means of sharing their experiences to others across the globe in real time. With thousands of audience members recording performances, understanding the underlying motivations behind this widespread behavior has become increasingly crucial to comprehend the evolving dynamics of live music consumption. While some may record for personal keepsakes, others may be more motivated by the desire for social validation through sharing these videos on social media platforms. Developing a thorough understanding of these motivations is crucial for concert-organizers and researchers to adapt strategies that elevate the concert experience and engage with target audiences.

Background Information

With these notions in mind, consulting secondary data sources is imperative to grasp the complex nuances of social media and the psychological benefits of sharing experiential activities on these platforms. In the context of live concerts, esteemed author Elsa Wilson explores this discrepancy in intention in her Forbes article “Can’t stop the tweet: How Social Media is killing the Concert Experience.” Within this exposition, she claims, “The nearly limitless accessibility

provided by smartphones fuels the idea that sharing things is more important than doing things. While sharing might be caring, we must remember that obsessive documenting changes the artistic structure of a concert atmosphere. The need to document one's life in every detail is a mania that can subtract from one's enjoyment of the moment, and more emphatically, one's memory of a special event" (Wilson, 2015). The excessive focus on documentation of these events can significantly detract from the authenticity and overall enjoyment of the live experience, as well as posing a significant disruption to others. Consistently recording through a tiny screen emphasizes the importance of capturing the moment rather than being present. Sharing these experiences on social media platforms has become a way for individuals to seek validation from peers, boosting one's social standing and sense of belonging within a community of like-minded fans. Additionally, the *Journal of Consumer Research* journal article, "How the Intention to Share Can Undermine Enjoyment: Photo-taking Goals and Evaluation of Experiences" provides valuable insight into the internal mechanisms underlying the relationship between photo and video-recording intentions, enjoyment of experiences, and the evaluation of memories. After a throughout examination of consumer behavior in experiential settings, collaborations were able to conclude, "...The negative effects of photo sharing goals on current enjoyment are driven by heightened feelings of self-presentational concern. Taking photos to share with others increases feelings of anxiety to present oneself in a positive light, which in turn reduces enjoyment during the experience" (Barash et al, 2017). Instead of immersing oneself in the music and atmosphere of concerts, individuals may be more preoccupied with ensuring that their photos meet certain unspoken standards or convey a specific image to their online audience. The shift in focus from internal enjoyment to external validation tremendously diminishes the overall satisfaction of an experience. From a social psychology perspective, the *Journal of Social*

and Personal Relationships’ article, “A Boost of Positive Affect: The Perks of Positive Experiences” states, “... Participants who had shared their grateful experiences reported significantly more satisfaction with life, more happiness, and more validity than participants in either control condition. This indicates that there are salutary benefits unique to sharing one’s grateful experiences with another person as opposed to simply writing them or having a neutral interaction” (Lambert et al., 2012). When individuals share their concert experiences online, they are prone to receiving likes, comments, and other reactions from peers, reinforcing their overall enjoyment of the experience and strengthening their social bonds. With these experiences made public, individuals can engage in positive social comparisons and receive endless affirmations from others, contributing to a sense of validation, well-being, and fulfillment. Furthermore, incorporating the syndicated data source *Statista* enriches these findings with empirical evidence and quantitative analysis. In accordance with the insights extracted from the “Concert & Musical Festival Goers in the United States” target audience report, digital video content emerged as the most predominant form of video consumption, with 82% of 60,627 respondents favoring the content as of January of 2024 (Statista, 2024). The statistic revealing that digital video content is the most heavily consumed form of video directly correlates to the concert experience. More specifically, it highlights the extremely common practice of concert attendees capturing and sharing moments from live performances through smartphone recordings. Attendees can amplify the concert’s reach beyond the venue itself. The high consumption of digital video content suggests that the recordings are being captured and widely distributed and enjoyed among social networks. Understanding the complex interplay between social media, documentation behaviors, and the psychological benefits of sharing activities raises a question of how individuals navigate between the desire for validation and connection through sharing activities online.

Research Question

With the elements above in consideration, my research question entails: ““How does the availability of social media sharing opportunities influence audience engagement and perception of live concert experiences?””

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design Overview

The research question of the study aims to investigate the intricate relationship between social media sharing opportunities and concert experiences, emphasizing their impact on overall engagement levels among attendees. Through a structured online questionnaire distributed via a Qualtrics survey, the study targets concert attendees aged 18 and over who have attended a live concert in the past year. Employing an online convenience sampling approach, the survey will be distributed primarily through popular social media platforms and email lists of concert attendees sourced from reputable ticketing platforms such as Ticketmaster. Participants will be asked to report upon their mobile device usage during concerts, prominently targeting their specific social media activities, and reflect on their motivations behind using social media at these events. Through leveraging online platforms and email lists, the study seeks to gather extremely diverse perspectives and generate insights into the relationship between social media usage and audience engagement levels at live concerts.

Operational Definitions

Concept / Variable	Operational Definition
Social Media Sharing	Presence and accessibility of platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, Snapchat, X, and Facebook that enable users to share content related to live concert experiences. These sharing mechanics include photos, videos, live streams, live updates, and participation in online channels such as discussions.
Online Ticketing Platforms	Digital platforms that facilitate the purchase and sale of live concert tickets. Platforms such as Ticketmaster, Seat Geek, and StubHub provide users with an extremely convenient way to browse available events, select seats, make purchases, and receive digital or physical tickets for entry to the respective event.
Engagement Levels	Level of active involvement, interaction, and emotional connection experienced by the audience in a live concert setting. This includes observing if attendees are cheering, clapping, dancing, singing along, and interacting with the audiences around them versus viewing the performance through a screen to record the entire time. Audience engagement also encompasses indicators of overall attention to the performance, interest, and enjoyment observed by concert participants.
Perception of live concert experiences	Subjective interpretations of the overall concert experience, including the quality of the performance, atmosphere, opinions on the behaviors of others around them, emotional satisfaction levels of being in attendance.
Influence	The impact of social media sharing opportunities on both audience engagement and the perception of live concert experiences. From an operational standpoint, influencer refers to the degree to which social media sharing opportunities affect audience engagement levels. In the context of social media, influence is measured quantitatively through metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and views.

Data Collection Instruments

The specific data collection instrument for this study consists of a structured online questionnaire administered through the Qualtrics survey software. Participants will engage with various scales designed to capture their social media usage patterns during these events, noting the frequency, duration, and specific activities undertaken. Furthermore, the survey will

incorporate measurement scales to assess participants' engagement levels during these concerts, touching upon factors such as immersion in the music and overall atmosphere, interaction with other attendees, and overall satisfaction with the experience. Participants will continue reflecting on their motivations behind using social media platforms at concerts, shedding light on factors such as the desire for social validation, connection, and documentation of experiences. Detailed descriptions of these scales and measures can be found in the Appendix section of this study.

Data Collection Methods & Sampling Strategy

Through employing a structured online questionnaire Qualtrics survey as the primary means of data collection, the study seeks to generate effective insights from concert attendees in a convenient and accessible manner. The research design will employ an online convenience sampling approach across multiple channels, targeting United States Citizens aged 18 and above who have attended a live concert in the past year. The sampling frame includes participants from various geographic locations across the United States and demographic backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the music industry and its impact on audience bases across the globe. The survey will be distributed primarily through popular social media platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, Snapchat, X, and Facebook. Leveraging the extensive reach and engagement potential of these platforms can facilitate extremely broad participation and rapid distribution of the survey to diverse audiences. To ensure participation efforts, a collaboration with online ticketing platforms such as Ticketmaster, StubHub, Seat Geek will be pursued. Dedicated posts, sections, and banners will be incorporated onto the platforms' accounts, featuring information about the study and a direct and easily accessible link to the survey. These posts will be timed to coincide with peak engagement periods, such as before, during, and after major concert events. Participation will be encouraged through the entry into prize drawings for free concert tickets, merchandise,

and additionally exclusive offers. This will generate a sense of excitement and anticipation among participants to participate in the survey for a chance to win, minimizing the risk of non-response and self-selection biases. Additionally, the research design will reach participants through email lists, leveraging a curated list of ticket purchasers from the online ticketing platforms, concert venues, and event organizers. Through accessing these lists, the study can gain direct access to individuals who have been confirmed in attendance to these events. Personalized email invitations will be crafted and sent out to participants, inviting them to take part in the study by clicking on the Qualtrics survey link within the email. Relying on a multi-targeted collection approach ensures a more representative sample of participants, minimizing the risk of over or under representation from a certain channel in the study. Results will be verified through a variety of methods to ensure a robust approach. Beginning, pre-screening questions will be introduced to ensure that participants fall into the audience being targeted. Additionally, cross-referencing participants' responses with official ticket purchase records can help confirm their attendance at live concerts. Finally, limiting the survey usage to one per person through the Qualtrics setting "Prevent multiple submissions" will attempt to discourage individuals from submitting multiple responses, maintaining the integrity of the data collected. As a final layer, implementing reCAPTCHA human verification in Qualtrics will help prevent automated bots from completing the survey multiple times. Considering these conventions, the optimal sample size will be 1000 respondents. Given the complexity of the research question of the study, 1000 respondents will ensure the findings are statistically significant and able to ensure sufficient representation of the target population across the target audience. This sample size effectively strikes a balance between obtaining reliable results while maintaining a manageable scope for data collection and analysis

ANALYSIS STRATEGY

Proposed Analysis Strategy

The data generated in this study will combine a thorough analysis of statistical techniques. More specifically, descriptive statistics will be employed to provide a more comprehensive snapshot of participants' social media usage patterns during live concert events, audience engagement levels, and overall enjoyment levels. Continuing, a quantitative analysis can be employed to cross examine the relationships between social media usage and demographic and behavioral characteristics of participants. This entails examining how social media sharing opportunities influence audience engagement and perceptions of live concert experiences. Additionally, measuring the differences in relationships between demographic variables will be conducted. Examining factors such as age, gender, and geographic location will provide a more nuanced understanding of the findings. Graphical representations such as bar charts and scatter plots will be utilized to illustrate key findings which will enhance the interpretation of results.

Social Soundscapes: The Impact of Social Media on Live Concert Experiences Survey

Survey Flow

Block: SCREENING_QUESTIONS (5 Questions)
Standard: INTRO_QUESTIONS (1 Question)
Standard: SOCIAL_MEDIA_USAGE (4 Questions)
Standard: Block 5 (1 Question)
Standard: PSYCHOLOGICAL_MEASURE (1 Question)
Standard: CLOSING_QUESTION (1 Question)

Page Break

Start of Block: SCREENING_QUESTIONS

Introduction 🎵 **Hi there music lover!** 🎵

We are absolutely thrilled to have you participate in our survey focused on social media engagement during live concerts. Your insights will play a crucial role in helping us understand how social media impacts the concert experience. Whether you're a seasoned concertgoer or a more occasional attendee, your feedback is invaluable to us!

This survey will only take a few minutes of your time, and we promise it'll be worth it! **Additionally at the end, you'll have the chance to enter a raffle for some awesome prizes – including concert tickets and exclusive merchandise from various online ticketing platforms such as Ticketmaster, StubHub, and Seat Geek.** So, let's dive in and make some noise!

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers – we just want your honest opinions. And don't worry, all your responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for being a part of this journey!

Now, let's rock and roll! 🎸

Page Break

TRANSITION Before we delve into concert-specific inquiries, we have a few quick screening questions to ensure that we're capturing responses from those who attend concerts. Your honest answers will help us tailor the survey to your experiences.



reCAPTCHA
Please verify you are human.

Page Break

SCREENER1 *Demographic age included here placeholder question* If under 18 or over 35 years old options are selected, skip to end of survey.

Page Break

SCREENER2 In the last 365 days, have you attended a live music concert or festival in-person?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ I don't know (3)

Skip To: End of Survey If SCREENER2 = 2

Skip To: End of Survey If SCREENER2 = 3

Page Break

End of Block: SCREENING_QUESTIONS

Start of Block: INTRO_QUESTIONS

Page Break

INTRO How often do you attend live concerts or festivals in a typical year?

- ☐ Once a year (1)
- ☐ 2-3 times per year (2)
- ☐ 4-5 times per year (3)
- ☐ 6 or more times per year (4)
- ☐ I don't know (5)

Page Break _____

End of Block: INTRO_QUESTIONS

Start of Block: SOCIAL_MEDIA_USAGE

TRANSITION Next, we'd like to inquire about your behaviors and experiences at concerts with social media.



Page Break

DURING Do you engage in social media sharing activities **DURING** live concerts or festivals at the concert venue? (e.g., posting photos/videos, live streaming, sharing live updates)

[\\${SCREENER2/Question Text}](#)

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Maybe (3)

Skip To: End of Block If DURING = 2

Page Break

AFTER Do you engage in social media sharing activities **AFTER** living concerts or festivals?
(e.g., posting photos/videos, participating in online discussions about the event)
\${AFTER/ChoiceDescription/1}

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Maybe (3)

Skip To: End of Block If AFTER = 2

Page Break

Display This Question:

If DURING = 1

And AFTER = 1

SHARING How do you typically share your concert or festival experiences with others? Please select all that apply.

☐ Social media (Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, X, Facebook, etc.) (1)

☐ Messaging options (Texting, WhatsApp, Messenger) (2)

☐ In person face to face with friends and family (3)

☐ ☒ I don't share my concert experiences with others (4)

☐ Other (Please Specify) (5)

Page Break

End of Block: SOCIAL_MEDIA_USAGE

Start of Block: Block 5

TRANSITION Transitioning to a closer look at your concert experiences, please use the following matrix to indicate your behaviors and preferences during these events.



End of Block: Block 5

Start of Block: PSYCHOLOGICAL_MEASURE

Page Break

PREFERENCES, Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your use of social media during concerts.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I enjoy sharing concert experiences on social media platforms (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel compelled to record videos or take photos at concerts (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social media sharing enhances my overall concert experience (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I prefer experiencing concerts without distractions from my phone or social media (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Page Break

End of Block: PSYCHOLOGICAL_MEASURE

Start of Block: CLOSING_QUESTION

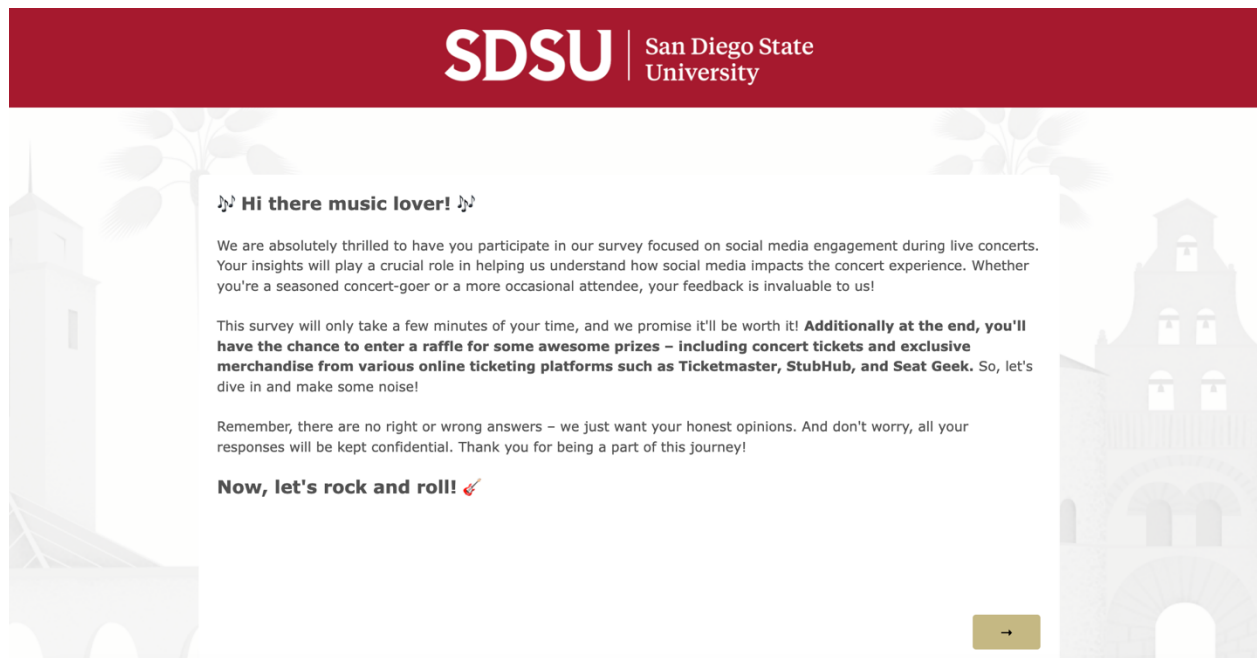
Page Break



OPEN Any additional comments or thoughts you'd like to share about your concert experiences?

End of Block: CLOSING_QUESTION

QUALTRICS SURVEY SCREENSHOTS



Before we delve into concert-specific inquiries, we have a few quick screening questions to ensure that we're capturing responses from those who attend concerts. Your honest answers will help us tailor the survey to your experiences.



Please verify you are human.



I'm not a robot



reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms



Demographic age included here placeholder question If under 18 or over 35 years old options are selected, skip to end of survey.



In the last 365 days, have you attended a live music concert or festival in-person?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know



How often do you attend live concerts or festivals in a typical year?

- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ 2-3 times per year
- ☐ 4-5 times per year
- ☐ 6 or more times per year
- ☐ I don't know



Next, we'd like to inquire about your behaviors and experiences at concerts with social media.



Do you engage in social media sharing activities **DURING** live concerts or festivals at the concert venue? (e.g, posting photos/videos, live streaming, sharing live updates) In the last 365 days, have you attended a live music concert or festival in-person?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe



Do you engage in social media sharing activities **AFTER** live concerts or festivals? (e.g, posting photos/videos, participating in online discussions about the event) Yes

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe



How do you typically share your concert or festival experiences with others? Please select all that apply.

☐ Social media (Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, X, Facebook, etc)

☐ Messaging options (Texting, WhatsApp, Messenger)

☐ In person face to face with friends and family

☐ I don't share my concert experiences with others

☐ Other (Please Specify)



Transitioning to a closer look at your concert experiences, please use the following matrix to indicate your behaviors and preferences during these events.



Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your use of social media during concerts.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I enjoy sharing concert experiences on social media platforms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel compelled to record videos or take photos at concerts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social media sharing enhances my overall concert experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I prefer experiencing concerts without distractions from my phone or social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Any additional comments or thoughts you'd like to share about your concert experiences?



We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

References

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