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Classical Concert Visitor Types: Attendance Motivation, Expectation, and Experience

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ABSTRACT

The motivation to attend cultural events is an insightful aspect with which to study audiences. To understand their motivations and experiences is key for audience development. However, classical concert visitors have rarely been studied in this regard. Moreover, the relationship between motivation and experience has not been studied at all. To shed light on this topic, 802 concertgoers of a concert series were surveyed before and after the concert about their motivations, expectations, and experiences and also provided sociodemographic information. A cluster analysis of motivation items reveals four types of concert visitors: *concert accompaniers*, *concert enthusiasts*, *social-event visitors*, and *music lovers*. The statistical analysis of the types shows that they also differ regarding frequency of concert attendance, music education, lifestyle, listening modes, etc., as well as regarding their expectations and experiences. For the field of audience research, this analysis represents a comprehensive and novel perspective on classical concert visitors and offers meaningful implications in the fields of arts management, cultural sociology, and concert design.

KEYWORDS

Audience studies; arts management; attendance motivation; classical concert; esthetic experience

Introduction

In Germany alone, 9,155 classical concerts by publicly funded orchestras took place in the 2018/19 season, attracting a total of 5.4 million visitors.¹ Private ensembles and orchestras are not included in these numbers. It can be assumed that these figures are many times higher worldwide. The question of who attends classical concerts and with what motivation is relevant not only for concert organizers, orchestras, and festivals but also for academia. Visitor motivation provides clues not only regarding how to attract audiences but also what factors make a fulfilling concert evening. The correlation of motivation with sociostructural characteristics and concertgoers' experiences may offer novel and more differentiated insights. Is the motivation to attend and the actual experience related to social class, prior knowledge, lifestyle, and other

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cultural-sociological paradigms? Sociological theories—on the one hand, more class-specific approaches by Veblen (1973) and Bourdieu (1987) and, on the other, more lifestyle- and milieu-specific approaches from Georg (1995) and Gerhard Schulze (2005)—are helpful, but mostly too crude for considering visitors to classical concerts in particular. Also, the actual experience is rarely taken into account in these relevant theories.

To advance these academic debates and develop a typology applicable in practice, this article aims to make a differentiated distinction between types of visitors to classical concerts with regard to their motivation, to describe them by individual characteristics, and to analyze them on the basis of their experiences at the concert. Additionally, in respect of the issue of audience development and the development of new concert formats (Tröndle and Bishop 2021), the knowledge about concertgoers' motivations and experiences is crucial.

Attendance motivation for classical concerts

While attendance motivation for various cultural events and institutions has been studied (Swanson, Davis, and Zhao 2008; Kulczynski, Baxter, and Young 2016; Rooij and Bastiaansen 2017; Cuadrado and Mollà 2000; Bowen and Daniels 2005), classical concerts are rarely among them. In an overview, Rooij and Bastiaansen (2017) summarize the following basic visitation motives for the performing arts in general: *esthetics*, *cognitive stimulation*, *relaxation*, *transcendence*, *entertainment*, *variety*, and *novelty*. Their summary reveals that both art-specific factors as well as very general needs play a role.

Audience research in the field of classical music is mostly conducted in regard to audience development for concert halls, festivals, and orchestras (Gembris and Menze 2020; Dollase, Rüsenberg, and Stollenwerk 1986; Wimmer 2021; Kolb 2001; Dobson 2010; Kemp and Poole 2016; Pompe, Tamburri, and Munn 2013; Sigurjónsson 2010). It is mostly about the decrease of audiences and the question of how new audiences can be attracted, but seldom about their motivations and experiences. An audience-focused study on visitors and non-visitors surveyed 1,248 students in Berlin about visiting art and cultural institutions (Tröndle 2022). Results show that a lack of neither money nor time is an obstacle to attending cultural events. On the other hand, musical taste and knowledge, preferences in leisure activities, one's circle of friends, one's peers, and one's studies had a significant impact on the decision to visit classical concerts or not.

With regard to attendance motivation, only a few studies explicitly refer to classical music performances. Pitts (2021) subsumes empirical studies on audiences' motivations to visit classical or jazz concerts. She concludes that a higher frequency of attendance strengthens the relation toward classical concerts. At first, practical questions (prices, accessibility) were the main motivation, followed by musical aspects (repertoire, program, recognition). Then social habits emerged (e.g. meeting friends at the concert) as did a perceived attachment to the place, the musicians, and the classical concert itself.

Roose (2008) categorizes classical concert visitors into three groups based on the frequency of attendance: *passersby*, *interested participants*, and *inner circle* ($N=2465$). Based on a factor analysis, Roose presents four factors of motivation: *specific* (interest in the musicians or ensemble), *general* (interest in the venue or having a season ticket),

network (being invited or advised by someone or spending time with others), and *media* (motivated through media). Generally, the inner circle, which is the oldest and a highly educated group, has the highest specific motivations compared to the other groups. The opposite is passersby, who are younger and have a stronger network motivation.

Few empirical studies on attendance motivations include the classical concert among other cultural events in their investigations. Willekens and Daenekindt (2022) examine the connection between the musical tastes of concertgoers of different genres and their “modes of consumption,” from which the motivation for attendance can be derived. With the help of a factor analysis, they determined *music-centered*, *entertainment-centered*, *discovery-centered*, and *group-centered* modes. Regarding visitors to classical concerts, the study found that they are less likely to have an entertainment-centered motivation for attending than visitors to concerts of other genres and that they instead have a music-centered motivation for attending if rejecting electronic genres.

Hager and Winkler (2012) found that demographics explain arts attendance reliably, but when it comes to orchestra and opera performances, where demographics are relatively equal, the motivation variables give insights into more differentiated motives beyond demographics. Factors of motivation are: *esthetics*, *education*, *escape*, *recreation*, *self-esteem*, and *social interaction*. This supports that the frequency of attendance might be explained by sociodemographics, but more detailed analyses of individual motivations need to be considered to better differentiate classical concert audiences.

Subsequently, Manolika and Baltzis (2022) identify six factors of motivations for visitors to different art venues in Greece (including concert halls): *entertainment*, *escapism*, *learning/curiosity*, *art interest*, *socialization*, and *family togetherness*. They come to the similar conclusion that not only sociodemographics and milieu affiliation can predict arts attendance but also psychological motivations.

The presented studies repeatedly come up with similar motivations. While on the one hand the esthetic experience and the music or art itself (art, music, esthetics, cognitive stimulation) are central motivations, on the other hand, it is the event as a social and varied event in everyday life (entertainment, group, social, escapism) that provides motivation. According to Roose (2008), these types of motivations could be divided into intrinsic (music) and extrinsic (event). Motivations oscillate between these fields, with different characteristics such as musical taste, age, and education influencing individual motives. Nevertheless, these variables cannot explain everything, as even within a sociodemographically similar audience, different types of motivation emerge (Manolika and Baltzis 2022; Hager and Winkler 2012).

Regarding the classical concert experience, few systematic empirical studies have been completed so far (for an overview, see Wald-Fuhrmann et al. 2021). Recently, Chen and Cabrera (2023) found three factors driving the concertgoing experience that support the previous literature on attendance motivation: the *music* (performance), the *environment* (acoustics, visual condition, and comfort), and the *event* (social aspects). Visitors who frequently attend concerts found the program more important, while for less frequent visitors, factors unrelated to the performance itself (e.g., seating comfort, costs, social aspects, architecture) tended to play a role.

The scarce literature supports the relevance of our endeavor—analyzing and comparing motivations and the experience of concert attendees—in regard to the future

of classical concerts and the understanding of motivations and experiences for all kinds of cultural events. The objectives can be subdivided in three parts: First of all, a cluster analysis of classical concert audiences will be carried out based on the motivation to attend. Then, we will examine which sociodemographic and characterizing variables are related to the clusters and, finally, how the types differ regarding visitors' expectations and experiences of a real concert visit.

Methods

Experiment and procedure

The research project “Experimental Concert Research”² aims to investigate the concert experience with a multidisciplinary and multi-method approach (Tröndle et al. 2022; Wald-Fuhrmann et al. 2021). The survey instruments and methods were tested, developed, integrated, and validated in two pretests (Merrill et al. 2021; Czepiel et al. 2021; Tschacher et al. 2023).

The study took place with 11 concerts in April and May 2022 in the Pierre Boulez Saal³ and Radialsystem⁴ in Berlin. Three concerts were performed by a newcomer ensemble and eight by an ensemble that unites established soloists.

The musical program of all 11 concerts consisted of a classic, a romantic, and a contemporary piece: Ludwig van Beethoven's String Quintet op. 104 in C minor (first movement); Brett Dean, *Epitaphs*; and Johannes Brahms, String Quintet op. 111 in G major.

Advertisements for the concerts appeared in the venues' programs and the media (daily newspapers, radio, internet). Interested parties were free to decide on which day and at which venue they would like to attend a concert. Before buying a ticket, the interested parties were informed about the project and the data collection and then could decide on either a participant ticket or a concert ticket without participation in the research project. Participant tickets could be purchased only after consenting to participate in the study. All, the concert audiences thus consisted of both study participants and regular concertgoers. The participants arrived at the site one hour before the concert began. They received an individualized participant token and were led to the survey room. Before the survey began, they were again informed about the project, and a written consent was obtained. Through an electronically supported questionnaire (tablet), participants were surveyed right before and after the concert using standardized questionnaires. Their individual tokens, entered in the entry survey, assigned each participant to a data set and a pseudonym. Each survey took about 10–25 min. After the entrance questionnaire, participants entered the concert hall. After the concert, participants returned to the survey room, where they filled out the exit questionnaire, after which they left. The token enabled the individual data sets to be joined. Research within this project was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and the relevant regulations in Germany. The procedure was approved by the Ethics Council of the Max Planck Society (2702_12).

Sample

The average age of the participants over all 11 concerts was 43.8 years ($n=802$), of whom 56.8% identified as females, 42.8% as males, and 0.4% as diverse. 80% of the

participants had a university degree, including applied universities ($n=778$). As the concerts were public and the advertisement for the concerts was focused on Berlin, the total population of the sample could be described as the population of Berlin, which is on average 41 years old and has an equal share of male and female inhabitants.⁵ About 30% of the Berlin population has a university degree including applied universities⁶, which is a major difference to our sample to with 80% university degrees. However, this is rather typical for a classical music audience and comes closest to the milieu of the “elevated-modern” population of Berlin (Tewes-Schünzel, Allmanritter, and Renz 2024).

For Western classical music, this is a relatively young audience. Other studies on German concert attendees report an average age of 66.2 years (Heinen 2013) or a median of 60 years (Reuband 2018). Potentially, concert attendees in more rural areas are older than those in a large city such as Berlin. The institutions at which the research project took place are relatively new cultural venues offering both classical and progressive programs and therefore attract younger and more diverse audiences. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic, with the shutdown of concert halls, had an effect. In Berlin, people of more advanced age do not visit classical concerts as frequently as they did before (Renz and Almannritter 2022).

Questionnaires

Motivations

To find out about participants’ motivations for attending the concert, they were asked the following questions before the concert: “There are various reasons for going to a concert. How important or unimportant are the following reasons for you to go to today’s concert?” (eight items; see Table 1) and “How important are the following aspects of a classical concert to you?” (13 items; see Table 2. Both questions include 5-point Likert scales from 1 = very unimportant to 5 = very important). Most items used in this study were taken from the concert and museum visitor studies literature.

Explanatory variables

Further, participants were asked about sociodemographics (age, gender, level of education), frequency of classical concert attendance prior to the pandemic, whether they came with company or alone, their music affinity (Tschacher, Bergomi, and Tröndle 2015), musical taste (listening frequency of various genres from 1 = never to 5 = daily),

Table 1. Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) per item on reasons for attendance.

Items	M	SD
A general interest in music	4.41	0.77
Interest in the “Experimental Concert Research” project	4.03	0.99
My companion	3.55	1.29
General interest in the venue	3.51	1.14
Leisure or tourist activity	3.28	1.19
Concert program today	3.18	1.08
Interest in a particular work that is being played today	2.80	1.16
Interest in a certain artist who is playing today	2.58	1.21

Table 2. Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) per item on aspects of importance.

Items	M	SD
Experience the musicians live	4.43	0.76
Acoustics of the concert hall	4.25	0.79
Ambience of the concert venue	3.94	0.82
Interpretation of the pieces	3.83	1.03
Musicians	3.82	0.96
Selection and arrangement of pieces (dramaturgy)	3.77	0.93
Type of scenic performance	3.57	0.97
Theme of the concert	3.53	0.95
Seating comfort	3.39	1.08
Information offered on the pieces	3.32	0.99
Interaction between musicians and audience	3.30	1.07
Opportunity to be with others before and after the concert	3.28	1.08
Opportunity to participate	2.03	1.02

lifestyle (Otte 2019), and their personality traits (BFI-10, Rammstedt and John 2007). In the exit questionnaire, their listening activity during the concert was surveyed (Rössel 2011; Behne 1997).

Expectations and experience

To analyze the difference between expectations toward and experiences made in the concert, 18 corresponding items appeared in the entrance and exit surveys, for example: “I would like to have a special evening” and “I was able to have a special evening” (5-point Likert scale from 1 = totally disagree to 5 = fully agree).

Analysis

All procedures were performed using JMP Pro 15.1 software (SAS Institute Inc.).

Cluster analysis

To identify different visitor attendance motivation types, a k-means cluster analysis was carried out based on the 21 items on attendance motivation and on the importance of aspects of a concert. To describe the clusters further, we assessed the descriptive statistics of age, gender, education, and frequency of attendance for each cluster.

Regressions and analyses of variance

We computed regression analysis to identify the predictability of variables by clusters regarding accompaniment, genre preferences, and lifestyle.

One-way analysis of variances (ANOVA) was computed to identify significant differences between clusters in terms of frequency of attendance, music affinity, personality traits, and listening modes.

Expectation vs. experience

To analyze the fulfillment or frustration of expectations through the experience, the ratings of the expectation were subtracted from the ratings of the experience to obtain a difference value for each expectation item. Where this difference was 0, expectations were precisely met. Where positive, the expectations were exceeded. Where negative,

participant expectations were frustrated. Subsequently, one-way ANOVAs were computed per item to assess if significant differences occurred between clusters.

Results

Attendance motivation

Descriptive statistics of $n=784$ participants were obtained. Their overall motivations (Table 1) with the highest mean (M) ratings for visiting the concert were interest in music in general and in the research project ($M>4.0$), followed by the accompanying person and interest in the concert venue ($M>3.5$). Specific interest in one of the artists or pieces had the lowest ratings ($M<2.9$).

Ratings of the importance of certain aspects in classical concerts in general (Table 2) revealed that, on average, experiencing musicians live and the venue's acoustics were deemed highly important ($M>4.2$), as were the musicians, the interpretation of pieces, and the program ($M>3.7$). Participation, socializing before and after the concert, and the interaction between musicians and audience were considered less important ($M<3.3$).

Cluster analysis

A k-means cluster analysis across the two presented item batteries resulted in four clusters. The dendrogram showed the least inequality of cluster sizes in the $k=$ four clusters solution, and there was also a qualitatively meaningful delimitation of the cluster types in terms of content. Of the 784 participants, 72 (9.2%) belonged to cluster 1, 250 (31.9%) belonged to cluster 2, 242 (30.9%) belonged to cluster 3, and 220 (28.1%) belonged to cluster 4.

The following table (Table 3) shows the average values of the four clusters in relation to the 21 items asked. Values below or equal to 2.5 (*italics*) and above or equal to 3.5 (**bold**) are seen as characteristic for each of the four clusters.

Interest in the research project

The item "Interest in the 'Experimental Concert Research' (ECR) project" was omitted from the cluster construction, as it does not represent an interest in concerts generally. We, therefore, examined the variance of this item explained by the four factors. The explained variance was low ($r^2 = 1.1\%$); the overall model of an analysis of variance was nevertheless significant ($F(3,780)=2.93$, $p<0.05$). Individuals in cluster 1 differ from those in the other clusters in that ECR was significantly less likely to be a motivation.

Cluster descriptions

The four clusters show similar tendencies across many items (Figure 1). All clusters show an interest in music in general (albeit to varying degrees) and all attribute a low level of importance to participation. Experiencing musicians live is also important for all clusters, as are the acoustics and ambience of the concert venue. Greater

Table 3. Cluster means (M) per item on attendance motivation.

Item	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
General interest in the venue	2.53	4.06	3.29	3.45
My companion	4.03	3.52	3.76	3.21
Interest in a certain artist who is playing today	1.53	3.16	1.83	3.08
Interest in a particular work that is being played today	1.82	3.26	2.03	3.43
A general interest in music	3.81	4.64	4.18	4.60
Leisure or tourist activity	3.81	3.23	3.68	2.82
Concert program today	2.40	3.60	2.57	3.64
Musicians	2.82	4.47	3.43	3.84
Interpretation of the pieces	2.64	4.47	3.35	4.01
Selection and arrangement of the pieces	2.72	4.35	3.52	3.74
Information offered on the pieces	2.49	3.85	3.03	3.32
Theme of the concert	2.58	4.08	3.20	3.58
Type of scenic performance	3.04	4.08	3.61	3.10
Experience the musicians live	3.32	4.82	4.45	4.34
Opportunity to participate	1.67	2.57	1.88	1.70
Interaction between musicians and audience	2.42	3.99	3.14	2.97
Opportunity to be with others before and after the concert	2.97	3.62	3.54	2.70
Seating comfort	2.94	3.68	3.69	2.86
Ambience of the concert venue	3.33	4.24	4.21	3.50
Acoustics of the concert hall	3.22	4.66	4.26	4.11

Bold values in this table point out the highest means.

differences appear in: interest in the musicians who played that evening, the works played, the program's dramaturgy, the interpretation of the pieces, the communication between the musicians, and the concert's theme.

For people in cluster 1, motivation is primarily bound to the person(s) who accompanied them, and they understand the concert visit primarily as a tourist or leisure activity. The opportunity to participate and a particular artist are least important for them. Also of little importance are the program, the interpretation of the pieces, and the evening's theme. Although they have an interest in music in general, it is lowest in this cluster. Visitors belonging to cluster 1 will be called *concert companions*.

People in cluster 2, the *concert enthusiasts*, gave the highest ratings across all items except for accompaniment, leisure activity, and seating comfort. Concert venue and ambience but also the musicians' live experience and interactions, as well as the interpretation, dramaturgy, and theme, are all very important aspects and motivations for this type of concertgoer.

Cluster 3 has the highest rating for seating comfort as well as the second highest for accompaniment and attendance as a leisure activity. Unlike cluster 1, however, they find important the musicians' live experience, the ambience, and the acoustics, as well as the scenic performance, but not the interpretation, the musicians, or the specific works. The comparatively high rating for socializing before and after the concert underlines the social motivation of this group. We call these concert attendees *social-event visitors*.

Cluster 4 has a very high interest in music in general and the highest rating for the concert program and interest in specific works. We therefore designate those concert visitors *music lovers*. While musicians, interpretation, and dramaturgy are also important to this cluster, the social aspects (accompaniment, being together, participation) are less important than for all other clusters, as is seating comfort. For this cluster, the concert is least understood as a leisure or tourist activity.

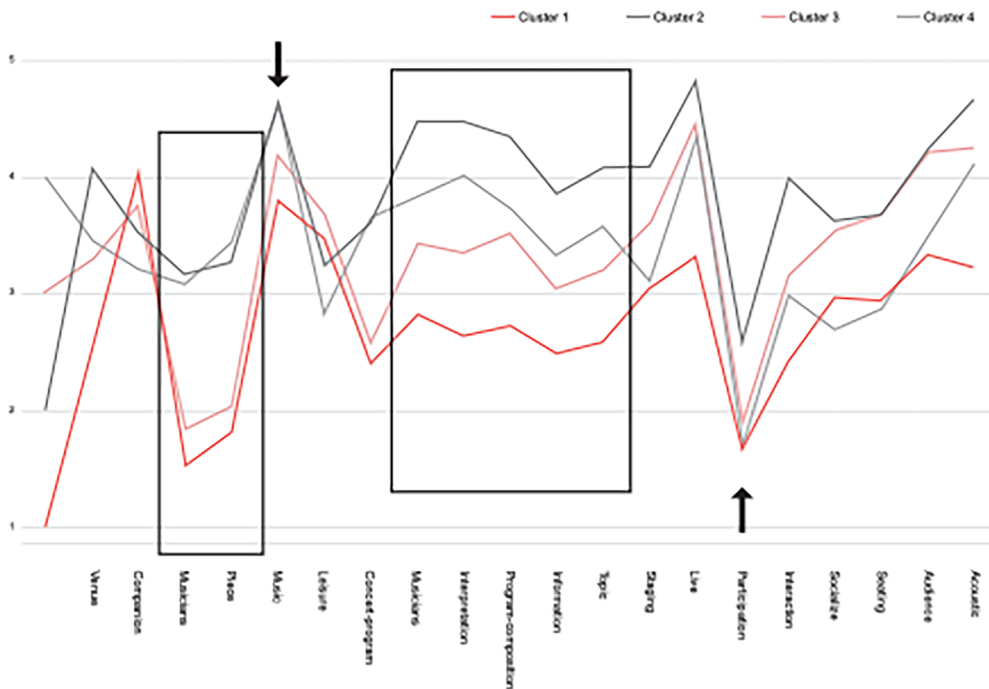


Figure 1. Mean values of rated items for attendance motivation in relation to clusters.

Sociodemographics and other explanatory variables

Age and gender

The clusters show differences in terms of age and gender distribution (Table 4). The mean age difference between the clusters is 11.6 years, and the proportion of women differs by over 20%. Clusters 1 and 3 have the lowest average age but differ in gender composition (cluster 1, concert accompanier, has the lowest proportion of women, and cluster 3, social-event visitors, the highest). Cluster 2 (concert enthusiasts) has the highest average age, and cluster 4 (*music lovers*) are in the middle; both have an equal share of women and men.

Frequency of attendance

Clusters 1 and 3 attended fewer concerts per year on average before the COVID-19 pandemic (3–4 concerts/year) than clusters 2 and 4 (10–12 concerts/year). Significant differences are present in ANOVA ($F(3,780)=17.01$, $p < 0.001$).

Education

The educational composition of the four clusters is quite similar. In all clusters, 80% are academics. In cluster 2, 25% have completed higher education studies in music, arts, art, or cultural sciences, and in cluster 4 it is 19%. In cluster 1, primary or secondary school degrees as highest education degree obtained is more strongly represented than in other clusters, at 11.4%.

Accompaniment

When visiting the concert, 638 participants came with company (81.4%) and 146 people attended alone. Overall, differences are observable among the clusters. More people from clusters 1 (90.3%) and 3 (89.3%) came with company than those in clusters 2 (78.4%) and 4 (73.2%). The logistic regression model shows significant differences between the clusters ($\chi^2(3)=26.0$, $p<0.0001$).

Music preferences

A nominal-logistic multiple regression shows that 15.1% of the total variance of the clustering is explained by music preferences. Three music genres show significant correlations with the clusters: classical music ($\chi^2(3)=109.7$, $p<0.0001$), rap ($\chi^2(3)=25.7$, $p<0.0001$), and non-European music ($\chi^2(3)=8.8$, $p<0.05$). People in clusters 2 and 4 listen to classical music more often on average. In cluster 1, a preference for rap predominates, and in cluster 3, the three music genres are balanced (Table 5).

Music affinity

The Music Affinity Index (MAI) of each participant was calculated in analogy to the Art Affinity Index (Tschacher, Bergomi, and Tröndle 2015) to capture musical affinity and knowledge. To evaluate “music relation,” the test persons described their personal relationships to classical music (including new music). Potential answers were: “I have no particular connection to classical music,” “I am an amateur with an interest in classical music,” “I am an amateur and I have a great/in-depth knowledge of classical music,” and “I work with classical music professionally.”

A one-factor analysis of variance of cluster membership on “music relation” revealed significant differences between clusters ($F(3,776)=21.94$, $p<0.0001$; explaining 7.8% of the variance). The “music relation” in clusters 2 and 4 is on average higher than in 1 and 3 (Figure 2).

Musical knowledge was surveyed through musical terminology, and composers or musicians that appeared in the concerts: Johannes Brahms, the sonata form, Brett Dean, spectral music and Baiba Skride, as well as Warren Pitlinsky. Pitlinsky does not exist as a musician and was included to test social desirability.

Table 4. Socio-demographics and mean (M) attendance frequency per cluster.

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Share total (%)	9.2%	31.9%	30.9%	28.1%
Attendance frequency (M)	3.9	11.7	3.3	10.2
Age (M)	33.7	51.7	35.9	47.1
Gender female (%)	43.7%	57.3%	64.4%	50%

Table 5. Mean (M) frequency of listening to music genre.

Genre	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Rap	3.03	2.17	2.74	2.09
Classical music	2.77	3.98	2.88	3.83
Non-European music	2.50	2.86	2.88	2.89

Note. 1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = a few times a month, 4 = several times a week, 5 = daily.

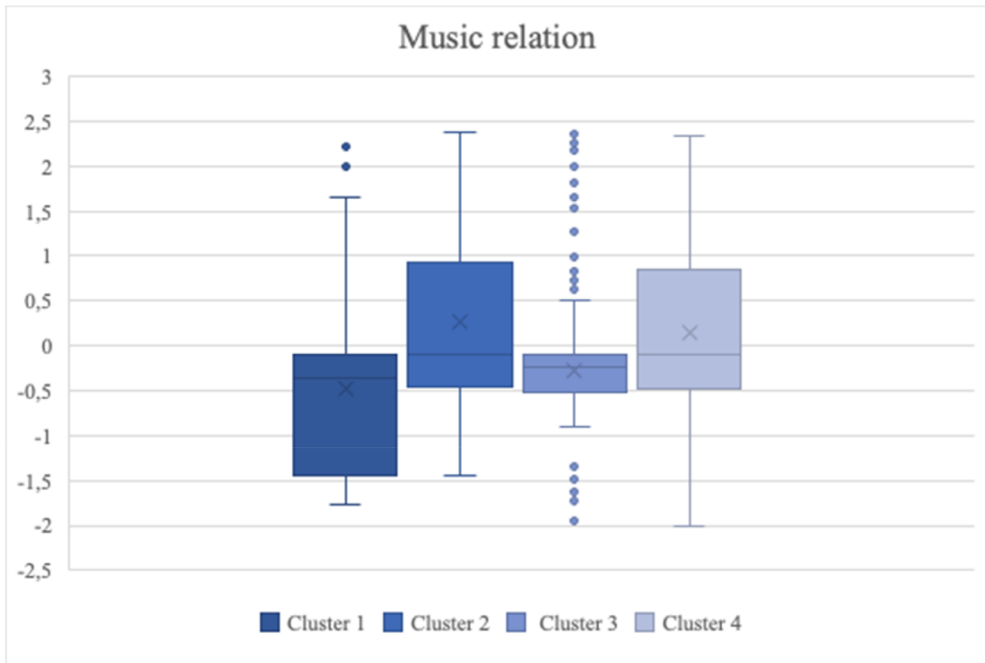


Figure 2. One-factor varimax analysis, music relation (y-axis), and cluster of concert-goer types (x-axis).

A one-factor ANOVA shows significant differences in relation to clusters ($F(3,776) = 40.9$, $p < 0.0001$). 13.7% of the variance of musical knowledge was explained by clusters. Individuals from clusters 2 and 4 have on average higher musical knowledge scores than those in clusters 1 and 3 (Figure 3).

Big five

The BFI-10 subscales are *extraversion*, *agreeableness*, *conscientiousness*, *neuroticism*, and *openness*. Significant differences were not found between the four clusters in terms of neuroticism and extraversion but were for openness ($F(3,772) = 13.9$, $p < 0.0001$) and conscientiousness ($F(3,772) = 8.7$, $p < 0.0001$; explained variance 5.1%), as well as agreeableness ($F(3,772) = 2.9$, $p < 0.05$; explained variance 1.1%). For openness, clusters 2 ($M = 4.05$) and 4 ($M = 4.33$) have higher values on average than clusters 1 ($M = 3.68$) and 3 ($M = 3.86$). Cluster 1 has the smallest values for all three subscales on average.⁷

Lifestyle characteristics

The overall model of a nominal-logistic regression shows highly significant correlations between three lifestyle items⁸ and the clusters ($\chi^2(36) = 131.6$, $p < 0.0001$; explained variance 9.5%). The descriptive statistics of the means are given in Table 6.

In relation to “arts and culture knowledge,” clusters 2 and 4 give higher average scores than clusters 1 and 3. It was the same regarding reading demanding books. Regarding the idea that “there should always be something going on in life,” clusters 3 and 2 rank higher on average than the other two clusters.

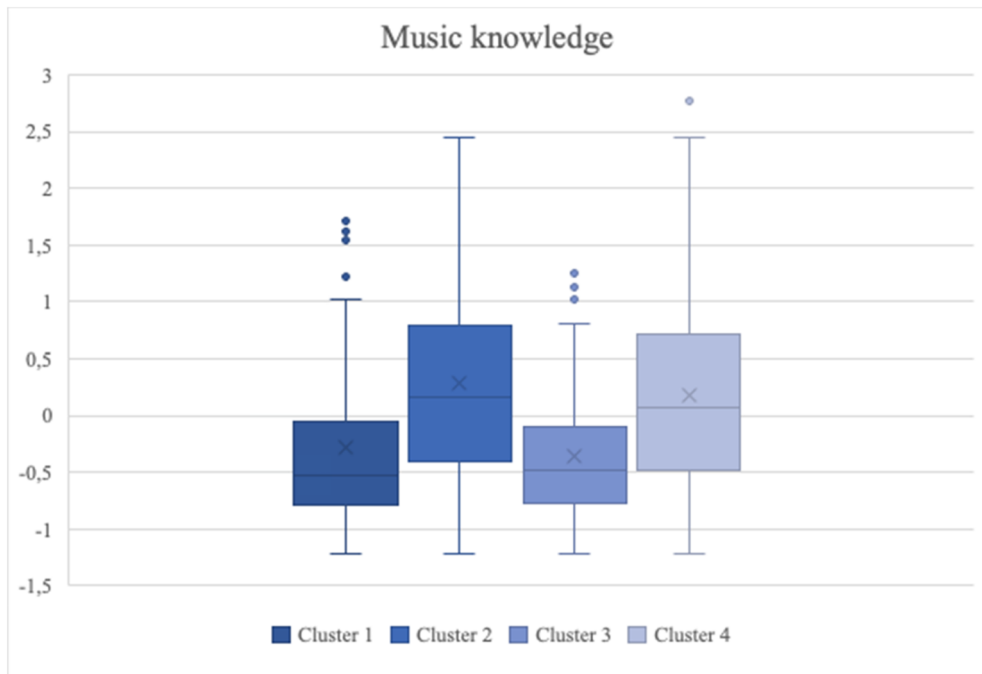


Figure 3. One-factor varimax analysis, music knowledge (y-axis), and clusters of concertgoer types (x-axis).

Table 6. Mean (M) per item on lifestyle characteristics per cluster and χ^2 .

Item	χ^2	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Art knowledge	$\chi^2(3) = 36.4^{****}$	2.61	3.25	2.78	3.10
Something going on	$\chi^2(3) = 15.7^{**}$	2.94	3.13	3.17	2.81
Reading	$\chi^2(3) = 11.4^{***}$	2.88	3.35	2.94	3.30

Note.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

*** $p < 0.001$

**** $p < 0.00001$

Table 7. Mean (M) per item on listening modes per cluster and F per item.

Item	ANOVA	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
I immersed myself in the sound.	$F(3) = 19.60^{****}$ $r^2 = 7.1\%$	2.72	3.62	3.04	3.38
The music "got under" my skin.	$F(3) = 11.4^{****}$ $r^2 = 4.3\%$	2.66	3.20	2.73	3.12
I felt like dreaming.	$F(3) = 6.79^{****}$ $r^2 = 2.6\%$	3.11	2.79	3.04	2.64
I often only listened with half an ear.	$F(3) = 20.73^{****}$ $r^2 = 7.5\%$	3.03	2.30	2.84	2.22
I often thought of other things.	$F(3) = 15.97^{****}$ $r^2 = 5.9\%$	3.50	2.92	3.35	2.78
I felt like humming along.	$F(3) = 6.51^{***}$ $r^2 = 2.5\%$	1.46	1.70	1.34	1.54
The skill of the musicians was important to me.	$F(3) = 9.60^{****}$ $r^2 = 3.6\%$	2.63	3.20	2.58	2.89
I paid particular attention to a specific instrument.	$F(3) = 4.53^*$ $r^2 = 1.7\%$	2.93	3.21	2.88	3.00

Note.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

*** $p < 0.001$

**** $p < 0.00001$; r^2 : effect size expressed as % of variance explained

Listening modes

Of 28 items, eight show significant differences between the clusters. Table 7 reports the mean values of the clusters in relation to the listening modes. Descriptively, clusters 2 (“enthusiasts”) and 4 (“music lovers”) more often stated that they bathed in the sounds of the music and that the music got under their skin than did clusters 1 (“accompanier”) and 3 (“social event”). Clusters 1 and 3 daydreamed more often during the concert, more often listened inattentively, and had more thoughts unrelated to the music. Cluster 2, on the other hand, wanted to hum along more often on average than clusters 1 and 3, and cluster 4 more often than 3. Cluster 2 paid attention to the musicians’ skills more often on average than all other clusters, although cluster 4 also did so more often than clusters 1 and 3.

Expectations and experience

Table 8 shows the differences between mean expectation and mean experience per cluster. Column F shows the results of the analysis of variance per item for significant differences between clusters. Empty fields in this column mean there are no significant differences.

The overview shows that some expectations were disappointed for all (e.g., atmosphere, focus on music, being touched emotionally), and only two were exceeded for all (feeling part of the audience, getting to know new works). Most items, however, vary by cluster, with clusters 1 and 3 and clusters 2 and 4 each showing similar tendencies more often.⁹

Expectations for *concert accompaniers* (cluster 1) were exceeded on average in terms of stimulating reflection, broadening musical understanding, and learning about new works, as well as regarding conviviality. On average, cluster 1 was disappointed little but moderately with regard to a deep connection to the music and slightly with regard to experiencing the beauty of the music and being surprised by new impressions.

Social-event visitors (cluster 3) were disappointed on average with regard to being touched and experiencing the beauty of the music, as well as concentrating on the music, forgetting everyday life, enjoying the atmosphere, and expectations of a special evening. Being well entertained was a slightly disappointed expectation.

Concert enthusiasts (cluster 2) were mostly disappointed in their expectations. However, their expectations of being well entertained were slightly exceeded.

This last expectation being exceeded was especially true for *music lovers* (cluster 4). In terms of social experience, expectations were also exceeded for meeting friends and acquaintances and feeling connected with others in the venue. They also were more distracted from everyday life and able to have a special evening beyond expectations. Particularly disappointed expectations in comparison with the other clusters related to their focus on music.

Overall enjoyment of the concert

An ANOVA shows that the clusters also differ in terms of the overall enjoyment of the concert, which was rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The overall model is significant ($F(3,766) = 13.60$, $p < 0.0001$; explained variance 5.1%). The means show that the concert accompaniers ($M = 3.96$) and social-event visitors ($M = 4.14$) liked the concert less on average than the enthusiasts ($M = 4.43$) and music lovers ($M = 4.33$).

Table 8. Mean (M) differential of expectation and experience per item pair per cluster and F per item.

Item	ANOVA	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Stimulated to think	$F(3, 766) = 6.76^{***} r^2=2.6\%$	.34	−0.29	.00	−0.17
Broadening musical understanding	$F(3, 766) = 7.45^{***} r^2=2.8\%$	.37	−0.27	.02	−0.22
Nice evening with company	–	−0.21	−0.23	−0.24	−0.07
Immerse in the music	$F(3, 766) = 2.96^* r^2=1.1\%$	−0.44	−0.58	−0.76	−0.47
Deep connection to the music	–	−0.23	−0.53	−0.51	−0.46
Emotionally touched	$F(3, 766) = 3.61^* r^2=1.4\%$	−0.59	−0.48	−0.69	−0.37
Experience the beauty of the music	$F(3, 766) = 3.01^* r^2=1.2\%$	−0.10	−0.26	−0.41	−0.22
Well entertained	$F(3, 766) = 8.00^{***} r^2=3.0\%$	.04	.10	−0.11	.37
Surprised by new impressions	$F(3, 766) = 5.62^{***} r^2=2.2\%$	−0.20	−0.55	−0.17	−0.24
Meet friends and acquaintances	–	.20	−0.11	.05	.18
Get to know new pieces	$F(3, 766) = 23.62^{****} r^2=8.5\%$	1.13	.24	.92	.39
Being part of the audience	$F(3, 766) = 6.47^{***} r^2=2.5\%$	.83	.26	.49	.63
Being in a place connected with others	$F(3, 766) = 3.16^* r^2=1.2\%$	.21	−0.09	−0.07	.16
Enjoy atmosphere	$F(3, 766) = 4.94^{**} r^2=1.9\%$	−0.14	−0.30	−0.49	−0.16
Completely focused on music	$F(3, 766) = 2.73^* r^2=1.0\%$	−0.34	−0.58	−0.78	−0.63
Distracted from everyday life, switch off, relax	$F(3, 766) = 9.36^{***} r^2=3.5\%$	−0.13	.02	−0.36	.24
Have a special evening	$F(3, 766) = 6.28^{***} r^2=2.4\%$	.17	−0.02	−0.14	.23

Note.

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$ **** $p < 0.00001$; r^2 , effect size expressed as % of variance explained

Discussion

Results show that within a classical concert audience, four concert visitor types can be clustered based on their motivations of attendance. Further, the four groups can be divided into groups of two. While the motivations of clusters 2 and 4 stem more from the music itself, such as esthetic and programming aspects, clusters 1 and 3 have a higher interest in the social aspects of the experience and the concert as an event. This corresponds strongly to Roose's (2008) dualistic differentiation of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for concert attendance and other previous research, where the event, social, and esthetic aspects of arts attendance motivation are differentiated (Willekens and Daenekindt 2022; Manolika and Baltzis 2022; Hager and Winkler 2012; Chen and Cabrera 2023).

In line with their motivations, *concert enthusiasts* and *music lovers* have a higher interest in classical music, more often visit concerts alone, have a stronger relation to music, and visit concerts up to three times more often than the other clusters. Compared to the previous literature, these clusters could be identified as the “inner circle” with a “specific” motivation in the music (Roose 2008). This specific music interest also becomes clear in the higher levels of attention and immersive and critical listening modes compared to the other two clusters. *Social event visitors* and *concert accompaniers*, by contrast, correspond to Roose's “passers-by” with a greater “network” and “general” motivation.



Figure 4. Continuum of the four types of motivation between social and esthetic experience.

Looking at the two poles, in simple terms, it seems that concert accompaniers attend only for the company, while music lovers come only for the music (Figure 3).

The related clusters of concert enthusiasts (2) and music lovers (4) differ mainly through cluster 2's overall interest in almost any motivational aspects versus cluster 4's specific focus on musical aspects. For social-event visitors (3), all event aspects around the concert are important, especially the social aspect but also the atmosphere and seating, with less interest in the music. Concert accompaniers (1) are characterized by their high motivation for company and lowest interest in musical and esthetic aspects, which corresponds to their higher level of inattentive listening. The clusters, as in any typology, need to be understood as ideal-typical, meaning that actual concert visitors might not always fall into exclusively one type (Figure 4).

Milieu-specific segmentation and lifestyle analyses (Simmel 1995; Barth et al. 2017; Schulze 2005; Tröndle and Awischus 2022) are nothing new in (cultural) sociology and audience studies. What is new, through using entrance and exit questionnaires focus on psychological and sociological dimensions, is a refined and multisited segmentation of classical concert visitors and their expectations and experiences of attending such an event.

Expectations and experience

In terms of expectation and experience, the clusters also differ. Nonetheless, the visitors' expectations overall were on average more often disappointed. In particular, the clusters were on average disappointed regarding expectations of an immersive and emotional experience. Visitors expected to, but could not as much as wished, immerse themselves in the music, make a deep connection to the music, feel emotionally touched, experience the beauty of the music, or enjoy the atmosphere of the concert, and they rarely were surprised by new impressions. For concert managers, program planners, concert designers, and so on, this must be alarming news. Maybe this is also a reason why classical music concerts have lost their attracting power.

Results show that high expectations and high motivation do not mean more likely fulfillment of these; it seems rather the opposite. Concert enthusiasts, who find almost any aspect of a concert experience important, had the most unfulfilled expectations, followed by social event visitors. That music lovers saw several expectations fulfilled could mean that they enjoy classical concerts due to the musical experience in general. The highest exceeded expectations of concert accompaniers regarding social aspects shows that, despite their low interest in classical music, they enjoyed being in a social context. However, of all the clusters, this cluster also had their expectations most exceeded regarding being stimulated to think, broaden their understanding, and learn new pieces.

That expectations for an immersive emotional experience and enjoyable atmosphere were on average not fulfilled throughout the clusters indicates that these experiences are not self-evident for classical concerts. However, it must also be considered that, although expectations were not entirely fulfilled, it does not mean the entire concert experience was negative. The results reveal that, despite all expectations and experiences for overall enjoyment of the concert, the two music/performance-interested clusters had an overall better concert experience than the two social/event clusters.

Overall, the study's findings align with previous research on the duality of artistic vs. social-event motives for attendance (Roose 2008; Manolika and Baltzis 2022; Hager and Winkler 2012). Within this distinction, intermediate types and different manifestations emerge in the clusters, but the core of the distinction remains. The same is true regarding the experience of classical concerts, for which Chen and Cabrera (2023) found that the differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic motives also applies (performance vs. environment and social). The joint analysis of motivation and experience in the present study makes observable the duality between esthetic and social factors for both motivations and experiences. This finding complements previous perspectives on motivation by adding the aspect of experience and, in addition to the cultural-sociological description of an audience, allows for practical implications.

Practical implications

What do the findings of this study mean for practitioners in arts management and cultural policy? According to Stampa (2018), artistic director of the prestigious Festspielhaus Baden-Baden (Germany), the focus of concert halls has so far been less on the audience and more on a representative building (e.g. Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Berlin Philharmonic), the artistic profile (stars, conductors, program), or the educational program (audience development). The presented study reveals that, regardless of these aspects, the diversity of the audience and its motivations and experiences are worth putting in the spotlight. Concert organizers could program concerts for each of the four groups or try to satisfy all with one concert. The various frame aspects of a concert experience, like the program, staging, venue, possibility to engage socially, and so on, are anticipated and experienced differently by different groups (Wald-Fuhrmann et al. 2021; Tröndle 2021). If these group differences are taken into account, there are no limits to the creativity of concert designers, dramaturges, and artistic directors. Knowledge about expectations in different clusters can also inform audience development in terms of addressing the audience groups in a more differentiated way. To meet the multiple expectations of the four types, the concert event must allow for different modes of behavior and ways of listening during a concert. Either the concert format must allow for multiple visitor behaviors in one event or different events should be created to align with the respective needs. Cultural policy should create incentives for concert organizers to (be able to) proactively respond more to audience needs and create an atmosphere of proximity: How do we establish proximity through the way we treat audience members, the roles they are assigned, and the degree of freedom they are given (other than, e.g. to sit still and remain silent)? What atmosphere do they enter, what do they experience, what stories are

told? Who can they meet during their visit? Can they make new friends? These are just a few among many other dimensions that can be addressed through proximity (Tröndle 2022). Such questions have to be thought through when designing new concert formats that are more attractive to audiences than the existing ones.

Limitations

The present study examined only two concert venues in Berlin and only one concert program. The extent to which the study can transfer to audiences of other concert venues and other programs has to be investigated. Through comparing data of other concert venues and using this study's questionnaires, further statements can be made in this regard. The surveyed concerts were part of an experimental study. Ecological validity was maintained by advertising the concerts regularly and holding them at established concert venues. However, the fact that participants knew they were part of a study could have moderately influenced the results. However, an unpublished audience report of the Radialsystem that shows strong similarities between its standard audience and the audience of the study supports the reliability of the results.

The novel and insightful connections arising from this study can be used in practice for targeted concert marketing and developing the design and program of classical concerts in greater accord with audience expectations. For the field of audience studies and arts management, this study presents a previously neglected and comprehensive perspective on how visitors can be analyzed from the perspectives of cultural sociology, psychology, and musicology to gain a better understanding of visitors, their motivations, and their experiences.

Notes

1. <https://miz.org/de/statistiken/konzerte-und-besuchszahlen-der-oeffentlich-finanzierten-orchester>.
2. <https://experimental-concert-research.org>.
3. <https://www.boulezsaal.de/en/about-the-hall>.
4. <https://www.radialsystem.de/de/venue/uber-uns/>.
5. <https://www.statistik-berlin-brandenburg.de/a-i-5-hj>.
6. <https://www.berlin.de/sen/frauen/gleichstellung/gender-daten/gender-datenreport-berlin/bildung/>.
7. For conscientiousness: cluster 1 ($M=3.39$), cluster 2 ($M=3.63$), cluster 3 ($M=3.75$), cluster 4 ($M=3.87$). For agreeableness: cluster 1 ($M=3.18$), cluster 2 ($M=3.45$), cluster 3 ($M=3.31$), cluster 4 ($M=3.31$).
8. 1) "I generally know a lot about art and culture"; 2) "I particularly like my life when there is always something going on"; 3) "I like to read demanding books."
9. The overview includes descriptive reports only for significant differences that explain cluster membership in terms of content.

Author contributions

MT & CW, first authors; WT, statistics and investigator, MWF investigator. CW will receive 0.5 points as the first author for this article as part of his doctoral degree.

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