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MASTER OF SCIENCE (M. SC.) BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
STRATEGIC MARKETING & SERVICISATION

# THE INFLUENCING FACTORS ON STUDENTS' INTEREST TOWARDS VISITING THE THEATRE

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JANUARY 31, 2023, ENSCHEDE

NUMBER OF PAGES: 76  
NUMBER OF WORDS: 16.981

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.



## Abstract

Theatres within the Netherlands see an underrepresentation of students within their visitors. In order to attract students to visit theatre performances, marketing strategies may need to be adapted, or new strategies might need to be adopted in order to better represent the current values and interests of students. The purpose of this thesis is to find the influential factors on the students' interest towards visiting the theatre, in order to in this way finding appropriate focus points for theatres to adapt their strategies accordingly to attract more students to their theatre. Through a survey consisting of 50 statements, answered on a 7-point Likert scale, data was analysed using linear regression to find influential factors on students' interest toward visiting the theatre. The quality of the location, the atmosphere at the location, the perceived service quality, the perceived value for money, the students' satisfaction as customers/visitors and the perceived quality of offerings at the theatre have been found to be significant predictors for the students' interest towards visiting the theatre.

Keywords: Students, Theatre, Marketing, Theatre visits

# Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	5
1.1 Introduction.....	5
1.2 Academic relevance.....	7
1.3 Practical relevance .....	8
<b>2. Theoretical framework</b> .....	8
2.1 Entertainment .....	8
2.2 Influencing factors and outcome variables on the interest towards visiting the theatre.....	10
2.2.1 Influencing factors.....	10
<b>2.2.2 Outcome variables</b> .....	16
2.3 Theoretical framework.....	17
2.4 Hypotheses development .....	19
<b>3. Methodology</b> .....	24
3.1 Data collection and analysis .....	24
3.2 Sample .....	28
3.3 Findings.....	29
3.3.1 Reliability .....	29
3.3.2 Average variance extracted and composite reliability .....	31
<b>4. Results</b> .....	33
4.1 Descriptive statistics.....	33
4.2 Hypotheses.....	34
4.3 Predicting variables with multiple independent variables.....	36
4.3.1. Predicting variables on perceived value for money .....	38
4.3.2. Predicting variables on customer satisfaction .....	39
4.3.3. Predicting variables on purchase intention.....	39
4.3.4. Predicting variables on repurchase intention .....	40
<b>5. Discussion</b> .....	41
5.1 Predicting perceived value for money .....	41
5.2 Predicting the customer satisfaction.....	42
5.3 Predicting the purchase intention.....	44
5.4 Predicting the repurchase intention .....	46
5.5 Theoretical contribution of this thesis .....	48
5.6 Practical contribution of this thesis.....	49
5.7 Limitations and future research directions .....	49
<b>6. Conclusion</b> .....	51
<b>7. Acknowledgments</b> .....	52

<b>Bibliography</b> .....	53
<b>Appendix A: Traffic on the website of Wilminktheater &amp; Muziekcentrum Enschede</b> .....	61
<b>Appendix B: questionnaire and answer sheet</b> .....	62

## **Table of figures and tables**

<b>Figure 1:</b> Theoretical framework with hypotheses.....	<b>19</b>
<b>Table 1:</b> Definitions of entertainment.....	<b>9</b>
<b>Table 2:</b> Demographics of the respondents.....	<b>28</b>
<b>Table 3:</b> Cronbach's alpha for each variable.....	<b>30</b>
<b>Table 4:</b> Average variance extracted, composite reliability and KMO-value for each variable.....	<b>32</b>
<b>Table 5:</b> Descriptive statistics for each variable.....	<b>33</b>
<b>Table 6:</b> Correlation, constant, unstandardized B, and significance for each hypothesis.....	<b>35</b>
<b>Table 7:</b> Multiple linear regression table with standard errors.....	<b>37</b>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

With an average of more than one entertainment performance visit per person, per year in the Netherlands, a clear interest for various forms of entertainment can be seen. Where the number of visits to theatre performances has decreased by over 25% between 2015 and 2019, other categories, such as cabaret (+28.8%), or musical theatre (+38.4%) have seen an increase in visitors in the period between 2015 and 2019 (Statista, 2022a). The total number of visitors to theatre performances grew to almost 20 million visits per year in 2019 (Statista, 2022a). The number of students within this population, however, has been falling behind without a clear reason why. The number of students within the Netherlands has increased with over 23% between 2016 and 2020 (Statista, 2022b), and is currently representative for around 2% of the total population in the Netherlands. However, while the number of students is increasing, the total attendance at theatre performances by students has shown a clear decrease in visitors since 2015 (Statista, 2022a).

Theatres have noticed a lack of interest from students for the theatre. For example, it can be seen that the share of students to the traffic on the website of Wilminktheater & Muziekcentrum Enschede (WME) consists of less than 7%. However, an increase has been observed since 2020, when students have started to represent a greater share of the visitors to the website of WME. The advice report for strategy of the WME (Wilminktheater, 2022a) also shows that currently their target group 'young digitals' forms only 5,8% of their customers, whilst being almost 10% of the population (CBS, 2022). Although students are not showing up to the theatre, that may not imply that they would not be interested in the

performances. Finding out what influences students in going or not going to the theatre can create a better approach from within theatres and other entertainment instances to reach this group and therefore target it better.

Next to the influences per group of visitors, individual aspects can also have an influence on behaviour. In order to target students effectively, the combination of price, product, promotion and people has a significant importance (Taylor et al., 2001). Peer pressure, for example, is applied less by growing age groups (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007). However, the consumer's interest also shifts in focus by valuing other aspects more (Hervé & Mullet, 2009). As for the satisfaction, gender differences are observed. The satisfaction level of men is mainly influenced by functional service quality, whereas women value the pro-social values of the theatre more (Voss & Cova, 2006). Furthermore, individuals can find different reasonings for going to the theatre, this can be either a rational or an emotional reasoning (Ciceo, 2012). During the COVID-19 pandemic, many entertainment industries, including theatres, were affected due to a lack of visitors, causing financial problems (Moon, 2020). The pandemic showed a clear shift in entertainment consumption, attracting people to make use of digital platforms like Netflix. The reaction to these changes has not been uniform, as shown by Mahendher et al. (2021). Even now that the pandemic is over and no more rules apply, the number of visitors will still not be expected to hit the peak of before the pandemic (Wilminktheater, 2022b).

Students' attendance seems to show no difference compared to the general population, as university students have shown to be easier influenced by peer pressure (Borsari & Carey, 2001), which could result in students not attending the theatre, since peers do also not attend the theatre. Furthermore, also role models, such as teachers (Harisman et al., 2019) or parents

(Šimunović & Babarović, 2020), are able to significantly influence the students in their behaviour. Next to peers and role models, the environmental factors, like facilities or infrastructure (Asfani et al., 2016) can influence a student in their life. Within the culture sector, students have shown to attach value to the atmosphere and the personnel, different types of offerings (refreshing, relaxing and quality), but the most important has shown to be accessibility (Beerda, 2022). However, research on these factors is limited, showing a clear lack of knowledge for theatres in how to approach this target group. This thesis aims to identify specific influential factors on students in their visiting or revisiting behaviour towards the theatre. The following research question is aimed to be answered: “Which factors influence the purchase intentions and repurchase intentions of students in attending the theatre?.”

Starting with a theoretical framework, built on the literature review, the aim is to create an overview aiming to explain the influencing factors with regards to students and their purchase intention and repurchase intention for the theatre. To test this framework, a self-administered survey will aim to find out among a sample group what drives them in their repurchasing behaviour and purchasing behaviour and complement the existing theory by adding new information.

## 1.2 Academic relevance

The field of purchase intention and repurchase intention with regards to the theatre has found very little attention, resulting in difficulties in explaining with academic arguments why certain groups do, or do not go to the theatre. Most of the knowledge is now based on experience, but the option to change the behaviour and get more students to the theatre does not (yet) exist, due to a lack of knowledge in this area. This thesis aims to describe the

influences on behaviour and thereby create a deeper insight into how students think of this topic.

### 1.3 Practical relevance

A framework with factors influencing the purchase intention and repurchase intention towards the theatre creates an overview for theatres to improve their strategy in targeting this specific group by implementing changes that suit this target group better.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Entertainment

The overarching concept in which theatres can be categorized, is entertainment. The theatre can be considered a passive form of entertainment (Jensen et al., 2016). Within a passive form of entertainment, the person experiencing entertainment lets things happen to them, and is not actively participating in it. Next to the theatre being a passive form of entertainment, it is also an offline form (Wong & Hiew, 2005) of it. This means that visitors have to physically be there, but during the COVID-19 pandemic many online entertainment platforms emerged and expanded (Ryu & Cho, 2022), which could result in an increase of the level of competition that theatres experience.

With a possibility to interpret the concept 'entertainment' in such a wide range of definitions, it seems nearly impossible to find a universal definition for the concept. Entertainment can be argued to be possible without other people being involved, as for



example Shustermann (2003) states that entertainment is defined as ‘the action of occupying (a person’s) attention agreeably’. In contrast, Jensen et al. (2016) state that entertainment aims to create a link between at least two persons, showing the need for multiple people to be involved. A complete overview of different definitions for entertainment is created and shown in table 1.

**Table 1**

*Definitions of entertainment*

Jensen et al., 2016	To entertain means to establish a link between two or more persons
Shusterman, 2003	The action of occupying (a person’s) attention agreeably
Bates & Ferri, 2010	Entertainment is anything that is entertaining or not boring
Hennig-Thurau & Houston, 2019	Any offering on the market with the goal to offer pleasure, instead of purely functional utility
Benny, 2015	The generation of the external stimuli in a satisfying way.
Mckee et al., 2014	Audience-centred commercial culture

Entertainment can be used for many different purposes, since it can be for leisure or pleasure, such as gaming, but also for educational purposes, as found in edutainment (Moss, 2010). McKee et al. (2014) do not see categories, but rather forms of entertainment, such as gaming, sport events or comedy. The theatre creates the opportunity for multiple forms of entertainment and can be seen as a form of entertainment on its own.

Considering the focus this thesis holds towards the definition of entertainment, the concept of entertainment in this thesis is defined as follows: Entertainment is the act of

keeping a person or multiple persons entertained, with the goal to offer a positive feeling to the person being entertained, through different kinds of entertainment forms.

## 2.2 Influencing factors and outcome variables on the interest towards visiting the theatre

### 2.2.1 Influencing factors

There are many factors that influence the reasons to go to the theatre. Whether one has the intention to purchase or repurchase after having visited the theatre can be influenced by factors in several areas, such as the physical environment or the offerings. Other factors can play a role of mediator. Below an overview is created of the influential factors that will be considered during this thesis, namely demographics, physical environment, offerings & alternatives, customer satisfaction, perceived value for money, and personal environment.

#### 2.2.1.1 Demographics

Whereas age might not be a determining factor, it can certainly play a role in the entertainment consumption behaviour. For example, Manolika & Baltzis (2022) found that the group of theatre visitors are, on average, older than museum, cinema, or concert hall visitors. The interests in entertainment segments also differs with age, since younger adults value fear- and sadness-related gratification (Bartsch, 2012) and have a greater interest in films with dark, violent, scary, or sad content (Marest et al., 2008), whereas older adults have shown more interest in contemplative and emotionally meaningful entertainment (Bartsch, 2012). These studies have shown that age does, indeed, have an impact on the entertainment consumption, and who usually belong to the category of younger adults, are likely to be affected by their age in their decision-making and behaviour towards going to the theatre.

The entertainment consumption also sees differences within the gender of the visitor, since women tend to put more value to the perception of pleasurable level of value-expressive attributes, whilst men have shown more interest in functional attributes (Voss & Cova, 2006). Voss & Cova (2006) also saw men put more value on functional service quality, though women attached more value to pro-social values in the theatre. Other differences between genders on a more general level can be seen by women reporting more emotional burnouts (Purvanova & Muros, 2010), living on different standards to obtain promotions (Jang et al., 2020) and women being better at remote studying (McSporrán & Young, 2001). All this previous research shows that gender differences come in many forms and are therefore likely to be observed when visiting the theatre.

Manolika & Baltzis (2022) showed that theatre visitors were the highest earning group among all entertainment visitors. Older respondents have also shown to be less price sensitive (Slabá, 2019), whilst ticket prices have an important role in making the decision to go to the theatre (Šimić et al., 2018). Students within the Netherlands have an average income per month of €409 (2017) (Statista, 2022c), which is needed to get through the entire month. Prices for theatre visits are not shy to be up to 10% of this monthly income (Wilminktheater, 2023), making a theatre visit relatively expensive for students or lower-income families.

The behaviour of individuals is also determined by the highest level of education that an individual has followed, as Manolika & Baltzis (2022) found that theatre visitors are among the highest educated group among entertainment visitors. Furthermore, Grisolia et al. (2010) found that the level of formal education is influencing the determination of attending the theatre. It has also been found that art education students are more likely to attend the

theatre than people with a different educational background, showing that not only level of education, but also type of education can influence theatre attendance (Borgonovi, 2004).

#### 2.2.1.2 Offerings and alternatives

The offering at the theatre is among the highest influencing factors for students to go to the theatre in the Netherlands. The entertainment should, in the opinion of students, be refreshing, relaxing or be of high quality (Beerda, 2022), but also visitors of the theatre in Croatia are heavily influenced by what is being offered (Šimić & Pap, 2019), and this is also one of the motivations for theatre attenders in the Czech Republic (Chytkova et al., 2012). Theatres who possess more values related to the market, or how artistic the offerings are, have reported to give a higher level of satisfaction to visitors (Voss & Cova, 2006), indicating that the respondents highly value the offering at the theatre. Walmsley (2011) found that 'entertainment; a good night out' was a very important reason for people to go to the theatre, but also learning about history or actual themes could play a role. In South Korea, it was found that two out of five main domains entailing reasons for people to go to the theatre were interest in Korean culture, and curiosity (Kim et al., 2018). Offering at the location can therefore be seen as a crucial influential factor, among many different cultures.

Related to the offering, is the alternative offering at other locations or better called: competition. Li (2020) found that new trends are being developed in the online entertainment consumption, and also Batool et al. (2021) saw that video streaming services have become the key source of entertainment. Big growths are seen, as for example Netflix added a record number of subscribers in the first quarter of 2020, during COVID-19 (Epstein, 2022). Next to the online entertainment seeing growth, the offering at the theatre has been seen as one of the highest influencing factors for students (see previous paragraph), and therefore logically

entails the offerings at other places, which might be more accessible or just have better offerings.

#### 2.2.1.3 Perceived value for money

The perceived value for money, with a main focus on price, has been shown to play an important role in behaviour, as shown by multiple research (Al-Ali et al., 2015; Park et al., 2019; Auf et al., 2018). The determinant price/value for money is key within this (Slack et al., 2020), since a price perception consistent with (or exceeding) expectations makes the customer more likely to perceive a 'fair' price (Herrmann et al., 2007). Apart from that, the correlation between price and quality is above average, when customers learn via commodities about obtaining quality for a reasonable price (Hanf & Von Wersebe, 1997), indicating the consumer interest in finding the value in the price they pay. El-Adly (2019) found that both price and quality have a direct positive influence on customer satisfaction, showing the importance of both aspects and the need for a balance. The value for money in this case is seen as the perception of the customer or visitor towards knowing that what they will receive is worth the money they will spend on it.

#### 2.2.1.4 Personal environment

Young people seem to be strongly influenced by the people in their inner circle and the peer pressure they exert, as it can be seen for example in the risky behaviour of young people behind the wheel, seems to be one of the main influences (Trógolo et al., 2022). People in general are also heavily influenced in their purchasing decisions by for example things or activities on Facebook that are liked by friends, as the like of a friend has a positive effect on purchase intention (Richard & Guppy, 2014). Moldes et al. (2019) showed that academic

performance of students is also influenced by their peer pressure, showing that the behaviour of students can indeed (heavily) be influenced by other students, or friends aiming to pressuring one into perform a certain behaviour. This behaviour seems to be in line with adhering to the same rules as your inner circle, as one tends to adhere better to rules when approval of their inner circle is perceived (Tuncgenç et al., 2021). Kim et al. (2018) found that one of the main factors for going to the theatre in South Korea was socialization and hobbies, which is also in line with previous statements. The findings of socialization are also supported by Walmsley (2011), as the study showed that one of the main five drivers was socially oriented, where quality time with family and friends played an important role.

Next to peer pressure, role models or ambassadors also play an important factor. As an example, cultural parenting among parents has been observed to be able to influence student's behaviour in terms of academic performance (Moldes et al., 2019), parental influence also actively influences student achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009), and the parents can also form motivational beliefs, achievement or choices in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) domain for students (Šimunović & Babarović, 2020). A positive teacher-student interaction is able to promote the self-efficacy of students (Li & Yang, 2021), with results also showing that a higher level of teachers produces more sophisticated students (Harisman et al., 2019). Next to academic performance, also attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control are influenced by role models (Fellnhofer & Mueller, 2018). Role models can therefore be considered to play an important role in behaviour of young people, including students. This might stimulate students to change behaviour or do activities they would normally not consider, such as visiting the theatre.

### 2.2.1.5 Physical environment

The physical environment consists of three factors, with the first factor being the atmosphere at the location visited. Beerda (2022) found that students in the Netherlands are heavily influenced by the atmosphere, but also students in Croatia (Chytкова et al., 2012) and the Czech Republic (Šimić & Pap, 2019) put significant value on the atmosphere within the theatre. The feeling of belonging or feeling at home in the location where you are is one of the main aspects of the atmosphere in Croatia (Šimić et al., 2018) for students.

The second factor of physical environment is the location of the activity. Students in Croatia (Šimić & Pap, 2019) and in the Czech Republic (Chytкова et al., 2012) found this the most important factor from the theatre. Within the Netherlands, the value attached to the location appears to be less (Beerda, 2022), but it is still considered to have a significant influence on the Dutch students. The location of the theatre and its facilities can therefore play an important role for the students.

The last influential factor of physical environment is the perceived service quality provided by the personnel. Students within the Netherlands value this highly, but not as much as adults do (Beerda, 2022). Visitors in Croatia (Šimić & Pap, 2019) and the Czech Republic (Chytкова, 2012) have indicated to value the service quality highly as well, and Walmsley (2011) has also found that a good customer service forms an important impact on the reasons to go to the theatre.

### 2.2.1.6 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is one of the main reasons for the intention to purchase again (Lin & Lekhawipat, 2014), and is seen by Hellier et al. (2003) to be influenced by the perceived value

of service. Al-Ali et al. (2015) found that next to the perceived service value, the monetary value and other offerings by the location also play an important role in customer satisfaction. The importance of perceived service value has been confirmed by more studies (Soebandhi et al., 2020); Hidayat et al., 2019), as well as the importance of monetary value (Park et al., 2019; El-Adly, 2019; Herrmann et al., 2007) and can therefore be considered to be key aspects towards the satisfaction of the customer, or in the case of the theatre, a visitor. The last important aspect influencing the customer satisfaction was the customer experience, which consists of staff service, environment, product experience and shopping procedure (Pei et al., 2020). These aspects once again show that the value of service and other offerings play an important role in satisfying the customer. Customer satisfaction is, within this thesis, considered to be the degree to which a customer or visitor is satisfied with the visit to the theatre. This variable is also, within this thesis considered to be both an influencing factor and an outcome variable of a visit.

### **2.2.2 Outcome variables**

The outcome variables are influenced by the influential factors, either directly or indirectly. These outcome variables are the purchase intention and the repurchase intention.

#### **2.2.2.1 Purchase intention**

When making a purchase, a person is influenced by many different factors. The opinion of others can be a determinant factor (Richard & Guppy, 2014), the attitude towards the purchase (An et al., 2021) or trust in a brand (Thamzihvanan & Xavier, 2013) when it comes to purchase intention. Next to the impact of the person and the opinion of others or friends, so-called influencers, categorized as role models in this thesis, can have an important impact in



purchase intention in many different forms (Lim et al., 2017; Chetioui et al., 2019; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). The purchase intention is therefore influenced by many factors and is eventually the determinant for one when considering going to the theatre, or not.

#### 2.2.2.2 Repurchase intention

Repurchase intention exists only when the product or service has already been bought once and can therefore only aim to explain the behaviour of visitors in coming back to the theatre, in this case. Although repurchase intention differs a lot per person, or group of persons (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001), one of the main reasonings for acting on repurchasing is the customer satisfaction level, as mentioned before, which has been shown in multiple studies (Hellier et al., 2003; Abrar et al., 2017; Thamzihvanan & Xavier, 2013; Suhaily & Soelasih, 2017). This indicates that visitors will only come back to the theatre if they are, overall, satisfied with their previous visit(s). This goes for the general satisfaction, since one bad experience could outweigh multiple positive experiences. As mentioned before, the customer satisfaction level is influenced by service quality perceived, the atmosphere and the location itself (see paragraph 2.2.1.4) and therefore the repurchase intention can be considered to start at the basics of having good personnel, or an attractive location.

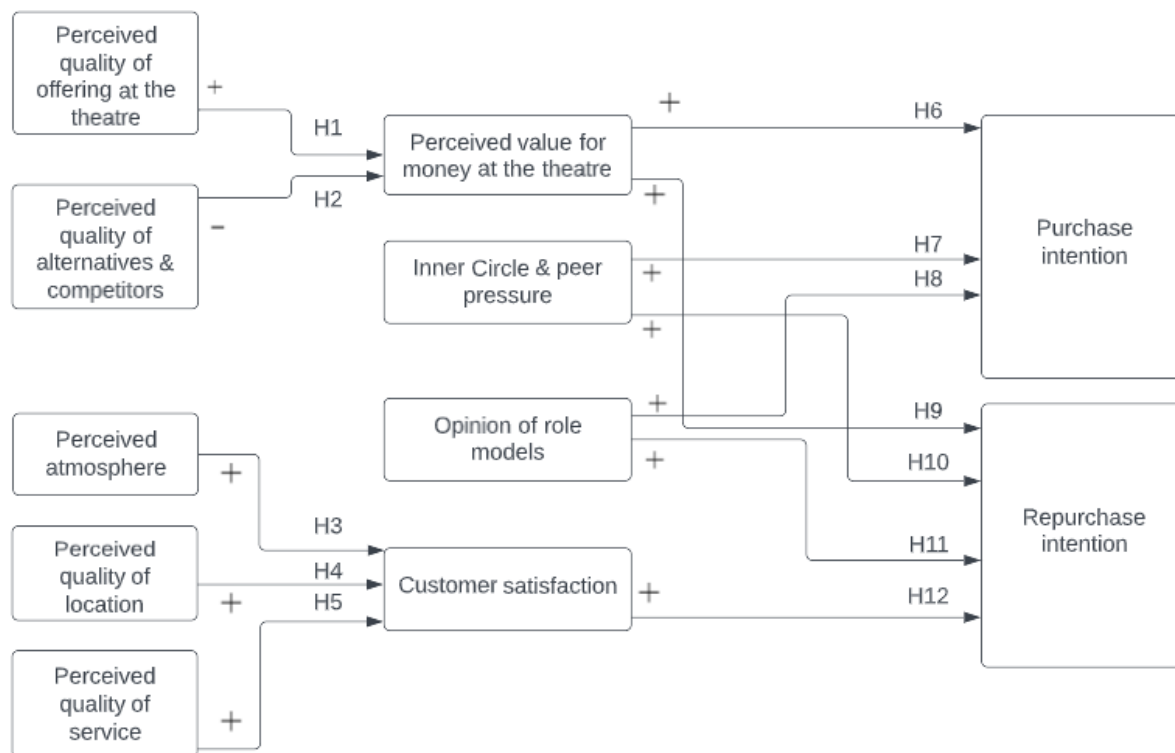
### 2.3 Theoretical framework

The anticipated theoretical framework (*figure 1*) is based on the findings from the literature, combined with the applicability towards students and their influential factors. Most relationships are predicted to be positive, except for the relationship between the perceived quality of alternatives and competitors, and the perceived value for money at the theatre, as

the better the quality at other locations, the worse your perception of the value for money of the theatre will (likely) be.

The role of customer satisfaction could be argued to be mediating. However, within the theory, evidence was found that customer satisfaction is directly influential to repurchase intention, as well as evidence for three variables having an impact on the level of customer satisfaction, namely the perceived atmosphere, perceived quality of the location and the perceived service quality. Therefore, within this thesis it is argued that customer satisfaction does not play a mediating role.

The role of the perceived value for money at the theatre can also be argued to be mediating. However, the theory has shown evidence that the perceived value for money directly impact the purchase intention and the repurchase intention. In turn, perceived value for money has also been found to be influenced by the perceived quality of offering at the location, in this case the theatre, and the perceived quality of alternatives & competitors. Therefore, the perceived value for money at the theatre will not be viewed as playing a mediating role.

**Figure 1***Figure 1: Theoretical framework with hypotheses*

## 2.4 Hypotheses development

In order to answer the research question: “What factors are influencing the theatre-going behaviour of students?”, 12 hypotheses were developed. These hypotheses are based on the anticipated conceptual framework, and aim to provide an insight into the influences and antecedents of the purchase intention and the repurchase intention, which are the perceived atmosphere, the perceived quality of the location, the perceived quality of service, the perceived quality of offering at the theatre, the perceived quality of alternatives & competitors, the customer satisfaction, the perceived value for money at the theatre, the inner circle & peer pressure, and the opinion of role models.

As following the theoretical framework, the first hypothesis formed investigates the relationship between the perceived quality of offering at the location and the perceived value for money. As was found in section 2.2.2, what is offered at the theatre is an important indicator for the perceived value for money (Voss & Cova, 2006, Walmsley, 2011). The higher the quality perceived of what is offered, the higher the satisfaction and thus the perceived value for money. Therefore, the relationship between the perceived quality of offering at the location, and the perceived value for money is hypothesised to be positive.

*H1: There is a positive relationship between the perceived quality of offering at the location and the perceived value for money*

Next to what is offered at the theatre, other locations and alternatives also have been found to be of important influence on visitors. Whereas the offer at the theatre is hypothesised to have a positive relationship with the perceived value for money, it is hypothesised that the offer at other locations, and alternatives, therefore have a negative relationship with the perceived value for money. Although there is little support showing this relationship, it has been formulated as a hypothesis, since the higher potential visitors values an alternative offer, the lower they will likely value your offer.

*H2: There is a negative relationship between the perceived quality of alternatives & offer at competitors, and the perceived value for money*

The first of three main influential factors on the customer satisfaction of a visitor is the perceived atmosphere at the location. Various research has shown that a higher level of perceived atmosphere leads to a higher level of customer satisfaction (Šimić & Pap, 2019;

Chytкова et al., 2012), and therefore hypothesis 3 states that the relationship between the perceived atmosphere at the location and the customer satisfaction is positive.

*H3: There is a positive relationship between the perceived atmosphere at the location and the customer satisfaction*

Next to the perceived atmosphere at the location, the perceived quality of the location has been found to be the second influential factor on the customer satisfaction. This relationship has been found to be positive in previous research (Beerda, 2022; Chytкова et al., 2012), and is therefore hypothesised to be positive within the scope of this thesis.

*H4: There is a positive relationship between the perceived quality of the location and the customer satisfaction*

The perceived service quality is the third and last factor that is hypothesised to have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Previous research found that a higher service quality leads to a higher level of customer satisfaction (Walmsley, 2011; Beerda, 2022), which indicates a good basis for hypothesis 5.

*H5: There is a positive relationship between the perceived service quality and the customer satisfaction*

The perceived value for money at the theatre plays an important role for students. Previous research has shown this (Al-Ali et al., 2015; Park et al., 2019; Auf et al., 2018), and this also indicates the likelihood of one purchasing a ticket, hence a positive relationship between the perceived value for money and the purchase intention is expected, as per hypothesis 6.

*H6: There is a positive relationship between the perceived value for money at the theatre and the purchase intention*

Purchasing a ticket for the theatre or purchasing any other object or service can be influenced by the opinion of others (Richard & Guppy, 2014). The inner circle & peer pressure, indicated by people close to someone, can therefore be considered to be positively related with the purchase intention, with a higher intention to purchase when the inner circle advises it, or peers put pressure on it.

*H7: There is a positive relationship between the inner circle & peer pressure, and the purchase intention*

Role models, which could be influencers, teachers, or parents, among others, have been found to have a positive impact on behaviour of individuals (Lim et al., 2017; Chetioui et al., 2019; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). The higher, or better, opinion of a role model can therefore be hypothesised to create a higher intention to purchase a product or ticket, indicating a positive relationship between the two factors.

*H8: There is a positive relationship between the opinion of role models, and the purchase intention*

Equal to hypothesis 6, the repurchase intention is influenced by some equal factors as the purchase intention, when for example looking at the perceived value for money (Al-Ali et al., 2015; Park et al., 2019; Auf et al., 2018). After the initial visit, visitors will be likely to understand their value for money better, and therefore the perceived value for money will be a clear indicator towards their intention to come back again, their repurchase intention.

*H9: There is a positive relationship between the perceived value for money at the theatre and the repurchase intention*

Behaviour of students is influenced by many factors, in many different aspects, as for example, academic behaviour (Moldes et al., 2019), purchase intention (Richard & Guppy, 2014) or adherence to rules (Tuncgenç et al., 2021). Due to all the different positive influences on behaviour of students, related to the inner circle and peer pressure, the repurchase intention is hypothesised to have a positive relationship with the inner circle and peer pressure.

*H10: There is a positive relationship between the inner circle & peer pressure, and the repurchase intention*

Students are also heavily influenced by role models, as shown for hypothesis 8. Parents (Hill & Tyson, 2009), cultural parenting (Moldes et al., 2019) or teachers (Harsiman et al., 2019) have all shown to positively influence different forms of behaviour of students. The repurchase intention, a form of behaviour, is therefore hypothesised to have a positive relationship with the repurchase intention.

*H11: There is a positive relationship between the role models and the repurchase intention*

The fourth, and last, hypothesised influence on the repurchase intention is the customer satisfaction. The hypothesis 12 states that the more satisfied a customer, or visitor is, the higher the intention to repurchase, hence a positive relationship. This is supported by previous research, indicating that indeed there is a positive relationship between the two factors (Hellier et al., 2003; Abrar et al., 2017; Thamzihvanan & Xavier, 2013; Suhaily & Soelasih, 2017)

*H12: There is a positive relationship between the customer satisfaction, and the repurchase intention*

### **3. Methodology**

In this part, the methods used within this study are described. It includes the data collection, sample distribution, data analysis, reliability check, and validity check.

#### **3.1 Data collection and analysis**

The assessment method was a self-administered online survey through Qualtrics, which was divided into five sections and 50 items. Items to help measure the used variables were found through the handbook from Bruner (2009) for scales for marketing.

Within section A (previous experience), five items were measured, which were the perceived atmosphere at the location, the perceived quality of the location, the perceived service quality, and the customer satisfaction, divided into respectively five segments. The quality of the location was measured by four statements, all answered on a 7-point Likert scale, previously used by Seiders et al., (2005), with a construct reliability of .82 and resulting in an average variance extracted of .54 (Bruner, 2009). Apart from that, answering four items, first used by Baker et al., (1994), will give an insight into the perceived atmosphere at the location from a perspective of the visitors. The validity of this scale can be derived from the research of Baker et al., showing at least .70 on the factor intended to measure, and less than .38 on the other factors (not intended to measure). The third set of questions focused on the perceived service quality at the location, answering four questions first used by Baker et al.



(1992), and later by Baker et al. (1994), showing an average variance extracted of .73 and .80 in the studies (Bruner, 2009). The fourth set of questions, measuring customer satisfaction from section A originated from three different studies, all conducted by Maxham III and Netemeyer (2002a, 2002b, 2003). To support validity, several tests of convergence were done, as well as discriminant validity among constructs, resulting in support for the validity of customer measures (Maxham III & Netemeyer, 2003). Another research of Maxham III and Netemeyer (2002b) also showed discriminant validity among constructs, however it was done through comparing the average variance extracted estimates of all construct pairs. Discriminant validity was found across all pairs of constructs, time periods and surveys. The last set of questions measured the repurchase intention and was measured through three items from Bhattacharjee (2001), who found construct validity for all items.

The second section, section B, intended to measure from all respondents how susceptible they are to influences from their personal environment, such as inner circle, peer pressure or role models. The section was divided into two segments of questions, for respectively inner circle & peer pressure, and the opinion of role models. The inner circle and peer pressure sees eight items measured on a 7-point Likert scale, first used by Bearden et al. (1989), yet not in the same format as used here. The original scale had two parts, with a total of twelve items, whereas the used measurement in this thesis uses eight items in a singular section. Estimated construct reliabilities were .86, .87 and .83. After creating a two-factor structure, instead of three-factors, the construct reliability showed .91, and variance extracted estimate of .52 (Bearden et al., 1989). Next, the five items, measured on a 7-point Likert scale, aiming to measure the influence of role models come from an original 24-item scale constructed by

Singelis (1994). Another 31-item scale was used by Aaker (2000) and Aaker & Williams (1998). Validation was shown through a reported factor analysis (Bruner, 2009).

Section C aims to measure the importance of the offering and alternative options. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale and the section was divided into two segments, one aimed at the perceived quality of offering at the theatre, and the second at the perceived quality of alternatives & competitors. The perceived quality of offering at the theatre is measured through four items, originally from Harris & Goode (2004). Validation of this scale was found through correlation analyses, showing a significant correlation level for all cases. Construct validity was found through the multitrait-multimethod approach, finding convergent validity. Discriminant validity was found through the analysis of chi-squared difference tests, finding all significant first-order constructs (Harris & Goode, 2004). The perceived quality of alternatives & competitors has the exact same set of questions yet adapted to create a view towards other entertainment services, instead of the theatre. Lastly, the perceived value for money at the theatre was measured through seven items, taken from a 9-item scale originating to Grewal et al. (1998). They reported construct reliabilities of .95 and .97, next to convergent validity through high and significant factor loadings ( $p < 0.001$ ). Discriminant validity was shown through confirmatory factor analysis.

Section D consisted of four items which intent to measure the purchase intention. On a 7-point Likert scale, these items where previously used by Coyle & Thorson (2001), who found a reliability coefficient of .83.

Section E, the last section, which deals with demographic data, aims to obtain data to categorize respondents based on gender, age, income, etc.

The following items were reversed and will subsequently be reversed back when analysing the data: customer satisfaction, item 2; repurchase intention, item 3; perceived quality at the theatre, items 1 and 2; and perceived quality at alternatives and competitors, items 1 and 2.

Before the questionnaire began, the participants were asked for informed consent and presented with a screening question to divide the group into respondents that have been to their local theatre, and respondents who have not yet been to their local theatre. Only respondents who had visited their local theatre before were shown part A, which included questions about their satisfaction with the previous visit(s), the other respondents started at part B. The questionnaire consisted of five parts in total (4 if they had not visited the theatre before). The full questionnaire can be found in appendix B.

After creating the questionnaire, a pre-test was conducted which showed no major issues. The pre-test was conducted by a single participant and the participant was asked to critically reflect on the questionnaire and point out mistakes or unclear segments. One item was adapted in a non-correct manner for the pre-test, and some minor spelling or formulation details showed up. After having corrected these, a pilot study was conducted with six respondents. This study showed no corrections needed for the questions, and all respondents, who are part of the target group, declared to have found no issues, and understood everything.

The data was analysed using the IBM SPSS version 28 tool. First, descriptive statistics were computed of all data, after which the hypotheses were tested through linear regression and multiple linear regression.

## 3.2 Sample

Participants were recruited via the snowball sampling technique, executed via private chats, group chats, mouth-to-mouth diffusion and via the theatre among the interest group. A total of 178 responses were recorded. Only the respondents that were asked to fill out the questionnaire and that filled out at least 95% of the entire questionnaire were kept, the other responses were deleted. The questionnaire will be discussed in a later section. This left 106 respondents. One more response was deleted, since the answers consisted of either strongly agree, or strongly disagree, and the participant had responded contradictory answers on different items. The exclusion left 105 complete responses that could be used for this study. Table 2 shows the demographics of the respondents.

**Table 2**

*Demographics of the respondents*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency - percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	49   47%
	Female	56   53%
<b>Age</b>	18-24 years old	87   83%
	24-30 years old	16   15%
	30+ years old	2   2%
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	82   78%

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	Part-time employee	6   6%
	Full-time employee	14   13%
	Other	3   3%
<b>Household income</b>	< €15.000	60   57%
	€15.000 - €30.000	14   13%
	€30.000 - €45.000	9   9%
	€45.000 +	6   6%
	No answer	16   15%
<b>Cultural background</b>	Dutch	53   50.5%
	Europe (not Dutch)	37   35%
	Asia	11   10.5%
	South America	2   2%
	No answer	2   2%

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### 3.3 Findings

#### 3.3.1 Reliability

The reliability was measured for each construct using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's alpha is a measurement tool that can be used to compute the random error, where the higher the level of Cronbach's Alpha, the lower the random error (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). A bear

minimum level of alpha of 0.50 was established, but an alpha of at least 0.70 is considered as good. The results are in table 3, below.

**Table 3**

*Cronbach's alpha for each variable*

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha after deletion</b>
Perceived quality of offering at the theatre	0.826	4	
Perceived quality of offering at alternatives and competitors	0.805	4	
Atmosphere at the location	0.546	4	
Location of the activity	0.780	4	
Perceived service quality	0.822	4	
Perceived value for money	0.863	7	
Inner circle & peer pressure	0.785	8	
Role models	0.360	5	0.586
Customer satisfaction	0.607	3	
Purchase intention	0.820	4	
Repurchase intention	0.819	3	

As table 3 shows, all items had good reliability levels, except for role models. After deletion of items 1, 2 and 3 of the corresponding section in the questionnaire, the Alpha went up to 0,586 which is high enough to be accepted. This means that in the rest of the analysis, items 1, 2 and 3 of role models are not considered and role models will therefore consist of only the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> items. Less than 3 items used to measure a construct has been used before by Gosling et al. (2003), showing that it can be sufficient.

### 3.3.2 Average variance extracted and composite reliability

The Average Variance Extracted maintains a threshold of 0.50, since that would show that the variance captured by the construct is larger than the variance due to measurement error (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For the composite reliability, a threshold of 0.60 is held, but a minimum of 0.70 is preferred, whereas values above 0.90 are not preferred since there might be too much overlap in the items, in that case (Hair Jr. et al., 2014).

For each construct, a factor analysis was conducted after which the factor loadings were used to calculate Lambda, Lambda squared and the error variances in Excel. If one items did not load sufficiently on the factor, it was excluded. Based on these three values, the average variance extracted, and composite reliability were calculated. Table 4, below, shows the results after exclusion of the second item of quality of the location, and the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> item of inner circle & peer pressure. These items were excluded since they did not load enough on the factor. After that, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO) was calculated which has a minimum threshold of 0.50.

**Table 4**

*Average variance extracted, composite reliability and KMO-value for each variable*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>KMO</b>	<b>KMO significance</b>
Perceived quality of offering at the theatre	0.666	0.888	0.784	<0.001
Perceived quality of offering at alternatives and competitors	0.638	0.876	0.739	<0.001
Atmosphere at the location	0.533	0.771	0.539	<0.001
Location of the activity	0.610	0.862	0.714	<0.001
Perceived service quality	0.658	0.885	0.770	<0.001
Perceived value for money	0.553	0.896	0.857	<0.001
Inner circle & peer pressure	0.549	0.879	0.808	<0.001
Role models	0.701	0.824	0.500	<0.001
Customer satisfaction	0.651	0.847	0.626	<0.001
Purchase intention	0.652	0.882	0.797	<0.001
Repurchase intention	0.758	0.903	0.656	<0.001



## 4. Results

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of all computed variables. Values for variables were computed by finding the average of the different items making up that specific variable. As can be seen, the first four variables have an N of only 67, which is due to these variable items only being shown to people who had already visited the theatre before. In order to have good results, the ratio between the highest and lowest standard deviation should be less than a 1:2 ratio (Yin et al., 2016). This is our case, since 1,22988 is less than double of 0,72329.

**Table 5**

*Descriptive statistics of each variable*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Perceived quality of offering at the theatre	105	2.00	6.50	4.383	0.993	0.987
Perceived quality of offering at alternatives and competitors	105	2.25	6.50	4.879	0.947	0.897
Atmosphere at the location	67	2.67	7.00	5.592	0.910	0.828
Location of the activity	67	3.75	7.00	5.892	0.723	0.523
Perceived service quality	67	3.50	7.00	5.869	0.767	0.588
Perceived value for money	105	1.71	6.71	4.888	0.784	0.615
Inner circle & peer pressure	105	1.00	5.83	3.127	1.125	1.266

Role models	105	1.50	6.50	4.429	1.117	1.247
Customer satisfaction	67	3.00	6.67	5.507	0.790	0.624
Purchase intention	105	1.50	7.00	4.402	1.230	1.513
Repurchase intention	105	1.67	6.67	4.985	1.118	1.251

## 4.2 Hypotheses

The relationships between variables from the hypotheses were tested through simple linear regression. The independent variables were tested against the dependent variables, to create a regression equation. To find the regression equation, it is written as follows:  $Y = a \cdot x + b$ . In this case, Y is the value for variable 2, a is the unstandardized B and indicates the slope of the relationship, x is the value for variable 1 and b is the constant. Y and x are the values given to a certain variable, depending on the variable predicted, and are integer values between one and seven, equal to the Likert scale items. As an example, customer satisfaction as being explained by the atmosphere at the location would give the equation: (predicted score given to customer satisfaction) = 0.38 \* (score given for atmosphere at the location) + 3.37.

The coefficient beta, in the case of the Pearson's correlation, is equal to the correlation. Next to that, the variance from the dependent variable explained by the independent variable, indicated by  $R^2$  is also not mentioned, since this could be calculated by squaring the value of the correlation, R.

Table 6 gives an overview of all outcomes of the simple linear regression. The first two columns show which variables were tested, where variable 1 is the independent variable and variable 2 is the dependent variable. Next, the correlation was mentioned with the standard error of the estimate, followed by the coefficient values of the constant and the unstandardized B, both with their respective standard errors. Lastly, significance of the slope is given, which is the significance of the unstandardized B since this value indicates whether or not the relationship between two variables is significant or not.

**Table 6**

*Correlation, constant, unstandardized B, and significance for each hypothesis*

<b>Var 1</b>	<b>Var 2</b>	<b>R</b> <b>(std. error)</b>	<b>Constant</b> <b>(std. error)</b>	<b>Unstandardized B</b> <b>(std. error)</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Perceived quality of offering at the theatre	Perceived value for money	0.47 (0.70)	3.26 (0.31)	0.37 (0.07)	<0.001
Perceived quality of offering at alternatives & competitors	Perceived value for money	0.08 (0.79)	4.56 (0.40)	0.07 (0.08)	0.401
Atmosphere at the location	Customer satisfaction	0.44 (0.71)	3.37 (0.55)	0.38 (0.10)	<0.001
Location of the visit	Customer satisfaction	0.65 (0.61)	1.35 (0.61)	0.71 (0.10)	<0.001
Perceived service quality	Customer satisfaction	0.50 (0.69)	2.48 (0.66)	0.52 (0.11)	<0.001

Perceived value for money	Purchase intention	0.49 (1.08)	0.68 (0.67)	0.76 (0.14)	<0.001
Inner circle & peer pressure	Purchase intention	0.08 (1.23)	4.14 (0.36)	0.08 (0.11)	0.443
Role models	Purchase intention	0.05 (1.23)	4.64 (0.50)	-0.05 (0.11)	0.627
Perceived value for money	Repurchase intention	0.34 (1.06)	2.71 (0.79)	0.46 (0.16)	0.005
Inner circle & peer pressure	Repurchase intention	0.01 (1.13)	5.03 (0.39)	-0.01 (0.12)	0.911
Role models	Repurchase intention	0.13 (1.12)	5.55 (0.54)	-0.13 (0.12)	0.289
Customer satisfaction	Repurchase intention	0.59 (0.91)	0.42 (0.79)	0.83 (0.14)	<0.001

Hypotheses are accepted if the relationship (coefficient beta and unstandardized B) are in the direction mentioned in the hypothesis (positive or negative influence) and the significance level is smaller than 0.05. This threshold was used since this means that there is only a 5% chance of committing a type I (false-positive) error (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012). Apart from that, the significance level also shows the model fit for the data, with the same threshold of 0.05.

#### 4.3 Predicting variables with multiple independent variables.

Multiple linear regression was performed to test how significantly predictors influenced the constant. From the original theoretical framework, four groups for multiple linear regression were identified. The thresholds maintained in the multiple linear regression are equal to the simple linear regression. This entails that relationships can be seen as significant

when the relationship (coefficient beta and unstandardized B) is in the direction mentioned within the hypothesis, as well as a smaller significance level than 0.05, since this threshold indicates that the chance of committing a type I error is only 5% (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012). The standard error was calculated for the intercept and each predicting variable, which indicates how far the mean of the results lies from the true mean of the population, with a higher level indicating that the value lies further away. The results of all multiple predictors linear regression are shown in table 7. The intercept indicates the coefficient for the intercept when predicting the dependent variable by multiple independent variables, with the standard error in brackets behind the value. The standard error indicates the standard error of the estimate of the model; the standard error of the coefficients can be found in brackets behind the value. One star indicates a significance level of less than 0.05, whereas two stars indicates a significance level of less than 0.01 and three stars indicates a significance level of less than 0.001.

**Table 7**

*Multiple linear regression table with standard errors*

	<b>Perceived value for money</b>	<b>Customer satisfaction</b>	<b>Purchase intention</b>	<b>Repurchase intention</b>
Intercept	3.43 (0.42)***	0.93 (0.66)	0.86 (0.85)	-0.50 (1.18)
Perceived quality of offering at the theatre	0.38 (0.07)***			
Perceived quality of offering at alternatives and competitors	-0.05 (0.08)			

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Perceived atmosphere	0.56 (0.14)***		
Perceived quality of location	0.13 (0.10)		
Perceived quality of service	0.09 (0.13)		
Perceived value for money at the theatre		0.76 (0.14)***	0.24 (0.14)
Inner circle & peer pressure		0.03 (0.10)	0.06 (0.10)
Role models		-0.06 (0.10)	-0.03 (0.10)
Customer satisfaction			0.76 (0.16)***

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#### 4.3.1. Predicting variables on perceived value for money

The variables “perceived quality of offering at the theatre” and “perceived quality of offering at alternatives & competitors” were tested as independent variables (predictors) on the dependent variable (constant) “perceived value for money”. The indication for model fit returned the correlation at 0.473, which meant R squared came at 0.224 and thus these two predictors were able to explain 22.4% of the variance in perceived value for money. Significance level of ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was <0.001, meaning that there was a good model fit for the data. The beta coefficients returned at 0.486 and -0.054. The formula to calculate the score for perceived value for money, based on the perceived quality of offering at the theatre and the perceived quality of offering at alternatives & competitors showed  $3.426 + 0.384a - 0.045b$ , where the significance levels were respectively <0.001 (intercept, perceived value for money), <0.001 (perceived quality of offering at the theatre) and 0.553 (perceived quality of offering at alternatives & competitors).

The conclusion to be drawn is that in this case only perceived quality of offering at the theatre was a clear predictor for perceived value for money, whereas the perceived quality of offering at alternatives & competitors did not significantly predict the slope for perceived value for money in this multiple regression analysis. Also, the intercept had a good significance indicating that the intercept can be assumed to be at 3.426.

#### 4.3.2. Predicting variables on customer satisfaction

The variables “perceived atmosphere at the location”, “perceived quality of the location” and “perceived service quality” were tested as independent variables (predictors) on the dependent variable (constant) “customer satisfaction”. The correlation returned at 0.666, which meant R squared came at 0.443 and thus these three predictors were able to explain 44.3% of the variance in customer satisfaction. Significance level of ANOVA was <0.001, meaning that there was a good model fit for the data. The beta coefficients returned at 0.151, 0.515 and 0.089. The formula to predict customer satisfaction based on the values of the independent variables showed  $0.925 + 0.131a + 0.562b + 0.092c$ , where the significance levels were respectively 0.169 (intercept, customer satisfaction), 0.178 (perceived quality of the location), <0.001 (perceived atmosphere) and 0.492 (perceived service quality).

The conclusion to be drawn is that in this case only perceived atmosphere was a clear predictor for customer satisfaction, whereas the others did not significantly predict the slope for customer satisfaction in this multiple regression analysis.

#### 4.3.3. Predicting variables on purchase intention

The variables “inner circle & peer pressure”, “role models” and “perceived value for money” were tested as independent variables (predictors) on the dependent variable

(constant) “purchase intention”. The correlation returned at 0.490, which meant R squared came at 0.241 and thus these three predictors were able to explain 24.1% of the variance in purchase intention. Significance level of ANOVA was  $<0.001$ , meaning that there was a good model fit for the data. The beta coefficients returned at 0.485, 0.026 and -0.055. The formula to determine the value of purchase intention based on the values of inner circle & peer pressure, role models and perceived value for money was showed at  $0.860 + 0.029a - 0.060b + 0.761c$ , where the significance levels were respectively 0.313 (intercept, purchase intention), 0.765 (inner circle & peer pressure), 0.535 (role models) and  $<0.001$  (perceived value for money).

The conclusion to be drawn is that in this case only perceived value for money was a clear predictor for purchase intention, whereas the others did not significantly predict the slope for purchase intention in this multiple regression analysis.

#### 4.3.4. Predicting variables on repurchase intention

The variables “customer satisfaction”, “inner circle & peer pressure”, “role models” and “perceived value for money” were tested as independent variables (predictors) on the dependent variable (constant) “repurchase intention”. The correlation returned at 0.617, which meant R squared came at 0.381 and thus these four predictors were able to explain 38.1% of the variance in customer satisfaction. Significance level of ANOVA was  $<0.001$ , meaning that there was a good model fit for the data. The beta coefficients returned at 0.539, -0.028, 0.065 and 0.181. The formula to predict repurchase intention based on customer satisfaction, inner circle & peer pressure, role models and perceived value for money returned at  $-0.496 + 0.763a + 0.060b - 0.028c + 0.243d$ , where the significance levels were respectively



0.676 (intercept, repurchase intention), <0.001 (customer satisfaction), 0.540 (inner circle & peer pressure), 0.788 (role models) and 0.091 (perceived value for money).

The conclusion to be drawn is that in this case only customer satisfaction was a clear predictor for repurchase intention, whereas the others did not significantly predict the slope for repurchase intention in this multiple regression analysis.

## 5. Discussion

This thesis aimed to answer the question 'what factors are influencing the theatre-going behaviour of students?'. In order to answer this question, antecedents, and influences on the purchase intention of visitors, as well as the repurchase intention of visitors were tried to uncover. Simply said, the goal of this thesis was to find out why visitors come to the theatre and why they come back. To answer these questions, 12 hypotheses were created to test different variables found in the literature, which could be antecedents and/or influences on the target group. In this part the results obtained in this study are shown and discussed.

### 5.1 Predicting perceived value for money

The perceived quality of offering at the theatre was predicted to influence the perceived value for money of students. Hypothesis 1 stated that a higher perceived quality of offering at the theatre, would result in an increased level of perceived value for money. This statement was supported by the results of the thesis, which showed that the perceived quality of offering at the theatre positively significantly predicts the perceived value for money students and young adults experience. The results in this study are corroborated by other similar studies.

Beerda (2022) found that one of the highest influencing factors for Dutch students to go to the theatre was the offering at the theatre. Furthermore, visitors in Croatia (Šimić & Pap, 2019) and the Czech Republic (Chytková et al., 2012) experienced the same, as they also found offering at the theatre important. Other research showed that satisfaction of visitors can increase depending on their values (Voss & Cova, 2006) or that knowing they will have a good night out significantly influences whether or not to go to the theatre. The results give reason to accept hypothesis 1, showing that the perceived quality of offering at the theatre significantly influences the perceived value for money.

Apart from to the perceived quality of offering at the theatre, there was another predictor for the perceived value for money: the perceived quality of offering at other locations. Whereas theory showed that online entertainment sees new trends being developed (Li, 2020) and the video streaming services have become the key source of entertainment (Batool et al., 2021), the results in this thesis do not support the importance of other entertainment options, next to the theatre. No significant relationship was found between the perceived quality of alternatives & competitors and the perceived value for money, meaning that hypothesis 2 was rejected. A possible explanation for this is that students do not consider the value of alternatives when making decisions about the theatre, but rather focus on the theatre itself. Another explanation can involve the criteria for judging an activity as competition, since some entertainment activities can go hand in hand or side by side.

## 5.2 Predicting the customer satisfaction

The first significant positive predictor of customer satisfaction was the perceived atmosphere. As a significant positive predictor, it can be said that a higher rating given to the predictor (perceived atmosphere in this case) will lead to a higher rating of the predicted

variable (customer satisfaction in this case). So, visitors who perceived the atmosphere as positive will likely be more satisfied with their visit. Since the sample consisted of mainly students, these results are in line with the research from Beerda (2022), who found that Dutch students did indeed perceive the atmosphere to be an important factor in customer satisfaction. The other way around, Šimić et al. (2018) found that the young audience does not like to go to a theatre location if they feel that they would not belong there, and the importance of the atmosphere for students was reinforced by research from Chytkova et al. (2012) and Šimić & Pap (2019). All previous research, as well as this thesis found the importance of atmosphere on the customer satisfaction, which reinforces the confidence with which that can be said. Customer satisfaction is therefore significantly positively influenced by the perceived atmosphere, accepting hypothesis 3

The second predictor that showed to be significantly positive for customer satisfaction was the perceived quality of the location. Again, the results show that this predictor is a significant positive predictor for customer satisfaction, implying that the higher the level of perceived quality of the location, the higher the customer satisfaction will be. These results are in line with previous work, where young Croatian (Šimić & Pap, 2019) and Czech (Chytkova et al. 2012) theatre attenders found the location to be an important reason to go, or not go, to the theatre. Dutch students also showed that accessibility of the location is very important (Beerda, 2022). The results imply that the quality of the location is an important factor for students in making their decision to go to the theatre. Quality of the location includes the accessibility (as can be seen in the questionnaire), which could be associated with students needing an accessible location, due to their lack of transport options. Therefore, hypothesis 4 can be accepted.

The last researched predictor for customer satisfaction was the perceived service quality. Research had already shown that personnel play an important role for Dutch students' customer satisfaction (Beerda, 2022), as well as for Czech (Chytkova et al., 2012) and Croatian (Šimić & Pap, 2019) theatre visitors. Furthermore, the level of customer service was found to have a significant impact in the reasons to go to the theatre for visitors by Walmsley (2011). The results of this thesis showed no difference, since the results indicated perceived service quality to be a significant positive predictor for customer satisfaction, which would mean that the level of customer satisfaction increases when the level of perceived service quality increases. The fifth hypothesis can therefore be considered to be confirmed by these results.

The confirmation of hypothesis three, four and five uncovers the reasonings behind customer satisfaction, a factor that is hypothesised to be influencing the repurchase intention. Confirming the underlying reasons behind customer satisfaction creates a possibility to adapt to the demand of the customers, positively influencing potential outcomes. Even though multiple regression showed only evidence for the perceived atmosphere, the individual loadings of the other factors have shown that they do significantly influence the customer satisfaction, though perhaps in a different manner than the combination of the three.

### 5.3 Predicting the purchase intention

Three predictors were hypothesised to positively influence the purchase intention (PI). The first predictor was the perceived value for money, which significantly positively predicted the purchase intention of students. Attitude towards the purchase was found to be an important predictor for purchase intention (An et al., 2021), which can be considered as how the visitor views the purchase vis-à-vis the value for what they are paying. Hypothesis 6 was accepted, stating that the perception of value for the money paid has a significant positive impact on

the intention to visit the theatre. Students do, indeed, find it important that the money they spend creates enough value, which makes sense considering the average income of a student in 2017 was only €409 per month (Statista, 2022c). Because their budget is limited, the need is created to find the highest value possible for their money.

The inner circle and peer pressure is the second variable hypothesised to have a positive influence on the purchase intention of students. Previous work showed that the inner circle can have a significant impact on the visiting and purchasing behaviour through liking different events on Facebook (Richard & Guppy, 2014). Apart from that, the behaviour of students in general is influenced by peer pressure (Moldes et al., 2019), but also by the rules within the inner circle (Tuncgenç et al., 2021). Although previous research shows the importance of the inner circle and peer pressure on the purchase intention, the results of this thesis do not. There was no evidence found that the inner circle and peer pressure significantly predict the purchase intention, which could indicate that the own will of students is stronger than the importance of what others think. Even though the group is young and shown to be influenced by peers, they might start to outgrow this when entering student life. Hypothesis 7 was therefore rejected.

The last hypothesis stated that role models play an important role on the purchase intention of students. This was again not supported by the results, even though previous work showed that the purchase intention becomes impacted by influencers, seen as role models (Lim et al., 2017; Chetioui et al., 2019; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Behaviour has also been seen to be influenced by role models in the form of teachers (Li & Yang, 2021; Harisman et al., 2019) or parents (Moldes et al., 2019; Hill & Tyson, 2009). This influence is, as mentioned, not supported by the results, which could indicate that even

though role models play an important role in students' life, they might play an important role in different situations than the purchase intention for the theatre. Hypothesis 8 is not accepted.

The results indicated that the purchase intention is significantly positively influenced by the perception of value for their money, but not by the inner circle and peer pressure, nor the influence of role models. Students can therefore be considered to be less influenced by others, and more by the importance of budgeting their savings more.

#### 5.4 Predicting the repurchase intention

The first variable that was hypothesised to predict the repurchase intention was the perceived value for money (PVM). The perceived value for money was previously shown to be significantly positively influenced by the perceived quality of offering at the theatre, meaning that depending on what is offered, the visitor perceived the value for money higher or lower. The results showed a significant positive prediction of repurchase intention by the perceived value for money. Previous literature showed that price is an important aspect (Al-Ali et al., 2015; Park et al., 2019; Auf et al., 2018), but also the perception of fairness (Herrmann et al., 2007). Perceiving a price as fair value for what is offered can therefore be considered an important influencing factor for visitors, when considering visiting the location again, which confirms hypothesis 9.

Another hypothesised predictor for repurchase intention was the inner circle and peer pressure. Previous work showed that the behaviour of students is influenced by peer pressure (Moldes et al., 2019), but no previous research focused specifically on the influence of inner circle and peer pressure on the repurchase intention. The results did not show support for this

relationship either, leading to the rejection of hypothesis 10. These results can indicate that students do not perceive the opinion of others as a leading factor in their decision making, since they might have already outgrown this. It could also mean that the inner circle of students is closely connected to themselves, and therefore share opinions on most matters. Lastly, students might have underestimated the importance that others play on them in making decisions.

The last hypothesised predicting variable for the repurchase intention was the role models. Role models have been shown to have a significant influence on the behaviour of students, such as for example parents (Moldes et al., 2019; Hill & Tyson, 2009), teachers (Li & Yang, 2021) or other role models influencing attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Fellnhöfer & Mueller, 2018). However, the results do not support the hypothesis that role models play a significant role in the intention to repurchase, or revisit, after an initial purchase or visit. Therefore, hypothesis 11 was rejected. The rejection could indicate that role models do not play an important role on students, since they often do not live at home anymore, and do not see their teachers as role models anymore but rather as 'just another person'. Role models could also already have left their mark, making the influence 'normal' for students, giving them the feeling that no influence is present on them in the decision making.

Customer satisfaction, as discussed before, was significantly positively influenced by perceived atmosphere, perceived quality of the location and perceived service quality. Customer satisfaction, in turn, was tested to be a predictor for the repurchase intention (RI) of a visitor. This prediction turned out to be a significant, positive relationships, showing that the more satisfied a visitor is, the more likely the visitor is to purchase again, or in this case

visit the theatre again. The literature supports this, as many earlier studies found the same outcome (Lin & Lekhawipat, 2014; Hellier et al., 2003; Abrar et al., 2017; Thamzihvanan & Xavier, 2013; Suhaily & Soelasih, 2017). These results show that hypothesis 12 is accepted. Customer satisfaction therefore plays an important role in visitors coming back to the theatre, which show the indirect effect of atmosphere at the location, quality of the location and perceived service quality on the repurchase intention. The more satisfied a customer is, the more likely he/she is to return.

The results show that important predicting factors for the repurchase intention of students are customer satisfaction and perceived value for money, which can be considered to have some coherence since a more satisfied customer will likely perceive more value for money. Even though the multiple regression showed only customer satisfaction to play a significant role, the relationship between the perceived value for money and the repurchase intention was positive. This could indicate that the perceived value for money plays less of a role when paired with other indicators, but a bigger role when considered solely. Role models and the inner circle and peer pressure have not been shown to be significant predictors for repurchase intention, indicating that students are unlikely to repurchase or revisit because of the influence of others, but rather on how they perceive the visit themselves.

## 5.5 Theoretical contribution of this thesis

By focusing on students within the Netherlands and the theatre as entertainment form, a new group was targeted which adds to the existing literature, since there were no papers found focusing on this issue. An added value to the literature was created by finding important factors that play a role within the life of students and the going, or not going, to the theatre by this particular group.



## 5.6 Practical contribution of this thesis

There are also practical contributions since theatres will be able to interpret the results to adapt their strategies accordingly. A heavier focus on customer satisfaction can be created, where the importance can be said to be on students, making their personal experience better, which has been shown to lead to an increased chance of revisiting. The offering can also be adapted to match students' preferences, which in turn will lead to an increased view on value for money and therefore a higher chance of visiting or visiting again after an initial visit. These focus points can be created through marketing stunts, an adapted routine for specific shows for students or new, inventive ways.

When theatres tend to attract more students to their venues, the above factors should be taken into account and marketing strategies should be adjusted to achieve maximum effect on the target audience. Marketing stunts, such as promotional discount codes or frequent visitor discounts could attract students. Next to that, the offerings within the theatres should be tailored better to students' interests, by either desk research, or asking the target group directly via, for example, questionnaires. When students feel more at home in the theatre, by means of tailored performances or feeling more comfortable at the location, they tend to visit the theatre more often, thus adding towards the goal of attracting more students to visit the theatre.

## 5.7 Limitations and future research directions

This thesis tried to uncover which aspects of the theatre are valued more by students, aiming to contribute to the possibilities of theatres to adapt to the demands of this target group. Although answers have come in and interesting results were found, the need to

address the limitations is important. The snowball sampling created the absence of a random sample, which can potentially lead to biases or systematic errors and thus potentially not represent the population well. Future research can try to address this issue by creating a random sample across the population of interest, which would be students across the entire country from different backgrounds and different fields of study. This future research would reduce biases and systematic errors, and a clearer picture about students within the Netherlands can be created.

Within the theoretical framework, customer satisfaction was not tested as a mediating variable for the effect of the attractiveness of the location, perceived atmosphere and perceived service quality on the repurchase intention. Future research could conduct a test for the mediating effect of customer satisfaction on these relationships. Next to customer satisfaction, the perceived value for money was also argued to not have a mediating effect for the perceived quality of offering at the theatre and the perceived quality of alternatives and competitors, on both the purchase intention and the repurchase intention. This effect could also be subject to testing for future research.

As type of research, this thesis used a quantitative research approach, which aimed to answer the 12 hypotheses created. The respondents had to answer statements, which focused only on factors already hypothesised. Future research could conduct qualitative research, aiming to uncover new factors and influences for students.

## 6. Conclusion

The research question stated, “What factors are influencing the theatre-going behaviour of students?” and tried to uncover factors playing an important role in the life of students, influencing their behaviour with regards to going, or not going to the theatre. Out of 12 developed hypotheses, seven were accepted, and five were not.

The acceptance of seven hypotheses uncovered that in order for students to have a positive experience at the theatre, the perceived atmosphere at the location, the perceived quality of the location and the perceived service quality during their visit play an important role. In turn, being satisfied is an important predictor for the intention to visit the theatre again. Another reason to visit the theatre again was the perceived value for money. Students attach strong feelings to the value they get for their money. Perceived value for money was also an important predictor for the initial visit, before having ever visited the theatre. The perceived value for money can be influenced by the offerings at the theatre, showing that creating an offering of shows that attract more attention from students could prove to increase the perceived value for money of students, and thus the likelihood of them visiting the theatre (again).

Next to the accepted hypotheses, there were five hypotheses which were not accepted. First, the perceived quality of offering at alternatives and competitors did not play a significant role in the perceived value for money at the theatre. This indicates that students value more what is offered, rather than what could have been offered. Furthermore, the role models did not play a significant role in (re)visiting the theatre for students, which indicates that they like to make up their own mind and are less sensitive to the influence of role models than

hypothesised. Lastly, the inner circle and peer pressure also had no significant influence on the (re)visiting of the theatre for students. This indicates similar conclusions to role models since students seem to be less influenced by others and more indicated to make up their own mind.

In conclusion, students are influenced by their customer satisfaction and the perceived value for money in their decision making to visit the theatre (again). This results that theatres should add to their value offering in terms of customer service and offerings, in order to attract more students to their premises.

## **7. Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my appreciation to dr. Kizgin, for supervising me during the process of writing this thesis, reserving time for meetings and answering my questions. I would also like to thank dr. Leszkiewicz for providing useful feedback on how to improve the thesis. Next to that, I would like to thank the Wilminktheater, and especially Femke Haage for supervising me during the time spent at the theatre and the opportunity given. Lastly, I would like to thank friends and family for providing moral support.

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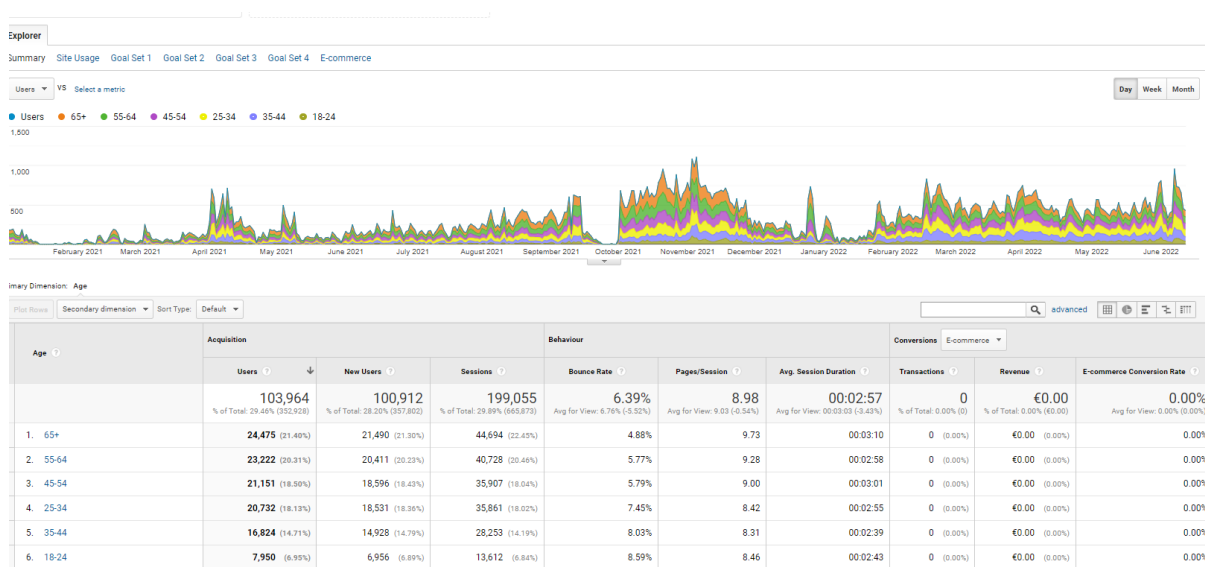
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**List of abbreviations:**

WME = Wilminktheater & Muziekcentrum Enschede

# Appendix A: Traffic on the website of Wilminktheater & Muziekcentrum Enschede

Share of young people on the website of WME:



Growth of young people on the website of WME:

Age Group	01-Jan-2020 - 13-Jun-2020	01-Jan-2022 - 13-Jun-2022	% Change
6. 18-24	2,971 (5.74%)	4,015 (8.23%)	-26.00%
	2,510 (6.04%)	3,490 (8.33%)	-28.08%
	4,504 (5.59%)	6,936 (8.15%)	-35.06%
	2.71%	16.91%	-83.98%
	8.24	6.88	19.68%
	00:02:06	00:02:39	-20.55%
	84 (7.01%)	0 (0.00%)	∞%
	€7,279.62 (7.40%)	€0.00 (0.00%)	∞%
	1.87%	0.00%	∞%

## Appendix B: questionnaire and answer sheet

### Why do you go to the theatre?

---

Start of Block: Foreword

Q23

Dear

participant,

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. The central topic within the questionnaire is your local theatre, in the city where you live / study in the Netherlands. You are asked to kindly fill in all the questions, as there are no right or wrong answers. However, if there is a question you would not like to answer, you can always skip it. All data will be processed anonymously, and whenever used will not be traceable to the person that filled it in. The questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes, and for filling it in you can win free tickets to an (English-spoken) comedy night on the 3rd of November, at the theatre (Enschede). If you would like to participate in this, be sure to fill in your e-mail address at the end (the e-mail address will not be used for anything else than reaching out to the winners).

Thank you in advance for taking the time to help out!

I have read and understood the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study

Yes (1)

End of Block: Foreword

---

Start of Block: Screening question

Q22 Have you ever visited your local theatre before?

Yes (1)

No (can not recall) (2)

End of Block: Screening question

---

Start of Block: Section A

AL The following statements address your satisfaction with your experiences about the accessibility of the theatre. Please read all the statements and choose an option that best described your preference.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I am able to get to my local theatre quickly and easily (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My local theatre offers convenient parking (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My local theatre offers convenient locations (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My local theatre offers convenient opening hours (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PA The following statements address your satisfaction with your experiences about the atmosphere at the theatre. Please read all the statements and choose an option that best described your preference.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
This theatre is a pleasant place to visit (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The theatre has a pleasant atmosphere (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The theatre is clean (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The theatre is attractive (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





RI The following statements address your ideas about visiting the theatre again. Please read all the statements and choose an option that best described your preference.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I want to continue visiting the theatre rather than discontinuing visiting the theatre (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My intentions are to continue visiting the theatre, rather than any alternative means (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I could, I would like to discontinue visiting the theatre (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Section A

Start of Block: Section B

ICPP The following statements address the influence your personal environment plays in your decision making. Please read all the statements and choose an option that best described your preference.





RM The following statements address the influence your personal environment plays in your decision making. Please read all the statements and choose an option that best described your preference.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor/boss (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I should take into consideration my parents' advice when making plans (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do my own thing, regardless of what people I look up to think (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to do what is best for me, regardless of how this might affect people I look up to (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Section B

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Start of Block: Section C

PQT The following statements address the influence of the offerings (= the shows and performances, or other forms of entertainment offered) at your local theatre and the comparison to other forms of entertainment, or other offerings available. Please read all the statements and choose an option that best described your preference.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I have a negative attitude towards the offering of the theatre (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I dislike the offering at the theatre (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the features of the services and offerings of the theatre (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the performances and services of the theatre (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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PQAC For the following statements, please take all entertainment options, EXCLUDING the theatre, available into account. (TV, streaming services, cinema, etc.)

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I have a negative attitude towards entertainment offerings (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I dislike the offering of entertainment available (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the features of the services and offerings of entertainment available (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the performances and services of the entertainment available (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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PVM The following statements address your perceived value for money at the theatre





I would value a ticket to a show as it would meet my needs for a reasonable price (7)

End of Block: Section C

Start of Block: Section D

PI The following statements address purchase intention you have for certain products or services. Please read all the statements and choose the option that best describes your preference.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither disagree nor agree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
It is very likely that I will buy a ticket to a show in the theater (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will purchase a ticket at the theatre the next time I need to go to a form of entertainment (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will definitely try visiting the theatre (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will recommend the theatre as a form of entertainment to my friends (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Section D

Start of Block: Section E

D1.1 What gender do you identify with (the most)

- Male (1)
  - Female (2)
  - Non-binary / third gender (3)
  - Prefer not to say (4)
- 

D1.2 What age group do you belong to?

- Under 18 years old (1)
  - 18-24 years old (2)
  - 24-30 years old (3)
  - Over 30 years old (4)
- 

D1.3 What is your current status / occupation?

- Student (1)
  - Full-time employee (2)
  - Part-time employee (3)
  - Retired (4)
  - Unemployed (5)
  - Otherwise, namely (6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

D1.4 Which of the following applies to your combined household income (best) on a yearly basis?

- Up to €15.000 (1)
  - €15.000 - €30.000 (2)
  - €30.000 - €45.000 (3)
  - €45.000 or higher (4)
  - Prefer not to say (5)
-

D1.5 What is your cultural background?

- Netherlands (1)
- Europe (Not Netherlands) (2)
- Asia (3)
- Africa (4)
- Australia & Oceania (5)
- South America (6)
- North America (7)
- Prefer not to say (8)

End of Block: Section E

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Start of Block: Ending word

Q2 This was the end of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for participating! If you would like to enter the contest to have a possibility of winning 2 free tickets to the (English) comedy show on the 3rd of November, please leave your e-mail address below so you can be contacted!

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End of Block: Ending word

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