

2022

"Fine Lines:" Common Experiences in Concert Merchandise Queues

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“Fine Lines:”

Common Experiences
in Concert Merchandise
Queues

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Date: 2 December 2022

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the University Honors Scholar designation
at Johnson & Wales University

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my advisor, mentor, and birthday twin Dr. Julie Viscardi-Smalley for her support and advice throughout this project. There has never been a day where she has not been enthusiastic and excited to hear what I have come up with.

Next, I would like to thank my parents and family. I would not be who I am today without my parent's dedication to ensuring that I receive the best education possible. I would especially like to thank my Mom, who was directly in charge of homeschooling me for nine years. It was not always easy, but it was worth it in the end! My cats, Barry and Spot also played a huge part in emotional support throughout this project.

I'd also like to thank the Spring 2022 TD Garden Directed Experiential Education Cohort. Though we've all grown in our own ways, the "Garden Girls" made a difference in my life. I would like to especially thank Samantha Lynn, for her energy and support.

I want to extend my gratitude to Professor Eskilsen, for his mentorship through my time at Johnson & Wales. Professor Oberacker, for encouraging me to stick with the honors program. My English professors, Professor Dube and Dr. Shea, for providing me an excellent foundation. And to Dr. Church, for believing in me.

And one final thanks to Dr. Wagner for her support and assistance. Thank you for opening your office to me for the past three years and letting me borrow your books. I will forever appreciate all that you have done for me, and for all of the students in the honors program.

ABSTRACT

Merchandise and other consumer goods are commonly sold for fan consumption during concerts and other musical events. The objective of this thesis was to determine if there was a common experience for patrons waiting in line for artist merchandise at concerts. A qualitative phenomenological research design was utilized to interview participants who had purchased merchandise at a concert in the past in order to understand their experiences and viewpoints. The interviews were then assessed for emergent themes. It was discovered that there is no common experience waiting in line, that fans purchase merchandise as memorabilia, and that unruly fan behavior can be a concern to some fans.

Keywords: Concert Merchandise, Queue Theory, Queue Psychology, Music Merchandise

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Background.....	2
Literature Review.....	6
Methodology.....	10
Delimitations.....	12
Data.....	13
Presentation.....	
Valentina.....	14
Elizabeth.....	15
Skye.....	17
Rachel.....	20
Elve.....	22
Veronica.....	25
Doorman.....	27
Emergent Themes.....	31
Not so “Fine Lines”.....	31
Merchandise as Memorabilia.....	34
Fan Behavior.....	36
Discussion.....	38
Implications.....	38
Suggestions for future research.....	39
Conclusion.....	40
References.....	41
Appendixes.....	48

Figures

Figure 1. Cyclical Model of the Music Industry.....	3
Figure 2. Skye's Merchandise Collection.....	18
Figure 3. Line for Harry Styles Merchandise.....	22
Figure 4. Diagram of Doorman's Experience.....	29

Tables

Table 1. Participant Data.....	33
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Introduction

From the racks of big-box retailers to the closets of fans across the world, the classic band T-shirt seems to have had a monopoly on shelf space for decades. In today's merchandise market, It is not just the band T-shirt anymore, as artists have expanded their offerings to include everything from hoodies to tote bags to posters.

My interest in merchandise started with an experiential education course in the Spring of 2022 which I completed as part of my studies in the Live Entertainment Management Specialization in the Department for Sports, Entertainment, Event - Management at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, RI. The experiential education client asked my cohort to brainstorm ways to fix overcrowding issues on the concourse of their 18,000-seat arena. Though the client primarily dealt with sport events, there were also quite a few entertainment events within their schedule. Through data collected for this project, I noticed that there was something different about the experiences of those who attended concerts. Upon deeper inspection, there was a connection between merchandise and the lines on the concourse. Though the data from this research was meant for the client's personal use and had a myriad of limitations, I was still fascinated.

This fascination was, at first, casual. I asked my peers and friends about their experiences purchasing merchandise within venues. After questioning my friends for months on end, some of them even began to send me images of what they were experiencing while they were waiting in line for their merchandise. With the opportunity to research a specific topic, I finally had the

chance to dig deeper into the world of music merchandise, the fan fascinations behind it, and the lines of people waiting to get their hands on band tees.

Background

There is more to the band tee, poster, or tour-exclusive hoodie than what meets the eye. Merchandise, specifically for the music industry, can be defined as a tangible item that someone can purchase to show that their are a fan of a band or an artist (Passman, 2019). These tangible items are so popular that licensed merchandise has become an industry within itself, for both sports and entertainment. In 2016, the licensed goods and services industry hit a valuation of over \$263 billion, with the entertainment industry accounting for a value of over \$118 billion (Christman, 2017).

Merchandise itself is just one small part of the greater music industry. The music industry as a whole is centered around the production and distribution of musical products, as seen in Figure 1 (Viscardi-Smalley, 2021). Though artists generally cannot make a living off of merchandise sales , it is estimated that a touring artist can make an average of 10-35% of their tour revenue on merchandise alone (Newman, 2017).

Figure 1
Cyclical Model of the Music Industry



Note. This figure serves to visualize the cyclical nature of the music industry; one of the categories in this graphic represents music merchandise (Viscardi-Smalley, 2022).

Merchandise at entertainment events has existed in some form or another since Ancient Rome. One of the first major public assembly venues, the Circus Maximus had arcades beneath the stands for shops and stalls that sold items to visiting spectators (Quennell, 1971). The later built Colosseum was known to have giveaways of food, coins, art, and precious metals to mark feasts and other celebratory events of the era (Pearson, 1973). As lifestyles have changed through time, venues and entertainment offerings have adapted as well. The entertainment industry, especially within concert venues, has seen a gradual shift from building venues with high capacities and maximizing ticket sales to instead focusing on the inclusion of add-ons, amenities,

and other ancillary revenue streams (Lisle, 2017). This change has thrust merchandise into a different role within the venue and in popular culture.

Though merchandise has existed for centuries, music merchandise truly found its place in society in the 20th century. American icon Elvis Presley was one of the first artists to offer an extensive merchandise range, with everything from record players to “I hate Elvis” badges (Nash, 2002). Though this legacy is now shrouded by controversy due to his management’s business decisions, by 1956, Elvis’s merchandise range saw over \$22 million in sales (Nash, 2002).

Another entertainment act early to the merchandising scene, but unaware of the true power behind merchandising, was the Beatles. The Beatles’s manager, Brian Epstein, was overwhelmed by the merchandise response to Beatlemania and decided to license the rights to The Beatles' intellectual property for merchandising instead of endorsing any specific company or making the merchandise on their own (Spitz, 2002). In a disastrous mistake by Epstein’s lawyer, 90% of the revenue from this merchandise was signed away, leaving the Beatles with only a 10% share in their merchandise efforts (Spitz, 2002). This decision resulted in a lengthy court battle and an eventual renegotiation in 1964 (Spitz, 2002). This situation brought merchandise and merchandising rights to the front pages of newspapers and also showcased the true economic potential of merchandise to the world.

The 1970’s saw the creation of one of the most successful merchandising companies of all time, Winterland Productions, which at one time had clients like Fleetwood Mac, Madonna, The Rolling Stones, and The Grateful Dead (Newman, 2017). In the 1980s, Winterland Productions was one of the first companies to explore music merchandise in the retail market,

putting boy band “New Kids on the Block” (NKOTB) in JC Penney stores across the United States (Boehlert, 1998). Even with the entrance into the traditional retail market, NKOTB still averaged a spend of \$15 per person on merchandise during their 1989 tour (Goldstein, 1990). Although merchandise had been “done before,” the success of the NKOTB ushered in a new era for merchandise by increasing the availability merchandise outside of the concert setting.

Current trends within the concert merchandise industry match the landscape of the general music industry today. Consolidation of merchandising firms has become increasingly common. In 2018, Warner Music Group purchased EMP Merchandising for \$180 million (Stassen, 2018). Warner cited the purchase as a way to provide signed artists the ability to create brand personalities and increase their merchandising options (Stassen, 2018). The merchandise industry within the music industry runs incredibly tight margins. Live Nation, the leading concert promotion company worldwide, ran a loss in their merchandise division in 2014 (Polkaoff, 2014). Innovation and technology trends have transformed the merchandising field. Artists like Celine Dion, Zac Brown, and Kiss have created their own apps so that they can communicate with their fans directly and so that they can connect with international audiences (Newman 2017). Even without new apps and technology, artists like Kanye West and Taylor Swift earn as much as \$300,000 in the three hour selling window of a concert (Newman, 2017).

There are many predictions of the direction that the music merchandise industry will take. The focus on moving to digital assets during the COVID-19 pandemic has brought up questions about the willingness of fans to wait in line for their merchandise, as digital assets such as non-fungible tokens have become more readily available and interesting to the consumer (Green & White, 2022). There is a real possibility that fans may not even have to wait in lines in the

future, but for now, fans seem to be dedicated to getting merchandise from their favorite artist by any means possible.

Literature Review

Queue Theory/Psychology

The research within this thesis looks at a relatively simple act - waiting in line. Though there are varieties of definitions and differentiations within literature regarding the usage of certain terminology, like line and queue, for the sake of simplicity, this thesis defines them the same way; a line/queue is a group of people waiting for something. Though most may not give a second thought to waiting in line, there is a large selection of literature on queues. The study of queueing is actually split into two separate research areas: queue theory and queue psychology.

Queue theory refers to the specialized mathematical theories and probabilities that relate to the act of waiting in a line (Cooper, 1981). The origin of queue theory can be traced to a Dutch telephone worker who developed theories of efficiency for telephone switchboard operators (Erlang, 1909). These theories assisted the telephone company in organizational efficiency as they gave them the ability to estimate the number of calls at any certain point and also assisted them in determining delays in connection to operators. In the many decades since, research on queue theory has been pursued in a variety of fields ranging from healthcare, immigration policy, and blockchain computations (Green, n.d.; Gelber, 2009; Li, 2018).

Queue psychology, in contrast, is the discussion of the experience of waiting in a line (Maister, 1985). One of the first works to connect the experiences of waiting in line and the psychology of queueing discusses how people feel regarding the fairness of a wait (Maister, 1985). It also discusses common anxieties that people may have while waiting in line (Maister,

1985). Abstract, non-mathematical concepts such as occupied time, the value of the service in relation to the wait, and group dynamics while queueing have also been addressed in queue psychology (Maister, 1985). Adherence to order in service is a principle that consumers have found essential, so much so that queue psychology has a heavy focus on the social justice of queueing (Larson 1987). Some queue psychology studies have researched the connections between the speed of service and concepts like arrival time versus possible wait at concerts and sporting events (Katz, 1991; Baker & Jones, 2011). Within the entertainment industry, queue psychology is now commonly utilized by theme parks and has been applied in the conceptualization and construction of virtual queues, which have been used in a variety of industries (Daniels et al., 2017; Hu, 2021).

Queue theory and queue psychology research have yet to cross over into the entertainment industry on a large scale. Studies have focused on projecting the wait time for Batman shirts and football tickets, but only in the context of the deviation in projected wait time expectations, not on personal opinions of experiences (Mann, 1969). The impact of queues in sports assembly facilities has been studied, but only for concession stands and bathrooms, not on merchandise sales (Baker & Jones, 2011). Industry based concert management consultants have used queue theory for concert entrance areas but have not applied the theory to merchandise queues (Larochelle, 2019). Queue research and concert merchandise have yet to collide beyond a few studies, representing an area that has great potential to be studied further.

Fandom & Merchandise

The motivations for fans to wait in line to purchase concert merchandise are many; these are worthy of consideration in the context of this study. Many of these motivations and behaviors come from the perspective of fans and fandom. Other than compact discs and vinyl, merchandise

is one way that fans can show evidence of their dedication to an artist or a band (Passman, 2019). Therefore, it is vital to dissect who and what a fan is, and how this impacts merchandise purchasing.

Within fan studies literature, there are a variety of ways to define a fan. One commonly accepted definition defines a fan as, “a person with positive emotional conviction about someone or something famous” (Hills, 2002). One way that fans commonly express their conviction is through recognition of style and creativity (Hills, 2002). The term “fan” itself can be traced to the Latin term “fanaticus.” This term was originally used to describe a devoted temple servant (Jenkins, 1992).

There have been a variety of studies conducted to determine fan motivations for concert attendance. One study found that fans enjoy going to concerts just to “be there” (Brown & Knox, 2016). Another study found ten fan motivations for concert attendance, with nostalgia, status enhancement, and experience being three specific reasons that stuck out among the group (Kulczynski, 2016). Though there are a variety of studies on this topic, there are no conclusive answers that suggest one universal motivation among fans.

Much of the current research that discusses fandom, merchandise, and concerts exists within literature that studies Korean pop music (commonly called, “K-Pop”). K-pop is commonly performed in groups consisting of single-sex singers and dancers (Malingkay, 2013). These performers are called “idols” within fan communities (Maliangkay, 2013). Although K-pop is primarily based in Asia, and a majority of K-pop fans have Asian backgrounds, its popularity has spread across the globe (Maliangkay, 2013).

Merchandise is significant to fans within K-pop communities. Although experts in the western/American music market state that compact disc sales have all but “dried up like the

Serengeti,” K-pop fans seek out hard copies of their favorite music (Passman, 2019; Sousa, 2021). Within the music industry it is heavily debated whether compact discs count as merchandise, as many ranking organizations have changed their rules regarding if compact disc and vinyl sales count as merchandise or as the sale of a sound recording (Stutz, 2019). Nonetheless, the current success of K-pop compact disc sales is massive compared to that of the western market.

K-pop fans take their merchandise collecting and purchasing seriously. One study of K-pop fans in Korea found that 60.8% of K-pop fans spend more than 100,000 KRW (~\$75.00 USD) per year on K-pop related merchandise and goods (Kim et al., 2018). K-pop fans also have a variety of merchandise to choose from when making their purchases, as K-pop merchandise is regionalized to highlight differences between different localities (Sousa, 2021). It was also found that there are many K-pop fans that buy two of each item, so that they can store the second item for safekeeping and collecting (Kim et al., 2018).

Though K-pop research is thorough and has studied a variety of different facets of the industry, it unfortunately does not apply in all aspects to the western music industry. Especially when looking at items like compact discs, it can be nearly impossible to generalize research across the music industry.

There have been studies within certain fan communities that involve purchasing items and waiting in line. Comic Con San Diego, a comic and pop culture themed conference, is a specific event that researchers have previously studied. One ethnographic study described how lines are so intense at the San Diego Comic Con that there is an entire panel discussion dedicated to line experiences so that organizers can make changes for the future (Gasser, 2014). This study also found that there were some fans who found positive elements to waiting in line. The ability

to converse with other fans was seen as a major positive element, as many fans do not often have the chance to connect with others within their fan communities in person (Gasser, 2014). Fans also saw waiting in line as tangible evidence of their dedication to being a fan (Gasser, 2014). Though this is one study within the literature, line culture and fandom intersect in more than just the music and entertainment industry.

Methodology

In order to complete the research for this thesis, a qualitative phenomenological design utilizing semi-structured interviews was used. The qualitative approach was chosen because it can assist in describing and providing meaning to a human or social problem (Creswell, 2018). Phenomenological research originates from psychology and philosophy and has been used in a variety of fields such as healthcare and gender studies (Creswell, 2018). It provides researchers the ability to find a common phenomenon among participants by using the lived experiences of individuals, commonly using interviews as a data collection method (Creswell, 2018).

A phenomenological approach is appropriate to use for this inquiry because the intended goal is to determine a baseline experience. Other qualitative methods such as grounded theory and ethnography do provide the researcher insight but are not appropriate methods of inquiry for this specific study because the intended goal is to not derive a theory nor study a sample over time (Creswell, 2018). Although quantitative research methods such as surveys or experiments could have been used to uncover similar findings, these methods would only describe the trends numerically or test specific treatments, which would not be as useful to the field compared to the ability to determine a baseline experience (Creswell, 2018).

This study was inspired by a project completed for a client during an experiential educational course in the Spring of 2022. A survey in which attendees at a major sports and entertainment venue were asked their perceptions on concourse waits for food, drink, and merchandise. The results of the experiential education study pointed to concert merchandise as an area with potential future research. The connection between the experiential education project and this study are limited as the experiential education project relied heavily upon qualitative data. Though the experiential education project inspired the subject matter of this study, it has little to no connection or relevance to this research.

Since the goal of qualitative research is to look at a specific population, participants were purposefully selected to best help in answering the research question (Creswell, 2018). The sample was selected by established personal relationships and recommendations from peers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via video conferencing platforms or in-person. To collect data, participants were asked questions about their personal experiences waiting in merchandise lines and also questions regarding basic demographic information. This form of data collection provides historical context and information, but is limited in that the data is not being collected in its natural setting (Creswell, 2018).

To establish a consistent interview process, an interview protocol was put in place. Participants were ensured that all IRB procedures would be followed. Audio recordings were made of all interviews conducted with participants who consented to being recorded; additionally, notes were taken by hand during all interviews. After the completion of the interview, the recordings will be stored on a password protected device for a period of one year. There were no known risks or benefits to participants. All participants signed consent forms prior

to the interview's conduction. Due to the nature of qualitative inquiry, data analysis and collection occurred concurrently. In addition, due to the size and scale of data collection, qualitative inquiry also requires the researcher to narrow data down into a selected number of theme (Creswell, 2018).

One strength of qualitative research is validity, from the researcher, participant, and reader's point of view (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In order to achieve research validity, a variety of techniques will be used. Peer debriefing, which consists of a peer questioning the qualitative research at hand, can provide the researcher clarity from an outside perspective on what conclusions a reader will come to (Creswell, 2018). Negative or contradictory information to expected themes will also be presented, to ensure validity and to establish a wide width of experiences within the study (Creswell, 2018). One final test of validity is the acknowledgement of bias. Throughout the data collection and interpretation any personal interjections and opinions will be reflected upon and noted.

Delimitations

Weaknesses within the scope of a study are defined as delimitations (Simon & Goes, 2013). Though limitation is a more well-known and commonly used term throughout research, limitations look at constraints in methodology, not in the scope of the study (Miles, 2017). There were delimitations present during the completion of this study.

Participants in this study were limited to personal contacts. Though the participants were from a variety of places, most of the experiences were within New England or the Upper Atlantic region, meaning the results may not apply to other geographic regions. Though there was one

participant who identified their home as a place outside of the United States, this is still not enough data to generalize this study as applying to all populations, everywhere.

Similar to that of the delimitation of place, many of the participants interviewed were in a similar life stage and may not have as vast of experiences as those if a wider sample population were selected.

This study was also limited to a select group of people and lacked diversity in race and gender. Of all seven participants, only one was male and one identified as Asian. Within the fan studies discipline, it has been noted by scholars that the field is both western leaning and white (Morimoto, 2021). Though there has been a recent scholarly uptick of fan studies that look at South Korean entities due to the increasing popularity of K-pop, it is still a field that lacks a transcultural dialogue (Morimoto, 2021). This is a major delimitation for this study and the field as a whole and is something that future researchers might strive to fix through enhanced research design methods.

Data Presentation

This section of my thesis contains descriptions of study participants and their interview responses. I started by identifying friends, peers, and mutual connections who attend live music events on a semi-regular basis. I then invited these selected participants to participate in this study. All names have been changed to protect the identities of those who have been interviewed, per Institutional Review Board policies. Due to the nature of the study, participants were purposefully selected to best help in answering the research question (Creswell, 2018).

I. Valentina

I knew Valentina through my involvement in a few different university organizations. We had planned a few events together in the past and I knew from speaking with her that she had an interest in concerts and liked music. Valentina is originally from the Midwestern United States but has attended concerts in the New England area as well.

From the start, Valentina enthusiastically considered herself to be a huge fan of live music. She is a fan of smaller artists who play nightclubs and other club-like settings. Many of these artists are pop musicians and she attends around two concerts per year.

Valentina enjoys purchasing merchandise at concerts. She budgets around \$80 per concert but she did say that she is fairly flexible with the price if she really likes a certain piece of merchandise. She doesn't collect any specific kind of merchandise or any specific artist's merchandise; she enjoys showing up at a concert and seeing what options they have. Valentina goes into the experience wondering what they are going to sell instead of setting out to buy a specific item, which seems to be a very unique perspective.

What Valentina does find important is the overall look and aesthetic of the merchandise. She will only make a purchase, "if it looks good." When I asked her about an experience waiting in line for merchandise, she described a time that she and her friends waited in line for merchandise at a Claire Rosinkranz concert. She described how she waited in line all that time to soon find out that the merchandise featured the artist's name in a simple font. On top of that, it was the color green, and "ugly," at least according to Valentina. She chose to not buy merchandise at this concert, citing the ugliness as the reason to decline the purchase.

For artists with more attractive looking merchandise, Valentina has a different opinion. Even if she does not like the artist themselves, she will buy the merchandise if it looks cool. If Valentina sees a piece of merchandise that she likes but cannot get it during the show, she will

also consider buying it online after the fact. She still does prefer to buy at concerts because she finds limited edition or exclusive tour merchandise to be exciting and a reason why she is willing to wait in line to make a purchase. Valentina is willing to wait as long as it takes to make her purchase. She remarked that she is, “already there and out late” so in her mind there is no reason to not wait the extra time. .

She does not consider the wait for this merchandise to be part of the concert experience. To Valentina, waiting in line is simply just something that is done. She also noted that older generations, like parents, are not always willing to stick around and wait to buy an item after a show. She had no specific opinion on the matter of waiting; it is just a necessary act.

Although Valentina’s interview was one of the shortest in this study, she had a variety of interesting experiences to share. One interesting theme within her interview is the idea of exclusivity being a factor in purchasing concert merchandise.

II. Elizabeth

Elizabeth and I worked together for a period of around two months. We would have lengthy conversations about music and entertainment as a whole whenever we worked together. I remember Elizabeth wearing concert merchandise to work and she told me about her concert experiences. Elizabeth currently works within the entertainment industry but not in a position that is related to concerts or music. Elizabeth was slightly apprehensive to be interviewed, but ended up enjoying the process by the end of our discussion.

“I have been a fan of music since I was born,” was the first statement that Elizabeth said to me during this interview. Her mother, a huge music fan, took her to her very first concert at ten years old. She goes to around two concerts a year, mainly in the genres of rock or pop. She loves to attend large arena shows for artists like Harry Styles and Shawn Mendes.

Elizabeth makes a merchandise purchase at every concert she attends, spending up to \$100. For some artists, like Harry Styles, she even considers herself to be a collector. She also considers herself to be “quirky” as she collects vinyl records, but she said she would rather buy those outside the concert environment. She absolutely considers a merchandise purchase to be part of the concert experience because she described herself as “materialistic” and noted that she wants memorabilia to show off her experiences.

When I asked her about some recent experiences purchasing merchandise at concerts, Elizabeth had some detailed comments to make. At a recent Post Malone concert, Elizabeth decided to purchase a hoodie. When she arrived at the merchandise stall, she could not figure out where the line started and ended as the line had converged with the line for another merchandise stall across the concourse. After asking other fans, Elizabeth was able to find the correct line and purchase her hoodie. When Elizabeth finally made it to the front of the line, she said that the staff were friendly and helpful.

Elizabeth’s least favorite part of the experience waiting in line for concert merchandise was something that I had not come across prior. When I asked her if there were any drawbacks to waiting in a line for merchandise she answered immediately and said “the stans, shoving people to get to the front.” Elizabeth said that she finds the behavior of “stans” to be a negative part of waiting for merchandise at concerts as she goes to concerts for enjoyment and fun, not to be pushed and shoved. This was the first time I had come across the term “stan” in interviews for this project. I came across the term in informal conversation online but had not necessarily considered it in the context of people’s behavior in real life.

When I asked Elizabeth to define the term in her own words, Elizabeth stated that, “A stan is a person who is loyal to a specific group or artist and will do anything for them. They are infatuated by this artist.” After this definition, I asked Elizabeth if she was a “stan” for any artist in particular. She told me “Yes, for Harry Styles, Shawn Mendes, and a variety of other artists that would be too long to list.”

I thanked Elizabeth for sharing her experiences and defining the term “stan” for me, as this was something that I had yet to come across. Fan behavior affecting others is a definite theme that I saw emerge from my discussion with Elizabeth along with the idea of the “stan.”

III. Skye

A professor in my program introduced me to Skye so that we could work on a project together. Skye currently works for two music venues within New England and plans to work in the industry when she finishes school. She works around 30-40 shows a year in concert venues, and often works in merchandise sales. I have an excellent working relationship with Skye, and she was interested in participating in this study.

As a patron, Skye attends roughly 2 concerts a year. Her favorite genre is K-pop, but she will attend country music concerts with her family. Although she works in amphitheater style venues, many of the concerts she attends are in large arenas.

When Skye attends a concert as a fan, she budgets around \$100 to spend on merchandise. She likes to purchase at least one item at every concert that she attends. As a fan of K-pop, Skye noted that there is a variety of different kinds of merchandise to purchase and a large number of albums are released, so she has a variety of options when it comes to buying merchandise within

the venue. Although she does buy merchandise outside of concerts, she likes to have the exclusive tour merchandise and also something to remember the concert by.

Skye considers waiting in line for merchandise to be a part of the concert experience. She made a comparison to waiting in line to get on a ride at an amusement park. Both of these line experiences should not take up the entire day, but both are considerably part of her overall experience. She likes to socialize with other fans while in line as it is an opportunity to talk to those who enjoy the same things that you do.

Figure 2
Skye's Merchandise Collection



Note. Photo of Skye's merchandise collection. Provided by participant.

Her perspective as a venue employee was an interesting addition to this study. She described how when she was at a concert, the employee selling merchandise did not give her the opportunity to hold the merchandise up to herself so she could see how it would fit. This is something that would be done in her venue, and she wishes that she had the same customer experience when she was purchasing merchandise.

Skye has noticed that at some of the concerts that she works, there are noticeable elements of line etiquette and expectations. One example Skye gave when discussing this is that some guests would start to get annoyed with others if they took too long to make a purchase. Another is that people would often get annoyed with the staff if things were taking too long. Essentially, Skye was discussing how she has seen a general expectation that merchandise lines should be a swift and quick experience.

She also brought up some drawbacks to lines that she has seen through her employment. Skye discussed how she considers selling out to be a concern, as it is always a threat when the line is longer than expected. At her workplace, she has also seen patrons miss the concert just to purchase merchandise.

She has also been on the receiving end of fan behaviors, both good and bad. Skye interacts with fans on a regular basis. Though she did start to mention “stans,” she noted that her work asks her to use “fan” as a universal term instead of differentiating with the term “stan.” Even still, she is all too familiar with intense fan or “stan” behavior. To Skye, “the term stan is almost beyond the premise of a fan. Stan’s are overly obsessed and have a cult culture. Fan is a more universal term, something that gives everyone a common identity.”

When I finished this interview, Skye stated that her one wish, as both a fan and an employee, is that everyone should be just a little bit more patient. She often has to work in small spaces and is doing the best that she can to get everyone what they want, as fast as possible. Her experiences as both a fan and an employee were valuable to this study and aligned with themes discussing fan behavior.

IV. Rachel

I immediately knew that Rachel was the perfect candidate to be interviewed for this study. We had worked together in a few classes prior, on some major projects. Each week she came to class excited to tell us about a new concert she attended. From speaking to Rachel, I knew that she had also worked within the music industry in a variety of roles. At the time of this interview, she is not currently in a role where she works with artist merchandise, but she has been in charge of merchandise sales in the past.

Rachel attends the most concerts compared to any other participant, by far. She estimated that she attends around 40 to 50 concerts a year, not including those that she has worked or has to work. Rachel is open to attending any concert, regardless of the genre of music.

Rachel budgets roughly \$50-\$60 per concert for merchandise. Although she will spend more on specific artists she likes, she does not see a reason to spend an enormous amount of money on merchandise. She noted that “high school Rachel” would have seen the purchase of merchandise at every concert to be an absolute necessity. Now, she feels as though she can enjoy the concert and have a good time without making a purchase. This is partly due to the expense of buying merchandise, but Rachel also noted that at times, when she was younger, she felt pressured to purchase merchandise.

Rachel finds the amount that some people spend on merchandise to be shocking. At one point, she was at a show selling merchandise for a band called The Decemberists. To her, it felt like each fan was buying every single piece of merchandise that the band offered. This merchandise stand in particular was also primarily for VIP ticket holders, who had already received significant amounts of merchandise with their VIP access. She was shocked that they purchased items like \$60 fabric flags and \$80 posters. Rachel found the poster to be an especially shocking purchase, as a poster is “just a piece of paper.”

When Rachel does buy merchandise, she has to like both the design of the merchandise and the performer who is on the merchandise. Her motivation to purchase comes from the fact that artists often have exclusive merchandise on tours. She describes a feeling of satisfaction when she can finally get her hands on the merchandise as well. In regard to her budget, Rachel likes that artists often offer bundle deals when you buy the merchandise in-person, and she does not have to pay for shipping and handling like she would if she had bought it online.

Her reasoning for not minding waiting in line is very unique. Rachel often struggles to decide what piece of merchandise she is going to buy. She likes to use the time that it takes her to get to the front of the line to make her decision. She has had the opportunity to buy merchandise ahead of time in the past but has still chosen to wait in line so that she can have time to make her decision.

Although she may like the wait so that she can make her decision, she does not like the way that some concerts have organized their lines. When asked about a memorable purchasing experience, Rachel described what it was like to purchase merchandise at a Harry Styles concert. She was confused at where the line began and ended, and so were a variety of other fans. She

noticed that people kept running to find the merchandise stand with the shortest line, which caused a lot of sudden movement and confusion. She found the entire experience confusing and disorganized as a whole.

Figure 3
Line for Harry Styles Merchandise



Note. Photo of Harry Styles merchandise line with commentary. Provided by participant.

Given the number of concerts Rachel has attended, her experiences were a great inclusion to this study. In her interview, she discussed her own experiences as both venue staff and a fan, which added a greater perspective to the emergent themes within this study.

V. Elve

I had initially inquired about interviewing one of Elve's friends but was immediately told that I should interview Elve instead. Like some of the other participants, Elve has the experience of being both a fan and a venue employee. Originally from Northwestern Europe, Elve has

attended concerts in countries outside of the United States. She was incredibly enthusiastic about participating in this study and was more than willing to share all of her experiences.

Elve is currently studying to become a production manager for concerts. She has attended over 40 concerts as a fan since 2014. Her favorite genres of music are pop, pop-rock, and K-pop. Though the venue she works for would be considered to be a medium size, holding roughly 5,000 people, she will go to any concert, anywhere.

Commemorative bracelets are the main focus of Elve's merchandise purchasing. If commemorative bracelets are sold at a concert, Elve will buy one regardless of her love for the musical artist. If she truly loves the artist, she will buy more than just a bracelet. Hoodies and t-shirts are often her next choice, especially considering her budget is around \$80-\$90 for artists she loves.

Elve was the first person I interviewed to discuss how her seat preference can change when she purchases merchandise. She discussed how at general admission shows, where anyone can sit wherever they like, there is a rush to purchase merchandise after the show ends as everyone spent the first half of the show fighting to find the best place to take a seat. If she knows that she wants to purchase a significant amount of merchandise, she will often buy a seat, so she does not have to worry about purchasing merchandise and finding a seat within the same window of time.

The time of purchase is also very important to Elve, as K-pop concerts sell light sticks. Elve described how these light sticks connect to Bluetooth and change colors and flash along with the music during the show. They add on to her experience and are also a piece of memorabilia. When Elve attended K-pop group *Seventeen's* show, light sticks sold out before Elve could purchase one. If pre-ordering were offered for merchandise, Elve would certainly use

it to purchase a light stick. Due to the fear of lightsticks selling out, Elve likes to purchase her merchandise early to ensure she can purchase the items that she specifically wants.

Elve then went on to discuss how she has seen some new practices in both Europe and the United States when it comes to selling merchandise. She described how many venues have started to open the day before a concert so that fans can buy their merchandise prior to the show. In her opinion, this has reduced lines and given her the ability to wear the merchandise she has purchased to the show itself. The venue that she worked at when she was living in Europe was also testing pre-orders for merchandise, but only for select musical artists.

Elve has had some very good experiences purchasing merchandise, and some very bad ones as well. At one concert, the venue opened early to sell merchandise; the merchandise had a display that was long enough for all to see, and there were organized lines with ropes so that customers knew where to wait. Yet at another concert, Elve described a small stand with confusing and disorganized lines. She noted that people who arrived after her were served first and that some fans even pushed her into the table.

Fan behavior had come up once before in these interviews, so I decided to ask her a bit more about it. Elve very much considers the wait for merchandise to be a major part of the concert experience. She actually described fighting her way to get a spot in line as a “thrill” and that she enjoys collecting memorabilia from every concert she attends. She doesn’t consider the fan behavior or culture to differ much between countries, but rather she has found it to be more dependent on the venue and the fans.

Overall, I uncovered quite a few thematic elements from my interview with Elve. It was interesting to hear her perspective coming from Europe and I am appreciative that she took part in this study.

VI. Veronica

When one of the other participants mentioned that I should interview Veronica, I was at first unsure. I had met Veronica during a class a year prior. I knew that she has an extensive background in media and had taken a few courses related to the music industry, but I was unaware of the extent that Veronica loves music and attending live concerts.

“I absolutely love live music” was the first thing that she said to me during her interview. Though she considers herself to be a late starter to the world of live music, only gaining an interest when she was a sophomore in high school, she discussed a variety of experiences attending concerts. Her parents had little interest in attending concerts, so Veronica has developed this love for music, on her own.

Veronica will attend any genre of concert, except for rap. Her favorite genre to see live is country, as she enjoys the affordability that country concerts provide. Veronica also loves artists like Harry Styles and Taylor Swift, in addition to a variety of other pop acts. Many of the concerts she attends are located in outdoor amphitheaters and she estimated that she goes to about three per year.

Veronica considers her merchandise buying habits to be artist dependent. For Harry Styles or country act Kelsea Ballerini, Veronica is more than willing to spend the money on merchandise. Veronica has attended four Harry Styles concerts in recent years and has built up a collection of Harry’s merchandise in particular.

When it comes to spending money on merchandise, Veronica considers herself to be quite “stingy.” She refuses to spend over \$60 on merchandise at any given concert and attributes this to the expense of tickets.

“For an artist like Harry Styles, you’ve already spent \$400 to get there!” she exclaimed to me when I enquired more about this budgetary choice. She will still buy merchandise, such as a T-shirt, tote bag, or sweatshirt but only if it is under \$60. If she is purchasing a book or a vinyl record, she prefers to purchase these items online.

Veronica has never had to wait a particularly long amount of time to make her purchase. She estimated the longest amount of time she has spent in line was 15 minutes and would not wait longer than 45. She has however, had some messy experiences with merchandise purchasing. She referred to the line to get Harry Styles merchandise as a “mob,” not a line. Veronica did not see any staff or barriers directing the lines and described the line itself as whatever location a person decided to stop.

Since Veronica was the first participant to mention country music, I asked her if the merchandise buying experience is different for country music. She felt that the experience was more dependent on the fact that many country concerts are at outdoor venues that have different constraints on set ups for the sale of merchandise.

Veronica ended her interview by describing a very memorable merchandise purchase experience to me. When she attended a Beach Boys concert (or “what’s left of them” as she remarked), she chose to buy a T-shirt. The concert had a primarily older audience that were not as interested in merchandise, so Veronica was one of the only people with a T-shirt. After the show was over, Veronica ran up to the stage and one of the Beach Boys signed her shirt. She saw this merchandise as memorabilia of her experience attending a Beach Boys (or what’s left of them...) concert.

Though I was at first hesitant to interview Veronica, she was a great participant in this study. Some of the points she discussed, such as her experience waiting in line for Harry Styles, matched closely with the experiences of some of the other participants.

VII. Doorman

A mutual friend suggested that I interview Doorman, a fellow student at my university. Although Doorman and I lived next door to each other for a year, I had never had the chance to speak to him at length before. It turns out that he has an extensive background in attending concerts and loves to purchase merchandise. My interview with him was the longest of all my participants, rounding out at about an hour.

Doorman described how his love for live music started when his mother took him to go see the singer Usher when he was in the third grade. In the time since, he has attended concerts in a variety of genres including EDM (electronic dance music), pop, rock, and rhythm and blues. He goes to around 2-3 concerts per year, but would go to as many as he could if he had “the money, youth, and eardrums.” Though most of the concerts that he attends are in outdoor amphitheaters, he has been everywhere from dive bars to huge arenas, just to attend concerts.

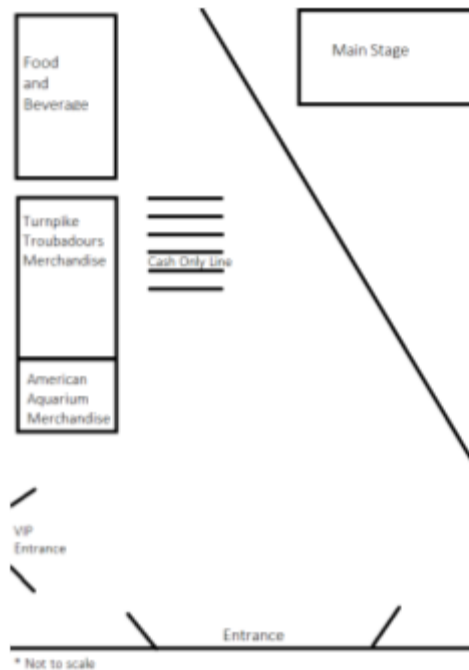
Doorman described himself as a “sucker” for the artist or band T-shirt. He will occasionally purchase a hoodie or a sweatshirt, but the T-shirt is his all-time favorite piece of merchandise available. He has little interest in novelty items or other goods that bands and artists sell. He will even show up early so that he can purchase his shirt, put it on, and get to the pit so he can be as close to the band as possible. Doorman owns the most AJR merchandise, as he has been following this indie pop trio since their early career.

The memory of “that night” is one of the main reasons Doorman purchases concert T-shirts. He considers concert merchandise to be a keepsake or similar to that of purchasing a toy

or a souvenir from a theme park like Disneyland. Although Doorman does like to purchase memorabilia, he will not spend over \$100 on merchandise. He estimated that he normally spends \$35-\$45 per concert on merchandise. If the T-shirt is of poor quality or cheaply made, he may not purchase it at all. He considers the ability to assess the quality of merchandise as a major reason why he prefers to purchase merchandise in-person.

When I asked him about his most recent merchandise purchase, he described a very efficient and positive experience. At a charity concert, he went to purchase merchandise from country bands American Aquarium and the Turnpike Troubadours. He estimated the wait times to range from five to ten minutes, across five different lines. Like the numbers that label a meal at a fast food restaurant, each piece of merchandise had a number so that guests could easily tell staff which piece of merchandise they would like to buy. Doorman found this experience to be incredibly efficient and did not have anything bad to say about it.

Figure 4
Diagram of Merchandise Stand layout



Note. Diagram based on drawing provided by participant.

Doorman considers merchandise to be a necessity but he does not think that the wait to get this merchandise is necessary, or even part of the concert experience as a whole. The longest he has ever had to wait is 30 minutes, but he would wait as long as it takes to get a piece of merchandise. He said he has even waited after the concert is over to get what he wants. He noted that he partly enjoys the dopamine rush that comes with a new merchandise purchase. Even though he does not consider the line to be necessary, Doorman likes speaking to other like-minded people while waiting in line for merchandise. He has found that everyone is generally happy to be at the concert. Doorman also likes to make connections with other fans, especially through complimenting other fan's outfits.

Through this conversation with Doorman, I identified a few thematic elements. His comments on purchasing for memory and his description of the “dopamine” rush he felt after purchasing were interesting and were similar in comparison to that of other participants.

Summary

The data collected represents the personal experiences of seven different individuals regarding their experiences purchasing merchandise at concerts.

Emergent Themes

In this section, I aim to describe common experiences for those waiting in line for merchandise at concerts. As done in many forms of qualitative inquiries, the data was narrowed down into emergent themes (Creswell, 2018). Three main themes were identified. These themes consist of the lack of a universal waiting in line experience, merchandise as memorabilia, and unruly fan behavior.

Not so “Fine Lines”

There was notably no universal experience among all of the participants when it came to their experiences with waiting in line to purchase merchandise. Some participants’ comments focused more on their experiences making purchases while others focused on the journey to get themselves to the front of the line.

Of those who discussed their experiences waiting in line, four of the seven participants described their experiences as “disorganized.” Veronica described her line experience as more of a “mob,” while Elizabeth did not enjoy being shoved around by other fans. Elve expressed frustration in being served out of order and Rachel could not even find where the line started or ended. Looking at the way that the participants described these experiences, it seems as though they contradicted some of the primary tenets introduced in queue theory. For example, Elve’s experience being served out of order directly contradicts the ideas presented in research pertaining to the social justice of queuing. Larson (1987) described the importance of why service should exist to not upset the first-in, first out order. If customers are served out of this order, they may feel as though the wait was unfair, just as Elve felt.

There were, however, participants who described their experiences waiting in line as unremarkable, and some participants thought their waits were organized. Skye expressed her disappointment with the sales staff, and Valentina was disappointed in the items being sold, but neither had anything bad to say about the line or the wait itself. Doorman found his experience to be extremely efficient, and Elve also mentioned a time where the set-up for merchandise was organized, in contrast to the negative experience she described. The positive experiences Elve and Doorman described align more with the understanding of human psychology and queuing that Maister (1987) discussed; their experiences were “certain” and they knew what would be coming next, which according to Maister (1987), reduces anxiety among those who are waiting.

Longest Estimated Actual Wait for Merchandise

The longest estimated time that participants said they have waited in a concert merchandise line ranged from fifteen to sixty minutes. Most wait times fell between the fifteen-to-thirty-minutes, averaging around 31 minutes, as seen in Table 1. Though these are just estimates, it is interesting to see how long the participants have perceived their wait times to be; indeed, this has been a subject of queue theory research. Mann (1969) discussed the gap between the amount of time that guests thought they waited in line, and the true amount they actually waited.

Longest Time Participant Would Wait for Merchandise

Three of the participants noted that they would wait as long as it takes to get concert merchandise. The rest of the participants would wait anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour for merchandise. Again, there seems to be no common experience or pattern among this data, as seen in Table 1.

Price Preferences

The spending preferences of the participants generally matched up to the preferred merchandise item that the participant likes to buy. Doorman, who generally only purchases a shirt, spends around \$35. Veronica, Rachel, Elve, and Valentina noted that they like to buy items such as hoodies. Elizabeth and Skye generally purchase multiple items and budget quite a bit for merchandise. Again, there is no universal price preference when it comes to what the participants estimate they will budget for concert merchandise.

Table 1

Participant Name	Concerts Attended Per Year (Approx.)	Longest Estimated Actual Wait Time (in minutes)	Longest potential wait time (in minutes)	Price Preference
Valentina	2	60	∞	\$80
Elizabeth	2	30	30	\$100
Skye	2	15	30-45	\$100
Rachel	40-50	40	60	\$50-\$60
Elve	5	25	∞	\$80-\$90
Veronica	3	15-20	45	\$60
Doorman	2	30	∞	\$35-\$45

Note. This is a table based upon participant responses.

In this section, differences between participant perceptions of waiting in line were discussed. Participant's reflections on their longest estimated wait time and longest actual wait time, in addition to their price preferences were also discussed. Results indicate that there are similarities and differences between these criteria.

Merchandise as Memorabilia

Data suggests that fans acquire merchandise for the purpose of memorabilia. Participants used a variety of words to describe the merchandise that they purchase, such as memorabilia, souvenir, and keepsake. Doorman, for example, described his motivation to purchase merchandise as wanting a memory of “that night.” Merriam-Webster dictionary defines memorabilia as, “things that stir recollection or are valued or collected for their association with a particular field or interest.” Though the participant’s words may be different, the motivation behind their purchases is a way to remember a specific day, artist, concert, or night.

Research within festival studies confirms this exact motivation. Collin-Lauchad & Kjeldgaard (2013) noted that “the motivation is not in the “product” itself, but rather the emotions, communion, and experiences" (p. 287). One researcher described merchandise as akin to that of a favor from a wedding, noting that “...Favours and other transportable merchandise represent a ‘tangible memory’ of the wedding in the same way that a holiday souvenir provides a ‘tangible memory’ of another place” (Doyle, 2012, p. 160). As confirmed by both the participants in this study and research within festival studies, the motivation for acquiring merchandise exists to serve a purpose of a tangible memory of an experience.

A significant aspect of this memory also comes from the concept of community. One participant that described the elements of community was Doorman who enjoys being around others who enjoy the same music and likes to compliment other’s outfits. There is a significant amount of research dedicated to this within fan and festival studies. This sense of community can be related to a specific show or place, called “regional specificity,” which is common within certain fan subcultures, such as Phish (Cohen & Viscardi-Smalley, 2020). Other researchers have

connected the modern music festival experience to that of a cultural or religious festival (Howell, 2013). In combination with tangible memories of experiences, elements of community at concerts were also found within this study.

The Allure of Limited-Edition

One common reason among participants for purchasing the merchandise at a concert over purchasing in store or online is due to the fact that many concert tours offer limited edition merchandise that is not sold anywhere else. Rachel's comments on how this exclusivity can push her to make a purchase is an example of the impact that limited-edition merchandise can have on the consumer. Valentina also noted that she finds buying limited edition merchandise "exciting." On the other side of this allure, participants also noted a fear that merchandise will sell out. Both Elve and Skye discussed this within their interviews, as they have either been in situations where they have been unable to make a purchase due to merchandise selling out or they have seen others miss out on the opportunity because merchandise has sold out.

Research discussing limited edition products exists in industries outside of the music industry. There have been extensive economic analyses on when companies should consider offering limited edition products (Balachander & Stock, 2009). In the retail industry, companies have tested the notion of limited-edition items with collaborations between retail stores and major brands (Childs & Jin, 2020). There is great potential for consumer behavior and retail studies to take a more in-depth look at the consumers who purchase merchandise at concerts and to capitalize upon the industry as a whole. This also may be a strategy that artists and concert merchandisers take when making the decision to sell merchandise on a tour or at a show.

Looking at merchandise purely through an economic lens is seemingly limiting, as there is more to merchandise than the monetary value. Rachel, for example, noted that she likes to purchase merchandise because it gives her “satisfaction.” Doorman described the act of buying merchandise as a “dopamine” rush. Elizabeth defined herself as “materialistic” because she wants to buy merchandise to show it off. There seems to be a drive to purchase merchandise that goes beyond simply buying a hoodie or a t-shirt.

All three of these participant experiences are likely due to what researchers have found to be the pursuit of status. Fans purchase these items to gain “cultural capital” with their fandoms and fan networks, which can make simple merchandise pieces become status symbols (Bourdieu, 1986). For fans, and a select number of participants in this study, merchandise seems to act as a symbol of status in addition to as a piece of memorabilia.

In this section, the emergent theme of merchandise as memorabilia, and the impact of limited edition merchandise was explored. The motivations of merchandise purchases were discussed, in addition to concepts such as status and regional specificity.

Fan Behavior

Though not all participants mentioned fan behavior when looking back at a merchandise purchase experience, those who discussed fan behavior as part of their experience had strong opinions and thoughts regarding the matter. Elizabeth and Elve both described how fans will fight, push, and shove to get to merchandise tables before other fans. Elizabeth defined these fans as “stans,” a type of fan with extreme loyalty to an artist or a group. Skye was also familiar with the idea of a “stan” and overall, with fans that are impatient, though she prefers not to use the term “stan” itself.

Within the music industry, fan behavior and its connection to safety has increasingly been a concern for venues and concert promoters, though it is not a concern for every genre and sub-culture of music. In November of 2021 ten people died at the Astroworld music festival in Houston, Texas (Gardener, 2021). It was later revealed that they suffered from compression asphyxia (Lozano, 2021). This was caused by fans pushing other fans so tightly that some lost their ability to breathe (Lozano, 2021). With an increased amount of publicity on concert safety due to this devastating incident, unsafe fan behavior has been increasingly scrutinized and come under review. Though Astroworld was not necessarily caused by “stan” behavior, fans pushing and shoving others to get to the front connects to the statements and observations of the participants in this study.

The “stans” and fan behavior described within this study are not as intense as what happened at the Astroworld festival, but it is concerning. It seems as though much of the current literature on “stans” exists in the context of online social interaction and is mainly exclusive to social media platforms like Twitter (Malik & Haidar, 2022; Martin, 2021). In the aftermath of Astroworld, there has been an increased look into safe and secure concerts. Pushing, shoving, and other behaviors that could be characterized as extreme “stan” behaviors will be called into question and scrutinized to ensure the industry is safe for all.

In this section, “stan” behaviors and other fan behaviors were discussed. The importance of safety at concerts was established and stan culture was explored in the context of online spaces.

Discussion and Future Recommendations

This study used a phenomenological design to assess if there is a common experience buying merchandise at concerts. The lived experiences of participants who purchased concert merchandise was explored through semi-structured interviews. After the completion of interviews, the data were assessed for emergent themes. Findings suggest that participants have had varied experiences regarding waiting in line for merchandise, participants acquire merchandise for memorabilia purposes, and that unruly fan behavior can have an impact on others. These findings could be used by music industry and venue professionals to create a better guest experience.

Throughout this study, I have had the ability to look at a variety of facets of the music industry and of human experience. I was able to take the information that participants gave me and determine a few emergent themes that can hopefully change the way venue management and concert producers think about concert merchandise. Though it is only a small look at a topic that intersects a variety of industries and disciplines, there are myriad opportunities for future research relating to concert merchandise and queues.

Implications

Determining how fans experience waiting in line for merchandise at a concert is vital to making changes in order to enhance the satisfaction and safety for those who attend. Though there was no determined universal experience, the data suggests that patrons have common motivations. Though it was not the initial purpose of the study, findings could be used to determine what steps a venue or musical artist might take to make their merchandise line safer and all around a more hospitable experience for the guest or patron.

From an artist's perspective, this study showcases that those who attend concerts are still eager to purchase merchandise and there is a great interest in what is sold. An artist could use the outcomes of this study to determine what types of items to sell and further decide on the level of exclusivity for said items.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is a great potential for future research regarding the fan experience and concert merchandise. A comprehensive historical background regarding the history of concert merchandise would be pertinent to future studies within this field. Current available research generally focuses on a particular artist's career or a particular company's history. Other research focuses on a specific kind of festival or concert. Future research connecting historical band t-shirts to modern day merchandise would benefit the field as there could be a baseline of knowledge to work upon, as merchandise is a highly influential sector of the music industry yet there is little scholarly research in this field.

Continued studies into concerts would benefit the field. Though there are extensive amounts of research dedicated to genres such as K-pop and entire sub-disciplines for festival studies, it would be pertinent to study the individual concert and more of the intricacies in planning, design, and production. Though many other disciplines of study can be applied to the individual concert, specialized research can provide a deeper look into this sector of the music industry.

One final area of suggested future research could be the continued connection of queue theory and queue psychology to waiting for concert merchandise. Studies measuring the length of time someone actually spends in line for concert merchandise would be pertinent in knowing

how to improve this field for the future. Future research might explore the true average wait time for merchandise across the concert industry. A renewed exploration into this topic could provide the industry a baseline of improvement, and a chance to improve the guest experience.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a common experience waiting in line for merchandise at concerts. It was found that participants did not have a singular universal experience waiting in line, merchandise was acquired for memorabilia purposes, and unruly fan behavior is of concern to some participants.

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Appendix A

1. Consent for Participation in Research Interview
2. Consent for Recording

Title of Study:

“Fine Lines”: Common Experiences in Concert Merchandise Queues

Investigator:

Emma L. Smith - ESmith16@Wildcats.Jwu.Edu

Thesis Advisor:

Julie Viscardi-Smalley - Julie.ViscardiSmalley@Jwu.Edu

Honors Program Director:

Dr. Wendy Wagner - Wendy.Wagner@jwu.edu

You are being asked to [participate in a research study about Concert Merchandise and queues. Please read this form. You may request that this form be read to you. The purpose of this form is to provide you information about this research study and if you choose to participate, your choice will be documented. You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study now, during, or after this project is complete. You can take as much time as you need to determine whether or not you want to participate. Your participation is voluntary; however, you may withdraw at any time.

The purpose of this study is to determine if concert attendees who purchase merchandise share any common experiences while waiting in line for said merchandise. This research will ultimately be used to fulfill the thesis requirement for the Johnson & Wales University Honors program. Due to the specific nature of the study, participants will be selected by their interest and past experience relating to concerts and musical artists.

If you agree to this study, you will be asked to participate in one 20 minute interview where you will be asked about your experience with concert merchandise and waiting in line. There are no know risks or benefits in your participation in this study.

This study will be kept anonymous. We will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity. The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. All audio or visual recordings will be only accessible by the researcher for this study and will be erased upon completion of transcription.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse to take part at any time without affecting your relationship with the investigator or Johnson & Wales University. You have the right to decline answers to any question and you have the right to request your data not be used. You may decline to answer for any reason. If you choose to not participate there is no penalty.

If you decide that you no longer want to participate within this study, you can withdraw at any time for any reason. If you are not satisfied with the way in which this study was conducted or you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, you may convey your concerns to the chair of the JWU IRB at institutionalreviewboard@jwu.edu or 401-598-1467.

You will receive an electronic copy of this consent form.

Would you like a summary of the results of this study sent to you?

Yes ___ No ___

Participant's Statement

I understand the above description of this research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I agree to take part in the research and do so voluntarily. My signature below indicates:

- I understand the information;
- I consent to participate in this study;
- I am 18 years of age or older.

You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the study investigators.

Participant Signature

Date

Printed Name

Researcher's Statement

The participant named above had sufficient time to consider the information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

 Principle Investigator Signature

 Date

 Printed Name
Consent to Recording

The study involves the audio recording/video recording of the interviews. Neither the name nor other identifying information about the participant will be associated with the recordings or with the transcript. Only the researcher will listen to or view the recordings.

The recordings will be transcribed by the researcher. Once the transcription is checked for accuracy, the recordings will be erased or destroyed. Interview transcripts may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written documents that result from the study; however, neither the name or any other identifying information (such as voice or picture) of the participant will be used in such presentations or documents. Further, immediately following the interview, the participant will be given the opportunity to have the recordings destroyed, either in whole or in part.

 Please check one of each of these pairs of options.

Recording the Interview

- I consent to having my interview recorded.
 I do not consent to having my interview recorded.

Transcription of Interview

- I consent to having my recorded interview transcribed into written form.
 I do not consent to having my recorded interview transcribed into written form.

Use of Transcriptions

I consent to the use of the written transcription of my interview in presentations and written documents resulting from the study, provided that neither my name nor other identifying information will be associated with the transcript.

_____ I do not consent to the use of the written transcription of my interview in presentations or written documents resulting from the study.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

I hereby agree to abide by the participant's instructions as indicated above.

Signature of Principal Investigator _____ Date _____

Appendix B

Interview Protocol & Questions - Queue Lines & Merchandise

Thank you for your participation in this study! I am conducting this research for my Honors Thesis to complete the Honors Program requirements at Johnson & Wales University. My thesis advisor is Dr. Julie Viscardi-Smalley and the Honors program director is Dr. Wendy Wagner. This study is being conducted to investigate the experiences of fans waiting in line for concert merchandise.

This interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may cease participation at any time until this study is published. This interview will be recorded, and responses will be kept anonymous.

All identifying information will be kept private within a password secured file for a period of one year. Data will be presented in a thesis-style study and become available in an academic library and other databases. All responses will be analyzed for emergent themes in relation to common experiences in queueing for concert merchandise.

There are no identifiable risks in participation in this study. To ensure that your responses have been presented accurately, a draft version of your portion of the study will be sent to you for any suggestions or edits.

I will provide you a document with contact information for the Institutional Review Board at Johnson & Wales University as well as all advisory parties.

Thank you and let's begin!

General Questions:

1. To what extent do you consider yourself a fan of live music?
2. Do you mostly attend concerts of the same genre or multiple?
3. Are most of the concerts you attend arena shows? In Concert halls?

Merchandise:

4. Do you commonly buy merchandise at concerts?
5. Do you collect merchandise of a specific artist?
6. Do you buy music merchandise outside of the concert environment?
7. Which form of merchandise buying do you prefer, in or out of venue? And why?
8. What price range/limit do you have for purchasing merchandise?

Queues:

9. Can you walk me through your most recent experience of purchasing merchandise at a concert?
10. What is the longest you have waited for merchandise?

11. How long are you willing to wait to buy merchandise?
 12. Are there any noticeable benefits to waiting in line?
 13. What are the drawbacks that you have noticed while waiting in line?
 14. Do you think that waiting in line for merchandise is part of the concert experience, or would you rather avoid it entirely?
 15. Would you rather order ahead or mobile order merchandise to avoid standing in line?
-
16. Is there anything else you would be interested in telling me?

Demographics:

Age

Gender to which you identify

Ethnicity

Appendix C

Initial Recruitment Email Text

Hello (Participant name),

My name is Emma L. Smith, I am a student at Johnson & Wales University (Providence, RI) conducting research to complete my Honors Thesis. I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview regarding common experiences among concert attendees in regards to waiting for concert merchandise. The results of this interview will be used in my thesis and participating in this interview is voluntary and you may stop answering questions at any time.

The interview will take around 20 minutes to complete and all results will remain anonymous. If you have any questions you can contact me directly, or my thesis advisor Julie Viscardi-Smalley Julie.ViscardiSmalley@jwu.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant you may also contact the chair of the Johnson & Wales University IRB Office at institutionalreviewboard@jwu.edu or 401-598-1467.

If you agree to participate in this interview, please reply to this email so we can arrange a time to conduct your interview.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,
Emma L. Smith
ESmith16@Wildcats.Jwu.Edu

Follow Up Email Text For Respondents

Hello (Participant Name),

Thank you very much for wanting to participate. I look forward to speaking with you. My schedule is fairly flexible so please let me know what times would work for you to meet for an interview. I will send you over the IRB paperwork so you can fill it out prior to our meeting.

I am definitely looking to hear about all of your experiences with buying concert merchandise and any unique experiences you think I should know about. I am basing much of my study on theories set up around queue psychology, which is essentially the psychology of waiting in line.

I hope that gives you a bit more information and I am excited to meet with you.

Thank you!

Emma

