

# Customer Experience in the pre-purchase phase of Music Festivals in the Netherlands: how is it affected by Social Media?

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## ABSTRACT,

*The digitalization has made organizations able to be more in touch with their customers via digital channels. The organizations can easily and frequently share information with interest groups via social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram. The aim of this research is to investigate the influence of social media usage by Dutch music festivals on the customer experience of their visitors in the pre-purchase phase. As the Dutch music festivals currently have the option to share more customized content with specific target groups, it is expected to have a positive influence on the customer experience of their visitors. An online survey is spread among respondents who had visited a Dutch music festival in the (recent) past in order to identify relationships between social media usage and customer experience. Research turned out that there are actually multiple positive relationships between these concepts. Visitors feel more connected to a Dutch music festival when this festival uses social media. Moreover, it appeared that the social media usage of these festivals even led to more ticket sales on the short-term and customer loyalty on the long-term because of an increased customer experience.*

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## Keywords

Customer Experience, Touchpoints, Customer Journey, Pre-Purchase Phase, Channels, Customer Loyalty, Music Festivals in the Netherlands.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Situation and complication

With the establishment and development of new digital technologies in the last decades the practice of marketing has shifted from the traditional way to a digital way. Due to this shift, the position of the customer has changed as they are empowered nowadays. This because online there is a lot more information available, are a lot more of alternatives available and transactions are made more easily compared to the traditional way of marketing. As a consequence, customer experience has become a very important aspect to consider for organizations when carrying out their (online) business activities. Steve Cannon, the former CEO of Mercedes Benz in the United States, has quoted: “customer experience is the new marketing (Tierney, 2014)” (Homburg, 2015).

The focus of this research will be on customer experience in the music festival industry of the Netherlands. The Netherlands has a large festival industry which is growing annually. In 2018 there were 836 festivals, whereas this amount increased to 1115 festivals in 2019. Of these 1115 festivals, 55% (approximately 614 festivals) were music festivals. Most of the festivals take place in May, June and August. This has a reasonable effect on tourism, as many foreign visitors will travel to the Netherlands in these months in order to attend one or more music festivals (EM Cultuur, 2020).

The digitalization has provided the music festivals with the opportunity to be even more in touch with their visitors at digital touchpoints in the pre-purchase phase. It has led to an increased focus on their visitors desires. This because “organizations that systematically monitor customer experience can take important steps to improve it” (Meyer, 2007). It allows them to reach larger groups of people compared to the traditional way of marketing. For instance, creating an excellent online website helps the festivals retaining their actual visitors and eventually acquiring new visitors. In addition, social media posts with attractive pictures of earlier editions of the festivals is a way to lure even more visitors to the upcoming events. All the contact moments in the (digital) touchpoints during the pre-purchase phase have to be valuable for the visitors, otherwise visitors may decide to skip the festival or buy tickets for other festivals.

The pre-purchase phase of the customer journey (see Figure 1) starts when Dutch music festivals start raising awareness by advertising for their new events both in real-life and digital. With this they reveal all the necessary information regarding the music festival, like the line-up, the anthem, the location and the date. Examples are countdown posts on their social media channels or advertisements in newspapers or along the highways.

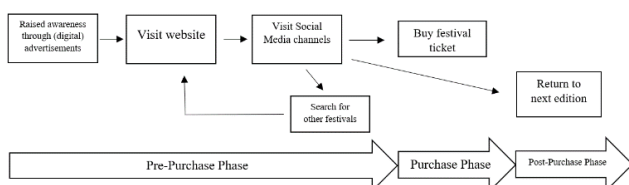


Figure 1. Customer Journey

The goal of increased focus on visitor desires during the pre-purchase phase by Dutch music festivals is to attract as much as

possible visitors to their upcoming events on the short-term and to create a loyal customer base with always returning visitors to the festivals on the long-term.

## 1.2 Research goal

The research goal of this thesis is to find out to what extent the customer experience of visitors of Dutch music festivals in the pre-purchase phase is affected by social media. As this makes these music festivals able to reach larger groups of people more often and more customized, it is expected to have a positive effect on customer experience. In addition, an improved customer experience is expected to result in more ticket sales (short-term) and customer loyalty among the visitors which means that they are returning each year (long-term).

## 1.3 Central research question

This research objective leads to the following research question:

*To what extent is customer experience in the pre-purchase phase of Dutch music festivals affected by social media?*

## 1.4 Outline of this study

This research will start with an overview of literature on the main concepts relating to the research question, which are: customer experience, touchpoints, customer journey, pre-purchase phase, channels and (long-term) customer loyalty. With the insights of this, a conceptual framework will be set up. After this, a methodology section will follow in which the methodology used in this research will be further explained. Next, the results from the data collection will be presented. To finalize, conclusions are drawn from the data analysis and limitations on this research will be presented.

# 2. LITERATURE

In this chapter each main concept will first be analyzed separately with help of existing sources in order to get an extended overview on each concept. Second, the expected relationships between these concepts with the hypotheses arising from it will be presented. Finally, a conceptual framework will be constructed as a basis for the rest of this study.

## 2.1 Customer Experience

Customer experience is defined as “the evolvement of a person’s sensorial, affective, cognitive, relational, and behavioral responses to an organization or brand by living through a journey of touchpoints along pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase situations and continually judging this journey against response thresholds of co-occurring experiences in a person’s related environment (Brakus et al. 2009; Verhoef et al. 2009)” (Homburg, 2015). Therefore, it is essential for Dutch music festivals to take the desires of their visitors into account when carrying out their (online) business activities, especially in the pre-purchase phase by targeting on their visitors. This because “a customer-centric focus is an important facilitator within firms to create stronger customer experiences” (Lemon, 2016).

Organizations require specific capabilities (e.g., partner network management, customer analytics) to develop successful customer experience strategies (Lemon, 2016). Dutch music festivals cooperating with each other enables them to gather more insights on (potential) visitor desires because data on

visitors can be shared among the different music festivals. Also with the use of customer analytics more specific data on (potential) visitors' desires can be gained. This information can be used for visitor targeting strategies in the pre-purchase phase.

“The customer’s dynamic external environment can have a significant influence on customer experience” (Lemon, 2016). When a visitor shares his/her experience regarding a music festival with friends this can influence the opinion of these friends. Sharing a negative experience about visiting a music festival last year is likely to obstruct these friends from going to the next edition. From this it can be concluded that customer experience is a very important aspect for Dutch music festivals to keep in mind especially in the pre-purchase phase when organizing their events in order to attract as many visitors as possible.

In the festival-industry customer experience quality is an important aspect. Lemke (2011) define customer experience quality as “a perceived judgment about the excellence or superiority of the customer experience”. They argue that customers construe customer experience quality and not just product and service quality. Linking this to the research, a music festival can be organized perfectly but for example bad weather can very negatively influence the customer experience of the visitors. The service quality of the music festival would then be excellent, but it would not prevent the visitors constructing a lower-quality customer experience.

## 2.2 Touchpoints

Touchpoints are defined as “distinct points in the experience of contacts between the company and the customer, including cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social components” (Homburg, 2015). A physical touchpoint in the pre-purchase phase arises when the visitors read an advertisement of a Dutch music festival in the newsletter, whereas a digital touchpoint arises when a visitor visits the website or the social media channels of a Dutch music festival. “Social media platforms are emerging as the dominant digital communications channel, particularly for people under 34 years of age (Chappuis et al., 2011)” (Hudson S. &, 2013). Due to the digitalization most of the touchpoints in the pre-purchase phase are digital nowadays. This because “consumers respond much more positively to content shared through social media than they do to paid placements such as advertising” (Hudson, 2015). Another reason is that a larger group of people can be reached via digital communication channels.

According to Lemon (2016) there exist four categories of customer experience touchpoints: brand-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned and social/external/independent. “Brand-owned touchpoints are customer interactions during the experience that are designed and managed by the firm and under the firm’s control”. So these are the websites and social media channels of which the content can be created by the Dutch music festivals themselves. “Partner-owned touchpoints are customer interactions during the experience that are jointly designed, managed, or controlled by the firm and one or more of its partners”. An example of this is a Dutch music festival cooperating with an external marketing agency creating (digital) advertisements. “Customer-owned touchpoints are customer actions that are part of the overall customer experience but that

the firm, its partners, or others do not influence or control. An example would be customers thinking about their own desires in the pre-purchase phase”. “Social/external touchpoints recognize the important roles of others in the customer experience”. This can be a visitor sharing his/her experience regarding visiting a certain Dutch music festival, so sharing pictures and video’s on his/her own social media channels with other visitors. Also, a review site of a Dutch music festival is a social/external touchpoint.

The effect of an individual touchpoint may depend on when it occurs in the overall customer journey (Lemon, 2016). If a potential visitor is hesitating to buy a ticket for a Dutch music festival and then reads negative messages at an online review site about the festival, it may lead to the person not buying the ticket. In contrast, when the visitor reads these messages after having attended the festival he/she may have a very different opinion which then makes these kind of messages of no value. This illustrates the importance of having valuable (digital) touchpoints in the pre-purchase phase.

## 2.3 Customer Journey

Customer journey is conceptualized as “customer experience as a customer’s journey with a firm over time during the purchase cycle across multiple touchpoints” (Lemon, 2016). It is necessary for Dutch music festivals to have a good overview on how the entire customer journey of their visitors looks like. For the aim of this research, the focus is especially on the pre-purchase phase of the customer journey of visitors of Dutch music festivals.

Insights on this could be obtained by carrying out a customer journey analysis. “In a customer journey analysis, organizations focus on how customers interact with multiple touchpoints, moving from consideration, search, and purchase to post-purchase, consumption, and future engagement or repurchase. The goals of the analysis are to describe this journey and understand the customer’s options and choices for touchpoints in multiple purchase phases (Verhoef, Kooge, and Walk 2016)” (Lemon, 2016). Customer journey analysis should understand and map the journey from the customer perspective and therefore requires customer input (Lemon, 2016).

By identifying the preferences and actions of their visitors during the pre-purchase phase, Dutch music festivals enable themselves to optimize the experience in the (digital) touchpoints which are expected to have a positive effect on the overall customer experience. But, the entire customer journey consists of a pre-purchase phase, a purchase phase and a post-purchase phase. Therefore, Dutch music festivals should for example also stay in touch with their visitors after the festival have taken place in order to request for feedback/advice.

## 2.4 Channels

“A channel is the pathway through which goods or services flow from producers to consumers” (Marketing-Schools, 2020). These channels can be both physical and digital. According to Hudson (2015), most of the communication channels Dutch music festivals use nowadays in the pre-purchase phase are digital channels like Facebook and Instagram. This because these channels enable the festivals with the opportunity to reach large amounts of people quite easy and because it increases the connection between the festivals and

their visitors. “Channels differ in benefits and costs, often making one channel more useful for a specific stage in the purchase funnel than other channels. These differences are, however, shrinking due to technological developments and diffusion of new channels” (Lemon, 2016). In the purchase phase, visitors of Dutch music festivals are nowadays able to buy their tickets online, whereas this was used to only possible at the entrance of the festival or at certain shops. An example of diffusion of a new channel is the introduction of mobile channels. Mobile device channels offer new location-based, time sensitive opportunities to create firm-initiated touchpoints. Thus, mobile device channels interact and may interfere with existing channels. (Lemon, 2016). But, mobile channels appear to be better suited for search, so the pre-purchase phase, than for purchase (Lemon, 2016). Therefore, the website of Dutch music festivals on which tickets can be bought on desktop remains crucial in the purchase phase.

### 2.5 (Long-term) Customer Loyalty

(Long-term) customer loyalty occurs when “the customer feels so strongly that you can best meet his or her relevant needs that your competition is virtually excluded from the consideration set and the customer buys almost exclusively from you (Rob Smith 1998)” (Schoemaker, 1999). The main purpose of customer experience design is to enhance customer loyalty—in other words, the customers’ intentions to live again through a touchpoint journey of a given firm or brand by transitioning from post-purchase to pre-purchase (Homburg, 2015).

Relating this to Dutch music festivals means that (long-term) customer loyalty occurs when visitors are coming back each year to the festivals. It is very important for Dutch music festivals to create customer loyalty with their visitors, as the competition in the music festival industry is increasing annually (EM Cultuur, 2020). Brand equity aspects such as image, festival atmosphere associations, and (anticipated) emotions are most important for loyalty (Leenders, 2010). Festivals can respond to this by for example offering merchandise which increases the connection with the visitors. This Brand Relationship Quality (BRQ) will be greater for customers who engage with brands, in this case festivals, using social media (Hudson, 2015).

### 2.6 Conceptual Framework

Keeping in mind the theories presented above, the conceptual framework can be constructed (see Figure 2). The expected relationships between the main concepts of this research are: the customer experience of visitors of Dutch music festivals in the pre-purchase phase is affected by both traditional and digital touchpoints. Expected is that especially the use of social media influences the customer experience of the visitors of Dutch music festivals in a positive way. In addition, this is expected to have a positive effect on the tickets sales on the short-term and on customer loyalty on the long-term. In this study customer loyalty is considered as visitors returning to a Dutch music festival each year because of a good customer experience.

This leads to the following three hypotheses which will be further investigated in this thesis:

1. Social Media usage does positively influence the customer experience of visitors in the pre-purchase phase.

2. Increased customer experience in the pre-purchase phase leads to more ticket sales on the short-term.
3. Increased customer experience in the pre-purchase phase leads to a loyal customer base on the long-term.

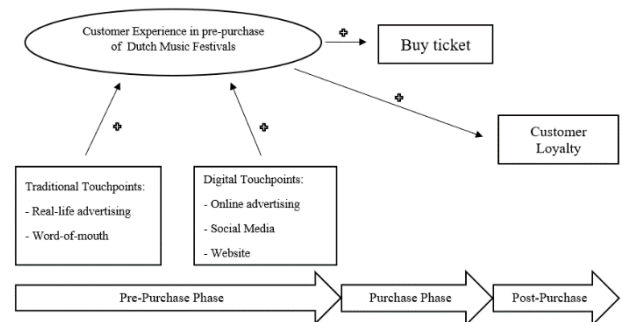


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

In order to answer the research question of this thesis primary and secondary research models will be used. “Primary data is information collected through original or first-hand research, whereas secondary data is information which has been collected in the past by someone else” (Channelpay, 2020).

The primary data in this research will be obtained via an online survey. The online survey will be spread among as many as possible participants who have visited a Dutch music festival in the (recent) past. As the topic of this research is very specific, the aim is to get between 70-100 participants filling in the survey. This to get a fair opinion of a representative sample group about the topic. The questions in the online survey will focus on the main concepts relating to the research question which are mentioned earlier. “Survey research is probably the best method available to the researcher who is interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly. This technique has been getting especially popular in marketing research” (Babbie, 2013). Therefore, it is an applicable method to use in this marketing-oriented research.

The secondary data which will be used in this research is the analysis of related sources and research articles. In the literature chapter a structured and extended analysis of these sources and articles is provided. With the help of this the conceptual framework is constructed as presented in figure 2. The sources and research articles were obtained via the library of the University of Twente, Google Scholar and Scopus.

In Table 1 below is shown how the main concepts of this thesis are captured during the research process.

Table 1: Capturing of the main concepts

Question	Method
What is customer experience?	Secondary research: Literature review
How does social media influence customer experience of visitors?	Primary Research: Survey (SPSS correlation analysis)
Does increased customer experience lead to an increased amount of ticket sales?	Primary Research: Survey (SPSS linear regression analysis)

Does increased customer experience lead to customer loyalty?	Primary Research: Survey (SPSS linear regression analysis)
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### 3.2 Sampling

During the sampling process of a research considerations about which participants to include in the research have to be made, in this case the online survey. Three important variables had to be considered in the sampling process of this research: age, nationality and having visited a Dutch music festival in the (recent) past. It was very likely that almost every Dutch person had (at least once) visited a music festival in the Netherlands, therefore the sample group should consist of mainly Dutch people.

The variable age had than still to be considered. Statistics show that social media is mainly used by people between 18-49 years old. 86% of people between 18-29 years old uses Facebook compared to 77% of people between 30-49 years old (Khoros, 2020). In addition, 67% of people between 18-29 years old uses Instagram compared to 47% of people between 30-49 years old. (Khoros, 2020). Next to this, in 2019 43% of people visiting a music festival in the Netherlands were between 20-29 years old (EM Cultuur, 2020). Therefore, the focus lay on spreading the online survey among Dutch people between 18-24 years old as they were the most likely sample group to provide useful information for the purpose of this research. This because they are active users of social media and because they are actually visiting Dutch music festivals most frequently.

In this research is made use of convenience sampling. "Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility and geographical proximity" (Etikan, 2016). According to the statistics shown above, the sample group would be easy accessible via social media which automatically solves eventual geographical proximity problems.

A total of 80 participants completed the online survey. With this the beforehand set criteria of 70-100 people completing the survey was met. However, not all responses could be used in the data analysis (see Appendix 1). Of these 80 people, 73 people (91,3%) had actually visited a music festival in the Netherlands. So, there were 7 people (8,7%) which had never visited a music festival in the Netherlands. Their answers would be left out in the data analysis of this research.

### 3.3 Survey Question design

The original online survey can be found in Appendix 2. Table 2 below shows how each main concept has been defined in the literature review, so which source was chosen for conceptualizing the main concepts in this research. In addition, Table 2 gives an overview on how the main concepts of this research were intended to be captured in the online survey.

**Table 2: Operationalization Table**

Concept	Source	Question
Customer Experience	Homburg (2015)	16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24
Touchpoints	Homburg (2015)	4, 5, 8, 9, 23

Customer Journey	Lemon (2016)	15, 22, 24, 25
Channels	Hudson (2015)	10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22, 25
Customer Loyalty	Schoemaker (1998)	22, 24, 25

The online survey started with demographical questions in order to get background information about the participants. After these questions a filter question was asked to find out whether the participant had ever visited a music festival in the Netherlands. As this was the main topic of the online survey, it was important to filter out participants who had never visited a music festival in the Netherlands because those participants would not be able to provide useful input for this research. The participants that were filtered out were directly sent to the last page of the survey where they could submit their answers. No questions would follow for them after the filter question.

The participants who actually had visited a music festival in the Netherlands were directed to the second part of the survey. In this part of the survey questions about music festivals in the Netherlands were asked. Participants could choose for themselves about which Dutch music festival they would provide further information, as this increased the possibility to get as many respondents on the survey as possible. This part focused on what actions the participants took after their awareness was raised for the Dutch music festival and aimed to identify the influence of social media on it. The questions in this part of the survey were all multiple choice questions.

The third part of the online survey was considered to be the most important part. It focused on channels and (its influence on) customer experience in the pre-purchase phase. In addition, it also focused on the search and purchase devices of the participants. In order to get answers which were as accurate/reliable as possible, 15 Likert-scale questions were asked. Data collected via this method "is easy to understand and it does not force the participants to express an either-or opinion as they are provided the option to have a neutral opinion on a certain question" (Cleave, 2017). Therefore, this method was chosen in order to make sure that the answers given were useful for the data analysis.

In total the online survey consisted of 25 questions and was fully conducted in English. The online survey took about 5-10 minutes to complete and could both be filled in on computer or on mobile. The online survey has run for two and a half weeks.

### 3.4 Data Collection

The distribution channels used in order to spread the online survey among as many possible participants as possible were Facebook, WhatsApp and word-of-mouth. The survey has been posted on both private and public Facebook accounts (for example on the Smart Marketing Group Facebook page of the University of Twente). The focus lay mainly on Dutch participants between 18-24 years old as explained earlier in this paper.

WhatsApp and word-of-mouth was used to reach family, friends and acquaintances. The survey was on a voluntary basis and was conducted fully anonymous. The participants were even provided with an option to withdraw from the survey after they had submitted their answers.

## 4. ANALYSIS

The responses to the online survey will be analyzed via SPSS. This chapter will start with descriptive information about the demographics in order to get an overview of the background information of the participants. Then, another part with descriptive information will follow about the music festivals in the Netherlands the participants have chosen to provide information on. This to get an overview on what kind of Music Festivals this research is about. To continue, the way Dutch music festivals raise their awareness will be analyzed. Further, the main concepts will be analyzed with help of SPSS. The correlations between different (relating) variables will be measured by using Pearson correlation coefficient. Also, linear regression analyses will be carried to model relationships between variables.

#### 4.1 Demographics

The following data was gathered on demographics in this research (see Appendix 3): 70 people (95,9%) were Dutch, whereas 3 people (4,1%) were German. 48 males (65,8%) completed the survey compared to 25 females (34,2%). As targeted on, most people responding to the online survey were between 18-24 years old (83,6%). From this can be concluded that the beforehand set criteria of the sample group for the online survey were well met, as these criteria were Dutch participants between 18-24 years old who had (at least once) visited a music festival in the Netherlands.

#### 4.2 Music Festivals in the Netherlands

In total, information on 33 different music festivals in the Netherlands was provided (see Appendix 4). The most frequently chosen festival is Boulevard Outdoor (18 times, 24,7%). This is a music festival located at 'Het Lageveld' in Wierden, Overijssel and is a very popular music festival in the region. The festival consist of multiple stages on which multiple music genres, for example Hiphop and Hardstyle (see Appendix 5), are played. Further, in accordance with the information retrieved from EM Cultuur in the introduction of this research, most festivals took place in the months May, June and August (see Appendix 6), as the options '2019: April, May, June' was chosen 36 times (49,3%) and '2019: July, August, September' 13 times (17,8%).

#### 4.3 Awareness and Search (devices)

In order to find out how the Dutch music festivals raise awareness by their visitors, question 8 (see Appendix 2) was designed in a way that participants of the online survey could fill in multiple answer options. It appeared that word-of-mouth (see Appendix 7), which has been identified as a social/external touchpoint in the literature review, was the most frequently chosen answer option in the sample group with a frequency of 58. The second most frequently chosen answer option was 'Via their Social Media channels, e.g. Facebook & Instagram' with a frequency of 37 votes. This has been identified as a brand-owned touchpoint.

Further, question 9 (see Appendix 2) was designed in the same way as question 8 and focused on where visitors were looking for further information on the music festivals. It appeared that this happened on the social media channels of the music festivals most often in this sample group with a frequency of 50 (see Appendix 8). The second most frequently chosen answer option was 'the website of the Dutch music festival' with a frequency of 39.

Finally, question 10 (see Appendix 2) targeted the question on which device the visitors did the search for more information (see Appendix 9). Mobile turned out to be the most frequently

chosen option as 'mobile' scored 63% and 'both' (mobile and computer) scored 20,5%. This makes a total of 83,5%. This is in accordance with the results found in the study of Lemon (2016) (see 2.4 Channels).

#### 4.4 Customer Experience

There is a moderate positive linear correlation between valuing the website of a Dutch music festival and customer experience (see Appendix 10). Pearson's R coefficient turned out to be 0,352 with a significance level of 0,002.  $0,002 < 0,05$ , so this moderate positive linear correlation is significant.

There is an even stronger positive linear correlation between valuing the social media channels of a Dutch music festival and customer experience (see Appendix 11). Pearson's R coefficient turned out to be 0,514 with a significance level of 0,000003.  $0,000003 < 0,05$ , so this moderate positive linear correlation is very significant.

Next, another (moderate) positive linear correlation is found between having subscribed to the social media channels after the awareness of the festival was raised and customer experience (see Appendix 12). Pearson's R coefficient turned out to be 0,547 with a significance level of 0,00000056.  $0,00000056 < 0,05$ , so again this moderate positive linear correlation is significant.

There is a moderate negative linear correlation between stating visiting the social media channels of the music festival was valuable and stating that the music festival using social media channels does not influence the customer experience (see Appendix 13). Pearson's R coefficient turned out to be -0,397 with a significance level of 0,001.  $0,001 < 0,05$  so this moderate negative linear correlation is significant.

#### 4.5 Channels

Among the participants of the online survey, there was no clear preference which channel to visit after the awareness for the festival was raised, as the distribution is normal with a mean of 3,05 (Neither agree, nor disagree) and a SD of 1,053 (see Appendix 14). However, the participants did feel more connected to festivals that made use of Social Media (see Appendix 15). The mean was 3,47 and the mode was 4. This means that most participants chose for option 4 'Agree' on question 20.

#### 4.6 Purchase Intention

The goal of social media usage of Dutch music festivals on the short-term is conceptualized as visitors actually buying tickets to visit a Dutch music festival. It is investigated by running a linear regression analysis on SPSS with variables 19 and 20. Variable 19 has label 'The Music Festival using Social Media channels has positively influenced my Customer Experience' whereas variable 20 has label 'The Music Festival using Social Media channels has positively influenced my Customer Experience and let me decide to buy a ticket'. The linear regression analysis (see Table 3) showed that this test was significant ( $0,018 < P < 0,05$ ) which leads to the following linear regression equation:  $Y = 1,204 + 0,491X$

**Table 3: Linear Regression Analysis between Customer Experience and Purchase Intention**

	<b>Purchase Intention</b>
	<b>Coef (SE)</b>
<b>Intercept</b>	<b>1,204(.498)**</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>0,407</b>
<b>R2</b>	<b>0,165</b>

## 4.7 Customer Loyalty

The goal of social media usage of Dutch music festivals on the long-term is conceptualized as visitors returning to the festival each year. Another linear regression test was run in SPSS, this time testing variables 19 and 22. Variable 19 has label 'The Music Festival using Social Media channels has positively influenced my Customer Experience' whereas variable 22 has label 'I would definitely go to the next edition of the Music Festival because of a good Customer Experience'. The linear regression analysis (see Table 4) showed that this test was significant ( $0,0006 < 0,05$ ) which leads to the following linear regression equation:  $Y = 3,905 + 0,736X$

**Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis between Customer Experience and Customer Loyalty**

	<b>Customer Loyalty</b>
	<b>Coef (SE)</b>
<b>Intercept</b>	<b>3,905(.736)***</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>0,124</b>
<b>R2</b>	<b>0,15</b>

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on chapter 4 in which the results of the data analysis are presented, conclusions can be drawn on the three hypotheses which are investigated in this research. The three hypotheses were:

1. Social Media usage does positively influence the customer experience of visitors in the pre-purchase phase.
2. Increased customer experience in the pre-purchase phase leads to more ticket sales on the short-term.
3. Increased customer experience in the pre-purchase phase leads to a loyal customer base on the long-term.

The first hypothesis has been supported by the results. It became clear that for most participants social media was the channel on which the awareness for a Dutch music festival was raised. In addition, social media turned out to be the most popular channel to search for more information on the Dutch music festival after the awareness was raised. Most of the participants of the online survey did value visiting the social media channels of the Dutch music festival they went to and this resulted in an increased overall customer experience in the pre-purchase phase. As a consequence, many participants subscribed to one or more of the social media channels of the

Dutch music festival they visited in order to stay in touch. It turned out that there was again a positive linear relationship between subscribing to the social media channels of Dutch music festivals and an increased customer experience. Participants stated unanimously that they felt more connected to the Dutch music festival because of the social media usage. This again increased the customer experience in the pre-purchase phase. From this it can be concluded that the first hypothesis can be considered to be correct for the sample group of this research.

The second hypothesis was a follow up of the first one: did an increased customer experience in the pre-purchase phase of Dutch music festivals due to social media usage influence the amount of ticket sales? It appeared that there is a significant positive relationship between an increased customer experience and the decision to actually buy a ticket. It can thus be argued that social media usage had a positive effect on the ticket sales of the festivals. Participants liked the digital interactions with the Dutch music festivals and as mentioned earlier it also increased the connection between both. Most tickets were sold via the websites of the Dutch music festivals. From this can be concluded that the second hypothesis can also be considered to be correct for the sample group of this research.

Finally, the third hypothesis aimed at investigating the relationship between an increased customer experience in the pre-purchase due to social media usage and customer loyalty. Did an increased customer experience actually lead to visitors coming back to the festival each year? Same as for the first two hypotheses, there turned out to be a positive linear relationship between these main concepts as well for this sample group. Most participants stated that they would definitely go to the next edition of a Dutch music festival if the customer experience was valuable. Further, most participants also stated that they would share the Dutch music festivals via their own personal social media channels. As this is how customer loyalty was conceptualized in this research, there is found evidence that also the third hypothesis is true regarding our sample group.

Based on these outcomes an overall conclusion for this research can be drawn. There turned out to be a significant positive relationship between an increased customer experience in the pre-purchase phase of a Dutch music festival because of that particular Dutch music festival using social media channels. It can be said that social media has a significant positive influence on customer experience of visitors of Dutch music festivals. It is thus an effective means of reaching and targeting on visitors in the pre-purchase phase of Dutch music festivals in order to get them actually to the festivals. Therefore, an advice for Dutch music festivals would be to increase their social media usage, for example on multiple channels, in order to reach more visitors more customized because this research has identified this leading to more ticket sales (short-term) and a loyal customer base (long-term).

## 6. LIMITATIONS

This research has a number of limitations. The spread of the Coronavirus had a large impact on the planning of this research. Research methods such as direct observation and live-interviews at Dutch music festivals were considered to be carried out as data collection methods. Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus all Dutch music festivals from March on were cancelled and an online survey turned out to be the only applicable data collection method for this research. As a result, the topic of this research had to be changed multiple times which led to a very specific topic to investigate. As a

consequence, it was hard to find respondents for the online survey. Therefore, the sample group of 73 respondents consisted mainly about Dutch people between 18-24 years old. This had a quite negative impact on the reliability and validity of the sample group.

Further, the questions which have been asked in the online survey did have some overlap. Some questions were asked to capture information about multiple main concepts. The aim of this research was not to come up with conceptualizations of the main concepts, but rather to identify relationships between the main concepts which may be valuable for Dutch music festivals to consider while organizing their events. This may be a starting point for further research on this topic in which clear definitions of the main concepts might be constructed. Finally, this research may also be a starting point for further research on the effect of social media on customer experience of Music Festivals around the entire globe

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the people who filled in the online survey and also the ones who helped me sharing it among as many as possible people. In addition, I also would like to thank the University of Twente for giving me the opportunity to write my Bachelor Thesis, especially my supervisor Dr. Leszkiewicz for her valuable input and support throughout writing my thesis. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for all their support during the last months. I appreciate this a lot and it definitely has helped me during this research!

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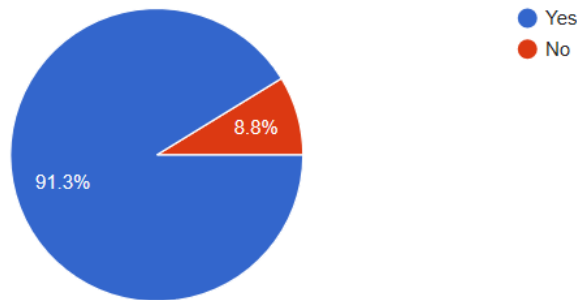
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## 9. APPENDIX

### Appendix 1: Question 4, Filter Question (73: Yes, 7: No)

Have you ever visited a Music Festival in the Netherlands?

80 responses



### Appendix 2: Online Survey

The effect of Social Media on Customer Experience of Music Festivals in the Netherlands

Dear participant,

This survey is part of my Bachelor Thesis Research for my study International Business Administration at the University of Twente. In this research I am investigating the influence of social media on customer experience of Music Festivals in the Netherlands. The aim is to get a better understanding on this emergent topic.

The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete and is anonymous. All data is treated confidentially.

Thank you for participating!

Harm Jan Meijer

[h.j.meijer-1@student.utwente.nl](mailto:h.j.meijer-1@student.utwente.nl)

#### Part 1: Demographics

1. What is your gender?
  - male
  - female
  - prefer not to say
2. What is your age?
  - <18
  - 18-24
  - 25-34
  - 35-44
  - 45-54
  - >54
3. What is your nationality?

- Dutch
  - Other, ...
4. Have you ever visited a Music Festival in the Netherlands? \* FILTER QUESTION
- Yes
  - No

#### Part 2: Information about the Music Festival

5. When did you (last) visit a Music Festival in the Netherlands?
- 2020: January, February, March
  - 2019: October, November, December
  - 2019: July, August, September
  - 2019: April, May, June
  - 2019: January, February, March
  - Before 2019
6. What was the name of this Music Festival?
- ...
7. What kind of Music Festival was it?
- Pop
  - Rock
  - Hiphop
  - Hardstyle/hardcore
  - Jazz
  - Other, ...
8. How did this Music Festival raise your awareness? Through: \*(multiple answer options can be selected)
- Physical advertising (e.g. an advertisement in a newsletter or along the highways)
  - Online advertising
  - their Social Media channels (e.g. Facebook or Instagram)
  - Word-of-mouth
  - Other, ...
9. After your awareness for this Music Festival was raised, where did you search for more information about the Music Festival? \*(multiple answer options can be selected)
- The website of the Music Festival
  - The Social Media channels of the Music Festival
  - Review sites about the Music Festival
  - Google
  - I did not search for any further information about the Music Festival
  - Other, ...
10. Did you search for more information about the Music Festival on mobile or on computer?
- Mobile
  - Computer
  - Both
  - I did not search for any further information about the Music Festival

#### Part 3: Customer Experience

In this part of the survey Likert Scale questions will be asked.  
Please select the answer that seems to be most appropriate.

The answer options are:

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

4 Agree

5 Strongly agree

11. Visiting the website of the Music Festival was valuable.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

12. Visiting the Social Media channel(s) of the Music Festival was valuable.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

13. I would rather visit the website of the Music Festival than the Social Media channel(s).

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

14. After my awareness for the Music Festival was raised, I have subscribed to the Social Media channel(s) of this Festival to stay in touch.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

15. After my awareness for the Music Festival was raised, I have been looking for alternative (Music) Festivals to visit.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

16. The design of the website of the Music Festival has positively influenced my customer experience.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

17. The Social Media channel(s) of the Music Festival has/have positively influenced my customer experience.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

18. The Music Festival being in touch with their visitors via their Social Media channels has positively influenced my customer experience. (e.g. give-aways)

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree

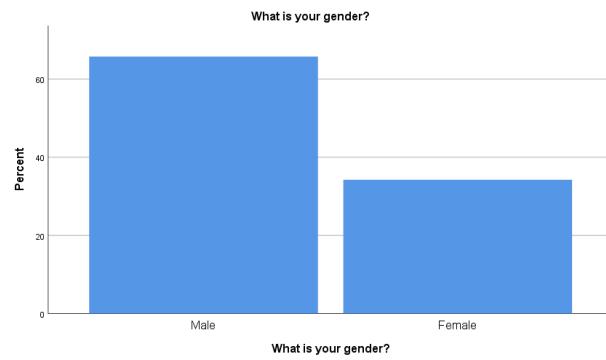
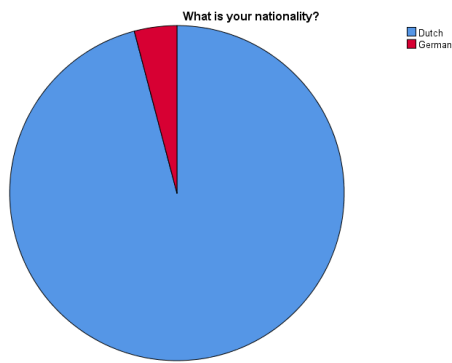
- Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
19. My Customer Experience is not influenced by the Music Festival using Social Media channels.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
20. I felt more connected to the Music Festival because of the Music Festival using Social Media channels.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
21. The Music Festival using Social Media channels has positively influenced my Customer Experience.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
22. The Music Festival using Social Media channels has positively influenced my Customer Experience and let me decide to buy a ticket.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
23. Where did you buy your ticket for this Music Festival?
- In a physical shop
  - At the entrance of the Music Festival
  - Online via the website of the Music Festival
  - Other, ...
24. I would definitely go to the next edition of the Music Festival because of a good Customer Experience.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
25. I would recommend the Music Festival to my friends by using Social Media.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree

You have done it!

Thank you for participating in this survey, it is highly appreciated!

Please click on submit to finish the survey.

### Appendix 3: Demographics



### What is your age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<18	2	2,7	2,7	2,7
	18-24	61	83,6	83,6	86,3
	25-34	3	4,1	4,1	90,4
	35-44	3	4,1	4,1	94,5
	45-54	4	5,5	5,5	100,0
	Total	73	100,0	100,0	

### Appendix 4: The different Dutch Music Festivals

#### What was the name of this Music Festival?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Boulevard Outdoor	18	24,7	24,7	24,7
	Bevrijdingsfestival	5	6,8	6,8	31,5
	Pinkpop	4	5,5	5,5	37,0
	State of Trance	1	1,4	1,4	38,4
	Drift	1	1,4	1,4	39,7
	Nederland Muziekland	1	1,4	1,4	41,1
	Freshtival	4	5,5	5,5	46,6
	Amsterdam Open Air	2	2,7	2,7	49,3
	KPN	4	5,5	5,5	54,8
	WieZo	3	4,1	4,1	58,9
	Carnaval Albergen	2	2,7	2,7	61,6
	Carnaval Geesteren	1	1,4	1,4	63,0
	HARDFEST	2	2,7	2,7	65,8
	Dance4Liberation	3	4,1	4,1	69,9

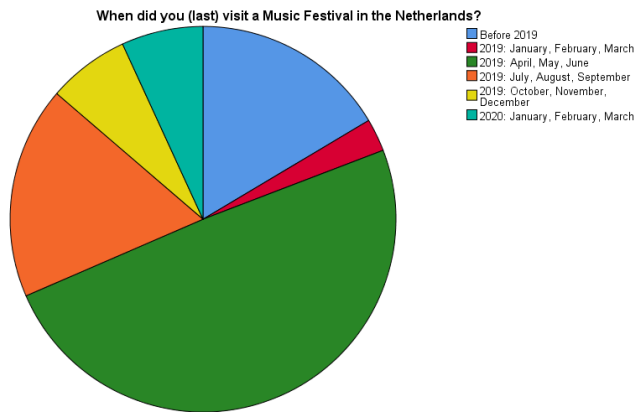
Zwarte Cross	1	1,4	1,4	71,2
Kingsday Zwolle	1	1,4	1,4	72,6
Lowlands	1	1,4	1,4	74,0
HardRock	2	2,7	2,7	76,7
Slam Koningsdag	1	1,4	1,4	78,1
Concert	1	1,4	1,4	79,5
VVAL	1	1,4	1,4	80,8
Kingsland	3	4,1	4,1	84,9
Kingsday Enschede	1	1,4	1,4	86,3
Paradigm	1	1,4	1,4	87,7
Mysteryland	1	1,4	1,4	89,0
LaLaLand	1	1,4	1,4	90,4
Psy-fi	1	1,4	1,4	91,8
Kingsday Enschede	1	1,4	1,4	93,2
Zandfestival Strand	1	1,4	1,4	94,5
The Flying Dutch	1	1,4	1,4	95,9
Bregipop, Glemmer	1	1,4	1,4	97,3
Ohm	1	1,4	1,4	98,6
Kingsnight Enschede	1	1,4	1,4	100,0
Total	73	100,0	100,0	

#### Appendix 5: Music styles played at the Music Festivals

##### What kind of Music Festival was it?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hiphop	10	13,7	13,7	13,7
	Pop	30	41,1	41,1	54,8
	Rock	4	5,5	5,5	60,3
	Techno	7	9,6	9,6	69,9
	All genres	10	13,7	13,7	83,6
	Geheime Zender	3	4,1	4,1	87,7
	Metal	1	1,4	1,4	89,0
	Hardstyle/Hardcore	7	9,6	9,6	98,6
	Classic	1	1,4	1,4	100,0
	Total	73	100,0	100,0	

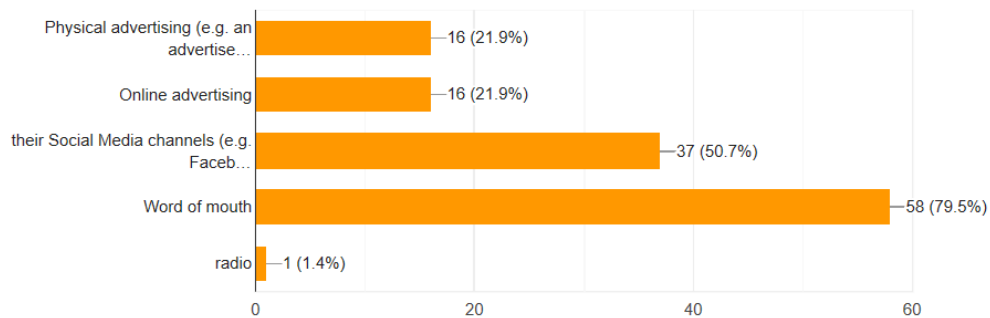
#### Appendix 6: Date of the Music Festivals



### Appendix 7: Awareness

How did this Music Festival raise your awareness? Through: \*(multiple answer options can be selected)

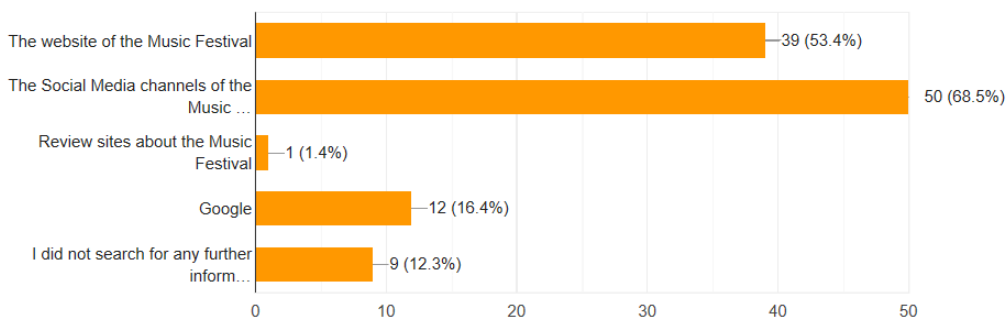
73 responses



### Appendix 8: Search Channel

After your awareness for this Music Festival was raised, where did you search for more information about the Music Festival? \*(multiple answer options can be selected)

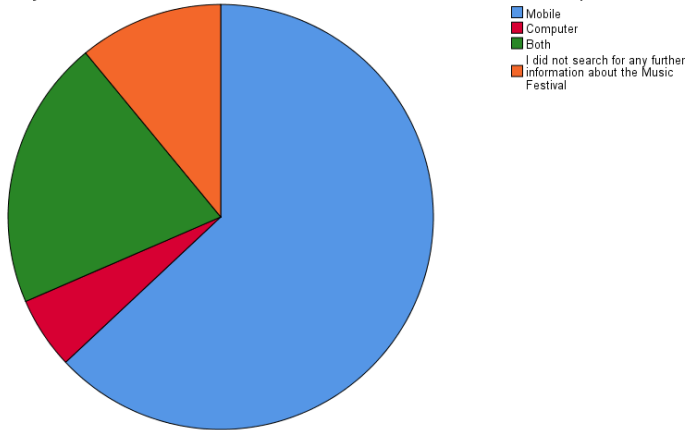
73 responses



### Appendix 9: Search Device



Did you search for more information about the Music Festival on mobile or on computer?



### Appendix 10: Correlation between Website and Customer Experience

#### Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The design of the website of the Music Festival has positively influenced my customer experience.	3,56	,866	73
Visiting the website of the Music Festival was valuable.	3,74	,943	73

Pearson R	Sig (2-tailed)	N
,352**	,002	73

### Appendix 11: Correlation between Social Media Channel(s) and Customer Experience

#### Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Visiting the Social Media channel(s) of the Music Festival was valuable.	3,90	,869	73
The Social Media channel(s) of the Music Festival has/have positively influenced my customer experience.	3,78	,917	73

Pearson R	Sig (2-tailed)	N
,514***	,000	73

**Appendix 12: Correlation between subscribing to Social Media channels and Customer Experience.**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
After my awareness for the Music Festival was raised, I have subscribed to the Social Media channel(s) of this Festival to stay in touch.	3,16	1,500	73
The Music Festival being in touch with their visitors via their Social Media channels has positively influenced my customer experience. (e.g. give-aways)	3,53	,959	73

Pearson R	Sig (2-tailed)	N
,547***	,000	73

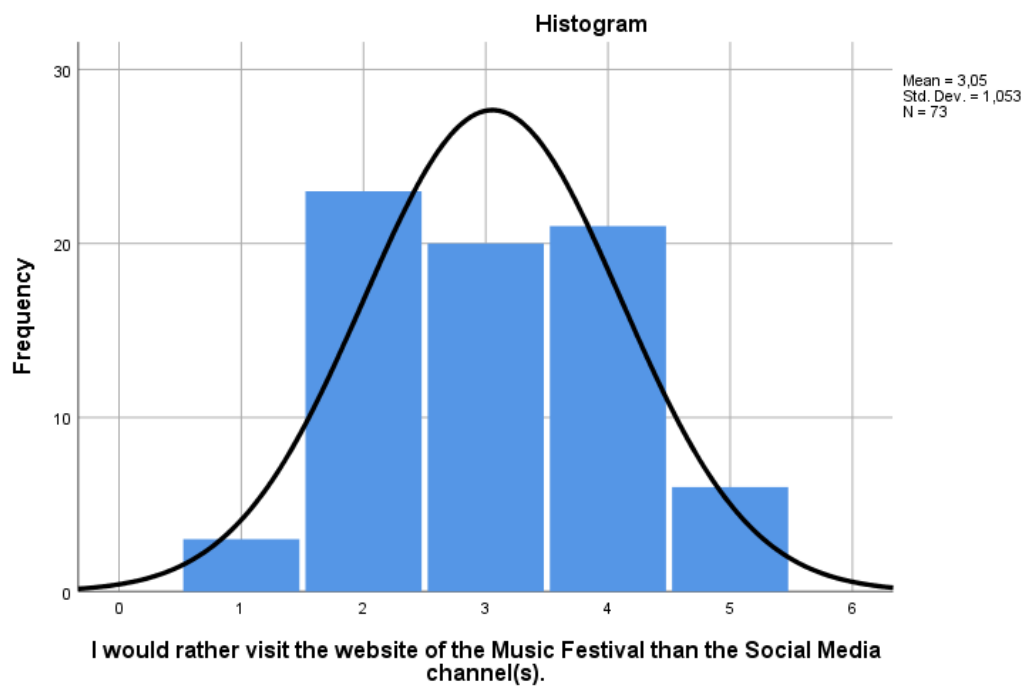
**Appendix 14: Correlation between Customer Experience not influenced by Social Media Channel(s) and valuing Social Media Channel(s)**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
My Customer Experience is not influenced by the Music Festival using Social Media channels.	2,81	1,101	73
Visiting the Social Media channel(s) of the Music Festival was valuable.	3,90	,869	73

Pearson R	Sig (2-tailed)	N
-,397**	,001	73

**Appendix 14: Normal distribution of Search Channel**



### Appendix 15: Statistics on Connection

Mean	Median	N
3,47	4	73