UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE OF ATTENDING A MODERN MUSIC CONCERT

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This research aims to uncover valuable insights that can be used in the development of innovative products, services or systems, after deeply understanding the experience of the modern music concert attendees, concretely in small-medium indoor venues. Although the overarching goal is to improve the concert experience, the main objective for this research is to focus on exploring the most profound aspects of the experience, usually hidden, which lead to the detection of deep and significant user needs.

A qualitative research which applies a *hermeneutical phenomenological* approach is the method used to achieve the expected goal. Different steps, such as immersing myself into the experience or exploring other’s feelings and impressions through intense non-structured interviews, help me to collect all the data required for a proper research. The *SEEing method* is a systematic process useful to analyse the qualitative raw material, acquiring an advantageous understanding of the deeper meaning layers of the lived experience.

As an output of this research process, a clear picture of the experience of attending a modern music concert in small-medium venues appears. A simple read to the seven category stories that sharply define the experience, is enough for a non-expert in the field to plainly understand the experience insights. Moreover, these experience insights are used in the development of numerous questions that immediately lead to plenty of innovative design and business opportunities for engineers, designers and Music Industry stakeholders.

Finally, another outcome of this work is the revelation of five innovative ideas and concepts, which are presented as a way to illustrate how to use this valuably gained information, showing the right procedure to move from qualitative research to design.
This Master’s Thesis has been a long way journey, which has required a lot of my time and effort. However, it could not have been possible to achieve my goals without the help of innumerable people that has been there during the journey.

First of all, I want to thank the Experience-based Designing Centre for giving me the opportunity of writing my Master’s Thesis with them. Both Gloria Gómez and Ian Coxon, my supervisor and co-supervisor respectively, have been really helpful during the whole process, not only teaching me everything I know about experience-based designing, but also guiding me through all the process, even when I seemed to be completely lost. When defining my research proposal, I felt a little bit scared, thinking that maybe my background wasn’t the right one for this kind of thesis and that I wasn’t prepared enough. However, they were very understanding and tried to explain me why it could be interesting to add this knowledge to my technical background. I trusted them and, having already finished, I must say that I am very thankful because I see how right they were. I am glad that I have been able to write this thesis with the support of this innovative research group.

Secondly, I want to thank all the 6 participants –Rubén, Arnau, G.Bagaria, Carles, Javier and Guillem– who offered me part of their spare time, allowing me to have profound conversations about their deep thoughts and impressions of their concert experiences. This research would have been meaningless without them. Also, I would like to thank all the countless people that have been talking with me about live music, during informal conversations in pubs, parties or at the concerts. Although they weren’t formally interviewed, they helped me a lot on shaping the whole research focus and understanding. Many thanks to Rubén Navarro too, for allowing me to project his professional concert pictures as a background for my oral presentation.

Third, many thanks to all my friends who have supported me along these months abroad, especially to my good friends Jaume and Jordi, who offered me a place for sleeping during my stays in Copenhagen when attending concerts, to Alba for our hard times spent at the library, and to Jordi S. for attending a concert with me and for being such a good company. Very special thanks to Tamara, for believing in me and always being there willing to help.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for all their continuous support during my studies, helping me on developing my skills and my career without barriers, with special mention to my sister and her partner, who are excellent professional designers and always a big source of inspiration.
Before start reading the present research document, it is important for the readers to have a clear guideline on how to properly read it. Therefore, in this section the structure of this paper is shown, in order to help the readers on creating a simple picture of the whole document which allows them to go directly to see what they are searching for. The following figure shows the elementary structure of this research:

![Diagram of research document structure]

**Figure 1: elementary structure of the research document**

If you (the reader) are not able to read the whole document now or you are searching for something specific, this guide might be useful. If you desire to:

- understand why this research has been done and why it is relevant, you should read the *introduction* and *literature review* chapters.
- learn the importance of the human factor and see how the data has been collected, you should go directly to the *data gathering* section.
- understand the methodology used in this research in order to analyze all the data, you should read the *data analysis* sections.
- understand the experience insights, you should go straight to the *summary of results and key findings* section and read the narrative stories. *(a must read)*
- find new design opportunities related to the concert experience, you should go to the *key findings* section. *(a must read)*
- see the design concepts and ideas that appeared behind the research, and read the analysis of the results, you should go to the *move from research to design* and *conclusions* chapters.

Nevertheless, it is preferable that the reader follows one by one all the research document steps, in order to correctly understand the insights of this work.
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INTRODUCTION

Before start reading this document, you (the reader) should make the effort to imagine yourself in the situation of attending a modern music concert.

One day, you read in a music blog that one of your favorite bands is going to make a gig in your town. Then, you quickly surf the website-service that will let you buy the tickets and, in a few minutes, you have been able to pay through the credit-card payment system and got your ticket printed using a printer in your own house. Then, there is a period of time when you are constantly dreaming about the day of the concert. You surf the online video storage services—like YouTube and Vimeo—in the search of music videos of the band, trying to see them playing in their previous concerts in other cities, which helps you feeding your imaginations.

Finally, the day has arrived. In the afternoon, you take your car and drive to the venue. It’s very difficult to find an empty place for your car, and you end up parking it quite far from the venue. After walking back to the venue for 15 minutes, you see the long queue of people standing in front of the door and you join them. When you finally get inside, the concert is about to start. You feel tired and a little bit upset: there’s not a better system for this? Then you use your smart phone to contact with your friends via Whatsapp service and you meet them. When musicians appear and start playing, there are a lot of elements that create an amazing atmosphere, such as smoke, lighting and sound systems, among many others. You are feeling so happy that you decide to take some pictures of you and your friends with your phone camera, and you instantly share them through your Facebook and Twitter profile. Later, while drinking a beer in a plastic cup, some people around you are constantly talking and they disturb you a bit. You wish you could have something that allowed you to make them to shut up, because you really want to listen to the musicians. The show reaches to its end and, after more than 90 minutes standing, your back really hurts and you feel very tired. When you leave the venue, you are very happy with the experience but you have to sit down in a bench just to rest a little before driving home, while you eat a small sandwich that you have just bought in a vending machine near the entrance of the venue.

The day after, while reading about the concert in a newspaper’s app in your phone, you can feel your deteriorated ears—you forgot to bring some ear plugs—, but still you keep very positive memories of the concert. You put the concert ticket in a little wooden box where you usually store them, and you create a Spotify playlist with the setlist of the concert, which might help you reviving the concert in the future.
As it is easily seen and exemplified in the previous little story, there are plenty of different products, systems and services surrounding the experience of attending a modern music concert, which definitely shape and enhance that experience. Guitars and amplifiers, lightning systems, smart phones, or bar services are just a few examples of products, systems and services somehow related to the concert experience.

5.1 THE OBJECTIVE FOR THIS RESEARCH

The main objective for this research is to deeply understand the experience of attending a modern music\(^1\) concert taking place in a small-medium venue\(^2\), using it as a foundation for innovative product, service or system developments that enhance the concert experience.

A qualitative research methodology and the use of experience-based designing (XbD) methods lead to a profound understanding of the people who attend concerts of this type. The project trajectory means moving from research to design.

5.2 RELEVANCE

The Music Industry is experiencing fast and relevant changes in the last years. Thanks to Internet and fast communications, people are usually no longer buying Compact Discs, but sharing or downloading music from the web (Leth Hougaard & Mich Tvede, 2009). The decrease in sales and the technological advances are leading to new ways of understanding the Music Industry: a couple of applications—such as iTunes or Spotify—are now allowing the user to listen for free, buy or download legally the music of his/her favorite bands. There are also musicians and bands who are giving their music albums for free download at their websites, spreading their music around the net, and after that they are touring worldwide to play live concerts. Therefore, live concerts are becoming one of the most important income sources to the Music Industry (Fabian Holt, 2010). As Jonas Bjerre (lead singer and guitarist of Danish rock-trio Mew) said to thelineofbestfits magazine in 2010:

"The record sales dropping at an exponential rate, newer generations just don’t spend their money on compact discs, the vast majority opt for

\(^1\) Modern music genres like Rock and its derivatives, pop, blues or jazz.

\(^2\) From small pubs with 30-40 spectators to middle-sized venues with a maximum capacity of 1500 standing people.
Understanding the experience of attending a modern music concert

downloading illegally. Thankfully, the live scene is doing well, and there’s still some revenue in merchandise and touring.”

A number of bands—especially small bands—are now using the Internet to share their music worldwide, which allows them to be known very far from his home country.

“The Danish music industry has gone from being a very strong domestic market in the glory days of CD sales, where the love of local music made it a great business to release Danish CDs in Denmark, to the digital era that has necessitated international touring and activities”, Christian Buhl said to thelineofbestfits magazine in 2010.

Small bands are now able to tour internationally to play small concerts in different parts of the globe, being sure that there will be enough people who listen to them in every country to make the tour profitable. Therefore, the importance of live concerts is now bigger than ever before (Holt, 2010) and that’s why the development of new products, services or systems in that area—or the improvement of the ones existing nowadays—may be very useful to the whole Music Industry and to the musicians specially.

5.3 CONTRIBUTIONS

One of the contributions of this thesis would be on the –Danish³– Music Industry (which includes not only major labels but mostly small and independent labels, musicians, venues and promoters), helping them to improve their musical events and with that, improving the attendees’ positive experiences. Jonas Bjerre, talking about the thriving Danish music scene, says:

“The majors are not doing well, but then this is a worldwide issue. Lots of smaller labels are doing good things with the small means they have.”

So, not only worldwide, but also in Denmark—especially in Copenhagen—small indie record labels and management agencies—like Good Tape Records— are promoting a lot of new young bands, which play live concerts in underground and small venues, such as Bakken, KB18, V1 Gallery or Trailerpark, to name a few.

Both the importance of these small concerts for the new music scene and the economic limitations for this research, are the reasons that make me

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³ This research takes place in Denmark and it is focused on concerts that take place in Denmark (not necessarily performed by Danish musicians or bands). Then, one of the main beneficiaries of these thesis’ results should be the Danish Music Industry (especially small promoters, musicians, producers and other stakeholders), but the results can also be exported to anywhere in the world.
focusing on small-medium venues and gigs. Then, the results of this thesis should be used to improve this kind of concerts; even though in some cases they shall also be exported to improve the ‘big concert’ experience—such like those in big stadiums or festivals performed by superstars—, this is not the aim of this research.

However, the key contribution of this thesis is the fact that, after reading the document, product designers and engineers of any kind might find countless innovative design and business opportunities in the concert area. Also, the research contributes on helping other product designers and engineers to understand the importance of human-centered design, especially experience-based designing. Moreover, it is crucial to understand that a product or system will be well rated by the user, when his/her own feelings and experiences are good and positive. That means that focusing on researching and understanding what a user experiences in front of a product (or event), turns at the end in designing better products (or events). A user experience perspective brings additional value when designing new products (Buxton, 2007).

5.4 INSPIRATION AND INTERESTS

As an industrial engineering student, I have a very wide and technical background: Mathematics, physics, chemistry, materials, mechanics, electronics, technical drawing and a long, long etcetera. Also, as a product and system design engineer, I have learnt to understand design as a Project: from the very first phase of conceptual design and creation of ideas, to the actual development and manufacturing of the products, always bearing in mind the economical, ecological and technological factors that need to be achieved in every project along the whole product lifecycle.

During 15 months I have been doing an internship at the Roca Design Center, where all Roca 4 products are developed. This has been a very valuable experience for me, allowing me to follow the whole design process as I had learnt at school: from first ideas and sketches in a blackboard, to the final product that can be purchased in stores, and all the hard work in between. Working there along with truly good professionals in the field of engineering and design has allowed me to learn a lot and become a highly skilled CAD technician, also improving my technical drawing skills. However, as bathroom products are strongly related to user experience, I could sense that there was something more than just good design and good engineering. I thought that probably what finally gives value to the product is something that can’t be easily measured. Even when the product is beautiful, the shape and the materials are appropriated and

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4 Roca is the leading global bathroom brand, founded and based in Barcelona.
the final quality is good, there might be something deeper that makes a product truly valuable: the experience that the user has beyond the product. Theoretically, consumer's satisfaction and technical aspects (e.g., functionality, ergonomic and comfort) are equally important in determining the success of product design (Akao, 1990; Norman, 2004; Green & Srinivasan, 1990; Nagamachi, 1992). Hence, producers strive to understand the factors that contribute to consumer's satisfaction in their product (Mohd L. 2010).

I realized that, if I want to become a good product design engineer, the one that companies are looking for and the one who is able to understand what users really need, I must add the user experience and experience design knowledge and skills to my background. As Bill Buxton (2009) says:

“End-user satisfaction and quality of experience need to be the fundamental pillars of any worthy company’s value system.”

Then, I thought that doing my Master's Thesis in this field would for sure give a high value to my career: we all need to be able to handle multiple directions (Buxton 2009). And even more when experience-based designing is a quite new discipline, which is not easy to study in my home university and country yet. Therefore, I am glad to be able to study and learn about Experience-based Designing in Denmark.

At this point, I must say that I am music passionate. I have been listening to music since I can remember. I played piano during some years when I was just a kid and I started playing guitar and drums in my adolescence, until nowadays, playing in different bands. I enjoy music, but I enjoy live music most of all. I think that live concerts are one of the best sensorial experiences that music can create. I am constantly attending concerts, travelling in the search of the best music festivals and events. Moreover, I have promoted two concerts in Barcelona, one from a Swedish band (Immanu El) and another one from an English band (Tubelord) during their European tour. I am living very close to the music world and music is part of my life.

Also, I am interested in how the Music Industry is quickly changing during the last decade and I would really like to be part of this constant development. I believe that experience-based designing can be very useful in the Music Industry, especially when creating and designing live concerts and experiences, through the products, services and systems that are beyond these experiences.

I hope that doing this Master's Thesis helps me in the future to open to new design and engineering directions, acting as a gate to new career possibilities, hopefully in the field of live concerts and experience design.
The purpose of this chapter is to give a brief overview of the relevant research streams concerning two different aspects related to the topic:

- The current drivers of change within the Music Industry that will affect future concerts.
- Experience-based Designing - the methodology and methods needed to conduct good experience research.

The Figure 2 reflects different aspects that may be relevant to the main topic: the experience of attending a music concert in small-medium sized venues.

**Figure 2. Different aspects that may be relevant to the main topic**

6.1 THE CHANGE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

The Music Industry has been changing dramatically during the last few years. The digitalization of music has had a profound impact on the industry, and the structure of the market is changing from CD sales in physical stores to Web-based music stores like iTunes Store (selling more than 3 billion downloads since it was launched in 2003) or online music libraries like Spotify (Leth Hougaard & Mich Tvede, 2009). Music is easily shared, legally or illegally, through the internet, so it is very common that you listen to a lot of bands, which you really
like, but you don’t feel like paying for a CD. "Liking bears no relation to buying the CD", argues Arthur Schock (2010), a booker for independent electronic artists, in an interview for Spiegel-Online; “Today the music itself matters, not ownership”.

Concerts are now the main source of income for many artists and their managers, and live music has a new cultural location in the era of networked digital media. Live experience and particularly live music have gained cultural value in contemporary culture (Holt, 2010).

Therefore, a new economic model is rising in Music Industry, and live concerts are now in the center of this economic model (Holt, 2010). While the number of concerts is still rising, record sales dropped considerably from 2000 and onwards. For example, Madonna's Confessions on a Dancefloor sold only 1.6 million copies, but her world tour generated about 200 million dollars (Hassenzahl, 2011).

In this new era, artists consider recordings less a revenue stream than a publicity tool for touring (Fabian Holt, 2010), so the main source of income for artists is generally concerts rather than recordings (Connolly & Krueger, 2005). Concerts are being priced more as single-market monopoly products rather than as complementary to recordings (Connolly & Krueger, 2005) and concerts have become a driving force in selling other products.

6.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF SMALL BANDS AND VENUES

As Rasmus Stolberg (Efterklang’s manager) said to thelineofbestfits magazine in 2010: “five years ago I often had troubles naming Danish bands I liked. These days it’s like a new great Danish band pops up every month or so”. So, not only these Danish bands but also international bands are touring Denmark every year, playing live concerts across the country. Only in April, there have been at
least 240 different music concerts programmed in Denmark in different venues (at least 45% of them took place in Copenhagen) (last.fm, 2013).

Also, in Denmark there are some worldwide known music festivals, such as Roskilde Festival—one of the biggest culture and music festivals in Europe with more than 120,000 visitors—Skanderborg Festival, Copenhagen Jazz Festival, Distortion, Strøm Festival, Spot Festival and Northside Festival, among many others (The Official Website of Denmark, 2013).

Therefore, although internationally renowned and famous musicians and bands are playing in big stadiums or venues in Denmark—during all seasons—and in huge festivals—mostly during the summer—the new small labels and bands, which are mostly playing in small venues, are the ones that are making the new Danish scene so active and thriving. And that is thanks to the internet and new communications: thanks to the change in Music Industry. Although a lot of money is still made in a traditional way by top artists and big record labels in the global mass market, avantgarde consumer tastes have turned toward small events, clubs, independent labels, local scenes, and Internet communities that often serve as important stakeholders in both the global and local music markets (Florida et al. 2010; Mattsson, Sundbo, and Fussing Jensen 2005; Scharenberg 2005; Leyshon, Webb, French, and Thrift 2005).

This is not only a Danish issue, but worldwide. Today, small bands can record their music in independent labels at a reasonable cost, and share it with the world through internet, freely or not, there are multiple ways (Bastian Lange & Hans-Joachim Bürkner 2012). For example, a post-rock artist from Iceland—e.g. Ólafur Arnalds—can record an album and, instead of trying to sell it physically around the world, which could be difficult and expensive, he chooses to share it for free download from his website. This allows people from around the globe to listen to and to enjoy his music for free. This amount of people listening to his music from different parts of the globe permits Ólafur Arnalds to perform a worldwide tour, including most of European Countries and the United States, among others, even when he is from the isolated Iceland, and playing concerts that rarely will reach the 800 hundred attendees (Ólafur Arnalds Official Website, 2013).

Then, small labels and artists in Denmark (and worldwide) are winning importance in this new model of Music Industry, promoting new bands and their small live concerts. Today, it is possible for a small band\(^5\) to tour worldwide playing small concerts\(^6\) and doing it profitable (Lange & Bürkner 2012).

"If we can all now make, distribute and sell music, to succeed we've got to differentiate ourselves from the crowd and give people something they can't get

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\(^5\) by small band I mean that they have a minor and select audience.

\(^6\) by small concerts I mean concerts with a minor and select audience.
elsewhere. If we can give people something that isn’t repeatable and isn’t copyable then all the better. So, what’s unique and not copyable? A feeling, or an experience”, Rich Huxley (2010) said to Creative Deconstruction. Instead of complaining about declining CD sales, the Music Industry must develop new, more experiential formats (Hassenzahl, 2011).

Internet is just the mean for small bands to get to know to the world, and then try to play their music live, out there, around the globe. That’s why small venues—where small bands usually play—are one of the main components of this new Music Industry era that is still developing (Lange & Bürkner 2012).

For instance, during the summer of 2013, at least 13 bands are playing in Lille Vega, a small venue in Copenhagen with a maximum capacity of 500 attendees, and only 2 of these bands are Danish, which means that the rest are coming to play from outside Denmark, mostly from the US and UK, but also from Belgium, Sweden and other countries (Vega venue official site, 2013).

**SMALL VENUES**

In short, a small venue is a locale where live modern music indoor concerts take place. Normally they house a stage for the musicians to play, which may be slightly elevated over the ground, a dance floor where the audience will be standing—sometimes seated, if there are seats—and other areas such as bathrooms, bars or recreation areas, among others. As it has previously been said, this research is only focused in small and medium sized venues, which means venues that can hold a maximum audience of 1500 standing people. Sometimes, these small venues can be improvised in shops, warehouses or other places, with stages on the floor and other particularities.

6.3 EXPERIENCE-BASED DESIGNING

It appears that industry in general—and especially the Music Industry—is moving from a materialistic to a post-materialistic (i.e. experiential) world (Hassenzahl, 2011). There is a missing willingness to pay for music in the form of a tangible product which may be a consequence of shifting from a materialistic to an experiential orientation (Hassenzahl, 2011). In fact, studies show that experiential purchases (i.e., the acquisition of an event, such as a concert) make people happier than material purchases (i.e., the acquisition of tangible objects, such as compact discs or stereo equipment) of the same value (Van Boven & Gilovich 2003; Carter & Gilovich 2010). And here is when Experience-based Designing becomes interesting. As seen in figure 4 below, EbD has a direct relation to most of design disciplines:
Formally defined, Experience-based Designing is a user-focused design process with the goal of making user experience accessible to the designers, to allow them to conceive of designing experiences rather than designing products, systems, processes, or services (Paul Bate 2007). The nature of the challenge is to understand the users’ experience at a deep level, always bearing in mind that it includes all aspects of subjectively experiencing a product or service, physical, sensual, cognitive, emotional, kinetic, and aesthetic, and to use this understanding to design a set of experiences –i.e. products, services or systems which enhance and shape that experience– that will be more successful and fulfilling for the users than it has been before (Bate 2007).

But it is not easy to understand others’ experiences. An experience is subjective, holistic, situated, dynamic, and worthwhile (Hassenzahl 2011). It is a highly subjective and unique event belonging only to that person and therefore it can only be viewed and truly understood through that person (Wright, McCarthy & Meekison, 2003). Experience is designated as how well people understand the product or service, how they feel about it while they are using it, how well it serves its purpose, and how well it fits into the context in which they are using it (Alben, 1996). Some authors describe this phenomenon with the Japanese term Kansei: Kansei is used to express one’s impression towards an artifact, situation and surroundings (Mohd L. 2010). Having various interpretations by different literature, Kansei is generally referred to sensitivity, sensibility, feeling and emotion, i.e. the “psychological feeling” people have with a product, situations or
surroundings (Nagamachi, 1992; Ishihara et al., 1993; Harada, 1998; Yoshikawa, 2000). Then, understanding experience is a critical issue for designers (Forlizzi & Battarbee, 2004). We—designers—can’t assume that everyone is just like us, but at the same time we can’t assume that everyone is so different from ourselves. People from different cultures and environments, with different world-views and lifestyles, are similar to us in many ways that can provide us with important insights (Fulton Suri, 2005). Yes, people do, say, think and feel different things and in different contexts. However, we can make sense of this and design appropriately if we use our ability to learn about, and identify with, their experience. This means that we can understand what other people are experiencing by trying to get close to them. Quoting Fulton Suri (2005):

“It seems to me that the most effective way to ensure that human-centered principles are embodied in design is for design teams to discover the significant issues for themselves, rather than just be told about them. Through observation, we become informed, and through empathy, the human connection, we are inspired to imagine new and better possibilities for people.”

Ranging from the more objective to more subjective, here are three useful ways to do this:

- Looking at what people really do, either in their current natural context or with prototypes we expose to them.
- Asking people to participate, either by making records of their behavior and context, or expressions of their thoughts and feelings.
- Trying things ourselves, to gain personal insights into the kinds of experience others may have.

This is, using empathy to understand other people better. Then, this kind of design is about using our understanding to inform and inspire the creation of more useful and enjoyable things for people we may never meet (F. Suri, 2005), which create a positive experience on the user. Once created, the experience is what is owned – an immaterial, personal story. The product is only of interest as it is identified as being crucial in creating the experience (Hassenzahl et al 2010).

Experiences are no longer supposed to be available at exotic places only. They can be close by: a day out in the sun, working the garden, a barbecue with friends, a trip to the local flea market, or a music concert (Hassenzahl 2011). As said by Forlizzi and Ford (2000) “We can’t really design an experience, only the mechanisms for creating it, and the interactive and expressive behaviors that modulate experience”. Travel requires transportation, dining requires a good kitchen, and a concert requires instruments and amplification. Things are not the opposite of experiences, but create and substantially shape them (van Boven, 2003).
A FOCUS ON THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

During this chapter, the overall research approach and the collection of data are explained, as well as the data analysis. The choice of which approach to use in the research has been inspired by reviewing both related literature and other research projects in the field, but mostly it has been influenced by using the Taxonomy of Experience (ToE), which has guided the data gathering and this particular focus on human experiences (Coxon, 2008).

OVERALL RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative research is a method of inquiry employed to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern that behaviour (Web Center for Social Research Methods, 2006). Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009).

Concretely, I use a hermeneutical phenomenological approach, which makes me focus on people’s subjective experiences and interpretations of the concerts. Hermeneutics is the art of understanding and the theory of interpretation. Phenomenology is a school of thought that emphasizes a focus on people’s subjective experiences and interpretations of the world. That is, the phenomenologist wants to understand how the world appears to others (Web Center for Social Research Methods, 2006).

Also, the phenomenologist uses the most common ethnographic approach, which is participant observation as a part of the field research. Then, the researcher becomes immersed in the culture as an active participant and records extensive field notes (Web Center for Social Research Methods, 2006). That means that I have “got into the field” to observe and understand the phenomenon in its natural states, observing carefully the participants and taking notes.

It is crucial to understand that people, and in this case concert attendees, are the true experts and owners of their own experiences. Therefore, it has been necessary not to apply a set of standard research methodologies, but to empathetically listen to people’s stories, focus on their experience and on the human aspect, embracing a more flexible research structure.

PLANNING THE RESEARCH

As it has been previously said, it is not easy to understand other’s experiences. As the core of this qualitative research, and with the clear objective of
understanding other’s experiences when attending concerts in small/medium venues, I have followed the next research steps to collect and analyze the data:

- **Immersion**: or embodiments, in order to get into the field and experience it myself, gaining an important knowledge and trying to create a deeper understanding of the actual experience (Brandt, 2004). I have also used the embodiments to observe others and take several notes.

- **Exploration**: non-structured interviews with concert attendees, to be able to know about people’s subjective experiences and interpretations of the concerts.

- **Understanding**: The ToE and the SEEing methods have helped me to deeply understand the experience and to change my perspective of the concerts, watching them as a researcher, gaining insight and a deeper understanding of the ordinary aspects of the experience.

At the end of the research process there is the **Sharing** step, which consists in presenting the summary of results, i.e. the most important findings from the data analysis. It is the final output of this research, and it is presented in the form of both this document and an oral presentation of the work.

Initially, the research was temporally planned as seen in Fig. 5 below, with the expected length of each phase of the process:

![Figure 5. Research initial planning](image)

It is important to comment the diverse limitations that I have faced during this research. On one hand, there has been a timing limitation. As I only came to Denmark for a certain period of time, I needed to be able to have all the work finished for the first week in August. This limitation has affected directly on the quantity of data that has been collected. On the other hand, there has been an economic limitation which hasn’t allowed me to attend a high amount of concerts, due to high ticket prices and transports. It seems obvious that the more immersion and exploration, the more accurate the results. However, according to the existing limitations, I have developed the most reliable research possible.

It is also interesting to note that, before starting this research, I already had a relevant background and experience within the live concerts area. I have attended hundreds of music concerts in small venues during the last years, and this experience is quite remarkable when trying to become a researcher in the field, because the experience was not completely new for me. It is not the same to start researching about other’s experiences in an area that you have never
experienced before –like, for example, sexuality in disabled people– than doing it in a field which you are familiarized with, what might seem a little bit easier. Nevertheless, this background can’t be directly used in this research, because when you are doing an immersion as a researcher, your experience is much more profound and you have many more different things into account (Coxon 2007).

In the following figure it is possible to see a diagram of the planned process for this research:

![Diagram of the simplified planned process for this research]

7.2 TAXONOMY OF EXPERIENCE

Taxonomy of Experience (ToE) is an approach for guiding the collection, processing and categorization of meaningful data from the field about everyday experiences. It is particularly useful for building an understanding of the everyday and helps designers and researchers to structure and see the valuable aspects of an experience. "Information gathered about an experience might be usefully explored if structured in the form of a taxonomy" (Coxon, 2008).
The Taxonomy of Experience model has been used to guide a deeper and more elaborate understanding of what elements an experience consists of, more specifically in the somatic, affective, cognitive and contextual experience categories. Figure 7 depicts the framework for understanding an experience with considerations to temporality, spatiality, relationality and corporeality (Coxon, 2007).

Figure 7. Framework of an experience.

As seen in the picture, there are different aspects that affect an experiential event:

- **SENSORY** - somatic experience
  - Sensorial (Sight, Touch, Smell, Taste, Sound)
  - Aesthetic (beauty, softness, intensity, nature)
  - Ergonomic (Comfort, fit, relaxing)

- **AFFECTIVE** - emotional experience
  - Positively valenced emotions 1 – 7
  - Negatively valenced emotions 7 – 1

- **COGNITIVE** - conscious experience
  - Connation – reflective experience (doing)
  - Cognition – reflexive experience (thinking)

- **CONTEXTUAL** – existential experience
  - Space (spatiality)
  - Time (temporality)
  - Body (corporeality)
  - Relationship to others (relationality)

- Meta-contextual factors: Environmental, Social, Legal and Regulatory, Corporate, Economic, Political, Technological...

Keeping the ToE structure in mind during the different research steps has been very useful. After knowing what elements an experience consists of, it has been easier to guide the conversations, to undertake the embodiments and to observe everything, with the certainty that no important aspect was missing. The ToE has been an especially helpful tool for me because, as an engineer, I am not trained on researching other’s experiences.
7.3
IMMERSION

The embodiments are about immersing myself in the experience of attending a modern music concert in small venues. The idea of the embodiments is to gain a valuable knowledge which helps to establish a common understanding when doing the interviews with the participants, by forming an empathic bond, enabling me to have deeper conversations with them. Immersion has allowed me (as a researcher) to explore the phenomenon from the inside.

“To be really useful to design, observation is not enough. We cannot observe people’s thoughts and feelings - their motivations, emotions, mental models, values, priorities, preferences and inner conflicts. Yet these subjective phenomena are so important for designers to grasp, for it is these that make up peoples experience” (Fulton Suri 2005)

I have attended 3 music concerts in small venues during the immersion stage, all of them in different conditions, venues, music styles and environment, with the purpose of experiencing the widest variety of concerts according to the existing limitations. In every embodiment I took some pictures and notes using my mobile phone, which allowed me to write extensive and detailed essays explaining all the insights of my experiences, my thoughts, my observations, feelings and sensations. Therefore, these embodiments have been twice interesting: while on one hand they have allowed me to better understand the participants during later conversations, on the other hand I have been able to collect a lot of valuable data from the essays, which has been used for the analysis. A brief explanation of each embodiment particularities, as well as some pictures and fragments of data extracted from the essays can be found in the next paragraphs.

EMBODIMENT 1

The first concert I attended was in Copenhagen and the band who played was la iaia, a Catalan band. They are quite well known in Catalonia, but rarely listened in Denmark, because they sing in Catalan. The concert was at the Danish Film Institute, where there was a Catalan Movie Festival during those days, and they took advantage of it to play a concert. Then, the concert was not in a real stage, but musicians were playing on the floor of one of the cinema halls and in front of less than 150 people. This concert was very interesting for my research, as it was a quite different experience than usual concerts in other venues, and also because I had the chance to see a concert where some people didn’t even understood what the musicians were singing, because of the language. Another particularity of this concert is that I went there with some friends of mine.
One week after, I attended a concert of a Swedish band, **pg.lost**, with two supporting bands. Again, the concert took place in Copenhagen, but this time it was in a very *underground* venue, KB18 with no more than 100 attendees. In addition to the particularities of this kind of venue, others were added, such as the fact that there were 3 bands playing—which resulted in a especially longer show— or the fact that I had only previously listened to one of them, adding the *surprise* factor. Again, I went to this concert with some people who I really appreciate.

**EMBODYMENT 3**

The last concert that I attended as a researcher was the one that *My bubba and mi* played in Odense, in Dexter Club. For this concert I decided to go on my own, without any company, just to force a different experience. Also, with the same intention, I chose this concert because I didn’t like very much their music and style, and they were completely new for me. Other particularities of this embodiment were that people were not standing, but seated in chairs, and also that, as they spoke Danish, they used all the time this language to communicate with the spectators, so I wasn’t able to understand them correctly.
EXAMPLES OF DATA COLLECTED

After attending these concerts and writing extensive essays, I could extract some fragments of data, like the following examples (translated), which have been later used as data during the analysis:

“at the beginning, musicians were a little nervous”

“we moved to the back of the venue, because we weren’t very motivated with the music”

“concert was about to start and there were not many spectators…”

“as time passed by, people began to talk less and listen more”

7.4
UNEXPECTED CONVERSATIONS

During the months that this research has been developed, there has been a component that must be considered. Although it is not a formal element from the research and it doesn’t appear in the research plan, it has been quite relevant in the development and shape of the research results.

As modern music and attending concerts is a quite common aspect of people’s everyday life, especially among young people, it has been quite easy for me to speak with a large amount of people about their concert experiences, their feelings or emotions when attending concerts. Sometimes, these conversations were with my friends here in Denmark and took place while riding our bikes or sharing a beer at some pub, for example. Other conversations where just unexpected with random people I met at the concerts. Almost all of the conversations were very short, sometimes just a few sentences. I tried to write them in my phone, although it was not always possible. However, undoubtedly all of these short conversations helped me to gain more insight and understanding of people’s experiences and opinions, and they were useful for better preparing and deeper understanding the formal conversations and embodiments.

7.5
EXPLORATION: FORMAL INTERVIEWS

The largest amount of empirical data has been collected through six non-structured interviews, which have served as the main foundation for the

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7 From the three embodiments I could extract more than 175 relevant bits of information.

8 From the six interviews I could extract more than 525 relevant bits of information.
analysis. These interviews have reinforced on the early insights from the observations and embodiments, as well as on the new ones that came into light during the unexpected conversations.

Personal conversations with people are one of the principal research methodologies used to gain insight into others' particular and subjective experiences. Structured interviews are commonly used within qualitative research, acting as a facilitator of the conversation and allowing the researchers to get access to information and understanding about personal experiences (Zemliansky, 2008; Hartley & Muhit, 2003). It is quite common that researchers lose valuable information by using interview structures which don't allow the participant to speak in a free way. Usually, if the interview has been prepared and structured in a fixed form, with specific questions, it is probable that both the participant and the conversation will be steered in a certain direction which will satisfy the researcher's initial thoughts and will not allow the participant to share true and personal stories (Hartley & Muhit, 2003).

Also, as Ben Rafoth (2001) states:

“The first step in getting someone to tell you something you are interested in hearing is to tell them exactly why you want to interview them. When you explain a clear purpose, the people you are interviewing understand what they need to talk about to satisfy you. Without this sense of purpose, they don’t know whether you want to hear facts, stories, advice, complaints, or whatever.”

Therefore, I prepared each of the six individual interviews as follows: at the beginning, I introduced the participants to the field of research, telling them what my research was about, and carefully explaining them what the exact purpose of the interview was. I didn't want to begin the interview with the participants having a vague idea about what I was interested in. Then, as I didn't have any set of questions prepared, I just let them freely talk about their experiences when attending concerts in small venues. Most of the time, participants were openly talking and I was just listening, but from time to time I made some spontaneous questions or commentaries, just to create the feeling of a natural chat and to ensure the continuity of the conversation. In addition, having the ToE structure in my mind was very helpful to guide the conversations along the right path.

All of the interviews were made in Catalan and Spanish, my native languages. The reason for this is because one of the main purposes of the interviews and the research is to deeply listen to and to understand the insights of what people have to say about their own experiences, so it seems obvious that if the participants speak in my native languages, it might be much easier for me to truly understand the details and hidden meanings of the conversations.
Consequently, all the participants were Catalan and Spanish people living in Denmark. It was very easy for me to find them, because there are a lot of Spanish and Catalan people working or studying in Denmark. While most of them were people that I have met during my stay in Odense, others were random people I met during the concert of la iaia, the Catalan band playing in Copenhagen. Also, I tried to have previous conversations with them just to make sure that all of them were music lovers—in different music styles—and they were experienced in attending concerts. Although it could have been interesting to add a participant who had no experience at all, I thought that it would be better to choose the experienced ones, because the more quantity of concerts they had attended in the past, the more valuable information they could bring into the conversation.

During the interviews I used my mobile phone to record their voice, although I took several notes along the conversations too. Some fragments of the interviews (translated) can be seen in the following lines, used later in the data analysis:

"(as an amateur musician) sometimes I learn more about music by observing every detail during the concerts than by playing and practicing at home" Participant 3

"when I’m at a concert, often I feel I am the happiest and luckiest person in the world" Participant 1

“I hate that annoying ringing in the ears when I wake up the day after the concert” Participant 6

“I liked the concert but... man! I couldn’t breathe! (it was too crowded and hot)” Participant 4

7.6 THE SEEING METHOD

The SEEing method helps a designer gain deeper understanding of an experience. It can be used to analyze all the sources of data collected via interviews and observations. The purpose of SEEing is to distil and separate out the Superordinary essences—essential elements—of the experience from the ordinary (form and function) aspects of the experience, so that designers can manifest, depict or illustrate their findings in a manner that others can ‘see’ or understand (Coxon, 2007). This method offers an opportunity to look deeper into the data collected, instead of extracting conclusions directly from it.

The SEEing process consists of nine steps. The first 3 steps relate to the ToE and are overall looked at as a way of storing information about an experience. Steps from 4 to 9 are the analysis phases which seek to distil and make visible the
deepest layers of meaning within an experience. The process allows going from a large amount of data collected during the embodiments and interviews to a few category stories that properly define the experience. Then, this analytical process results in seven overall category essential elements. I have used an Excel worksheet especially designed for this kind of analysis.

Due to time limitation, for my analysis I have used a shortened version of the SEEing method, the SEEing (lite), which slightly reduces the time spent in the first steps of the analysis. Nevertheless, the process has still been very slow, as the transcription of the data and the analysis have been tough.

The 9 process steps of the SEEing(lite) are described in the following paragraphs. Also, at the end of this chapter there is an example for a better understanding of the process:

**STEPS 1, 2, 3 – FRAGMENTS OF INFORMATION**

These steps are used for gathering the data (through immersion and exploration) and for transcribing all the data collected. Once all the data has been transcribed and the bits of information have been entered into the Excel worksheet, the actual analytical process is ready to start.

**STEP 4 – DEVELOPING MEANINGS**

This step is one of the most time consuming, but also one of the most important for the research. As a researcher, I carefully looked behind each of the fragments in step 3 and tried to extract from them a plurality of meanings. I asked to the fragments “what is really been said here?” and then I wrote down the hidden and deep meanings into the step 4 column. This process has helped me to tease out the fragments’ different meanings. The insights gained during the embodiments, are now very useful to truly understand what is really been said in other people’s words.

**STEP 5 – ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS**

The fifth step helps to filter out the less important meanings and outline the most essential. Then, the purpose in this step is to determine if the meanings found in the previous step are incidental or vital (essential) to the nature of the experience. I tried to filter out all the elements that were not essential to make the experience what it was, according to the knowledge gained during the immersion. This step has also been useful to considerably reduce the number of meanings and make the analysis a little bit manageable.

**STEP 6 – METAPHYSICAL / PHYSICAL ELEMENTS**

In this step I distilled the ‘Authentic’, spiritual hidden essence of the experience from the ‘inauthentic’ physical side of it. Therefore, I separated the metaphysical aspects of the experience from the functional and form oriented physical
aspects, which allowed me to isolate the essential elements which were most probably not seen originally as important parts of the experience.

**STEP 7 – WEIGHT**

In the seventh step I weighted and sorted all the essential meanings with a subjective numerical scale, rating from 1 to 7 (where 1 is low) in relation to how important the meaning was to the experience. This step was very useful to reduce even more the quantity of elements, considering from now on only the most powerful elements of the experience.

**STEP 8, 9 – CATEGORIZING AND CATEGORY STORIES**

Finally, I placed the essential meanings under seven categories (step 8) which grouped the similar meanings together. What I found was a clear picture of the top 7 categories of meaning to be drawn from the most intense meta-physical and physical elements of the experience. Then, I wrote 7 stories (step 9), one for each category, as if I was describing them to someone who had no understanding of what the category names meant.

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### SEEn (lite) - Qualitative data analysis process

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**EXAMPLE**

In the following you can see the process of fragment extracted from an interview going through all the **SEEn (lite)** steps, working as an example for a clear understanding. Note that the example has been translated from Catalan to English.

During the first **3 steps**, this fragment was collected, transcribed and entered into the Excel worksheet:

“We entered to the venue quite late, but it was almost empty”
From this fragment, I could extract and develop the next meanings during step 4:

- They had the impression that the quality of the concert wouldn’t be very high, because there were not many spectators.
- As they were late, they expected the venue to be so crowded that they couldn’t get close to the stage.
- They were disappointed about the venue being almost empty: to fully enjoy the show, they need to share the experience with other people.

Then, in step 5 I outlined the most essential elements for the experience:

- They had the impression that the quality of the concert wouldn’t be very high, because there were not many spectators.
- As they were late, they expected the venue to be so crowded that they couldn’t get close to the stage.
- They were disappointed about the venue being almost empty: to fully enjoy the show, they need to share the experience with other people.

In steps 6 and 7, I classified both of the essential elements as metaphysical (m), and weighted them according to how important these elements were for the experience (5 and 7, respectively).

- As they were late, they expected the venue to be so crowded that they couldn’t get close to the stage. (m,5)
- They were disappointed about the venue being almost empty: to fully enjoy the show, they need to share the experience with other people. (m,7)

Finally, in step 8 I classified them in different categories: *(I Can't Get No)* Satisfaction and Human touch, respectively. These categories have a narrative story related (step 9) which can be read in the next chapter.

As it can be seen through this example, repeating the same procedure for more than 700 bits of information results in a very slow and laborious process.
8
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Once all the data has been gathered and analyzed, it is time to share the results, the experience insights found thanks to the immersion, exploration and the analysis with the SEEing (lite) method. As it has already been said and explained in the previous chapter, at the beginning of the analysis there were more than 700 bits of information or fragments, collected during the embodiments and the interviews. The method has been useful to extract the hidden and essential meanings from those fragments, while at the same time moving from a large amount of data to 7 category stories that properly define the experience insights of attending a modern music concert.

In this chapter, the reader will be able to understand the deeper layers of the experience just by carefully reading the seven stories, and the key findings that appear behind these stories will create the substantial basis for innovative developments.

8.1 EXPERIENCE INSIGHTS

The 7 narrative stories are presented here as the final output of the analytical SEEing process. Each of the stories represents a category of the experience: A kind of magic, Brilliant disguise, Human touch, (I can’t get no) Satisfaction, It won’t be long, Land of hope and dreams and Glory days. Although the names of the categories are strongly related to the meaning of the story, it is necessary to read the narrative stories in order to properly understand the essence of the category. After every narrative story there are fragments of data in order to support the stories.

A KIND OF MAGIC

Music, as an artistic expression, has a great emotional capacity, and a very important metaphysical effect on humans. Music can make you laugh, make you cry, make you feel things that seemed to be forgotten. It can make you think about that teenage love, take you back to the past, make you feel joy, hope, excitement, happiness, euphoria, but also despair, anger, melancholy, sadness and, in short, all the wide variety of feelings that humans may experience. Many people need music in their lives as a regulatory element of their emotional state and, therefore, music becomes very important, often vital, to the life of most people, regardless of their age, social status, ideology or even their favourite music style. Thus, musicians are often admired by most of the people, because they are the ones able to create and shape those songs that make them feel so many different things. Therefore, music has a magical power, but if we
add to this power the live experience element, which includes all the other senses, feelings are often multiplied, and therefore the concert experience can be often described as magical and unforgettable.

“I couldn’t live without music” Participant 2 (translated)

**BRILLIANT DISGUISE**

Then, music has an amazing power on human feelings and emotions, especially when talking about live music. In this case, many other factors come into play, which are able to channel and drive your feelings while playing with all of your senses. It is therefore necessary that all the elements surrounding the experience are very well designed and prepared by the musicians and promoters, in order to transmit the right feelings, the ones that the musicians want to transmit to the audience. Lighting colours and intensities, the kind of venue and its architecture, sound quality and volume, staging and set design, visual effects such as video displays, photographs or fireworks and the aesthetics of the whole show are just some of the elements that can be used to drive the audience emotional state. It is quite relevant, then, that every detail is taken into account, in some way disguising the show, to be able to transmit and convey what the musicians want to, and what the audience is willing to feel. Often, spectators themselves will want to get into a certain emotional state, and in case they aren’t able to get there, they would like to have some kind of control over all those external elements that may guide their emotional state to the demanded point, interacting with the elements and voluntarily modifying them.

“I felt like being in a rehearsal of the band, more than in a concert”
Embodiment 1 (translated)

**HUMAN TOUCH**

It seems that there is an element which is more powerful than the rest: the human touch. This is probably the most important element of the experience, the one able to make you feel "better", "happier" and "more alive", even modifying itself the whole experience result, even when the rest of the factors and elements are not working well enough. There are two different parts in this category: the closeness and human connection that the spectator feels with the musicians/artist, and the closeness and human connection that the spectator feels with the rest of the audience and the people around him. In the first case, being able to have an actual communication, both verbal and nonverbal, sharing glances, smiles or even some words, with the actual musicians who create and sing those songs that you have listened so many times at home, turn the experience into something really deep, human. In the second case, being able to observe dozens or hundreds of people around you, feeling the same as you, generates a very positive feeling and atmosphere. If you attend the concert along with your friends, partner, a family member or a relative, a very strong and intense connection will be created between you, thanks to the fact of sharing
Understanding the experience of attending a modern music concert

the same feelings and experiences during that period of time. All these feelings are more pronounced the smaller the venue is, because physical proximity is easily translatable into a meta-physical proximity, to the point of being able to think that the artist could become your best friend. It is convenient to note that often when two people listen to the same kind of music and have the same musical taste, you tend to think that they may have similar tastes and opinions in so many other aspects of life and, therefore, they could certainly become very good friends and get on well. Thus, it is easy and common to meet people during concerts, making new friends and meeting old ones -or even flirt- which makes the experience even more memorable.

“I was seeing him (the songwriter) playing that song while looking at me…”  Participant 3 (translated)

(I CAN'T GET NO) SATISFACTION

Spectators want to be able to absorb through their senses all the different elements that the artists have prepared to transmit what they want to. Thus, spectators want to hear perfectly the whole concert, they want to observe and watch each and every detail –that is instruments, musicians, stage, and even the venue, the rest of the visual effects, and so on– and they want to be able to make it comfortably, with no distractions and bother. That is why there are certain aspects, those which prevent you from absorbing everything that you’d like to, which can easily ruin your concert experience: people higher than you standing in front of you, or some architectural element, blocking you from seeing the whole stage; part of the audience -generally at the background- who don’t stop talking loudly to each other, creating a disturbing noise which can be heard from every corner in the venue (the smaller, the worst) and blocking you from concentrating on the music and show; if the music volume is so high that literally hurts your ears, and you can’t listen to the music calmly; or even when there is an extremely high density of people standing in the crowd and you are constantly being hit, pushed, suffering from heat, suffocation and claustrophobia, and a high physical fatigue due to being standing for hours in a bad posture... All these elements, among others, usually external to the spectator, which don’t allow him to enjoy the experience the way he would like to, and which may worsen it significantly, should be avoided, or at least there should be the possibility of controlling them oneself.

“sometimes I wish I was taller” Participant 1 (translated)

IT WON'T BE LONG

Live concerts last some specific time, they occupy a certain space in time. Also, human beings have certain basic needs that should be covered every certain time, such as eating, going to the bathroom, drinking, refreshing or resting, to name a few. It is appropriate, therefore, that concerts are correctly programmed, always having in mind these basic needs. The audience won’t be able to enjoy
the experience if they are, for example, constantly starving, thirsty or if the concert lasts one hour longer than expected and, they aren’t only tired, but also in a hurry to get to the toilet. To fully enjoy the experience, viewers should have all the basic needs well covered, and avoid unnecessary distractions and discomforts. Also, the promoters should take into account that people should be able to easily get to the concert in time and calmly, but also try to finish the concert not too late and not extending it too long. However, it is not only about scheduling it in the right way, but also organising and measuring the room correctly, the toilets area and its quantity, as well as the beer prices and quality, the possibility of purchasing food in the room, among many other factors. Nothing should distract you from the concert experience.

“I usually eat something before going to the concert” Participant 5 (translated)

LAND OF HOPE AND DREAMS

According to the experience and maturity that you have at attending concerts, to the band you want to see, your musical taste, and many other factors, your expectations of the concert before it starts may vary substantially. Often you can feel very excited, eager to finally get to the concert, imagining how much you’ll enjoy the concert experience. You can imagine how it will sound, where each musician will be located, who will go with you to the concert and what kind of feelings you will probably experience. Sometimes these previous moments of pure emotion and imagination make you enjoy the experience more than during the concert itself, which confirms that the concert experience is not limited to the actual concert, but starts much before and ends much later. Once at the venue, if you are enjoying the concert and you are feeling happy, you’ll probably have the feeling of being the luckiest person in the world, you will feel unique, enjoying an experience reserved for very few people, only for the most especial ones. Even, you may probably let your imagination run wild so much to see yourself playing with your band on the stage, becoming a rock star, creating incredible songs and touring the world with your music. At the end, when comparing your initial expectations to the experience that you finally got, you will be able to judge if the price you paid for the ticket was worth it and appropriate, and if you can go home satisfied with the experience.

“I feel so happy when I have the ticket in my hands, months before the concert” Participant 4 (translated)

GLORY DAYS

The concert experience is not limited to the concert itself, the actual time when the musicians are playing in front of the audience. The experience begins long before the concert starts, probably the same day you buy your ticket, when you start to let your imagination and enthusiasm overwhelm you. In the same way, once the concert is finished, the concert experience continues in the form of feelings, memories and sensations. It is likely that if you have deeply enjoyed a
concert, those sensations will remain for a long time. Years later, if you listen to an exciting song that you heard during that concert, you will probably be able to revive some concert moments and fragments in your mind, even feeling exactly the same way you were feeling years before, during that concert. This is why it is very interesting to have certain elements that allow you to remember that concert, that unique experience, whenever you want, preferably physical elements but they can also be virtual, such as photographs, videos, set lists, chronicles, the printed ticket, and so on. It is convenient to be able to have all these elements, as well as other kind of memories in more innovative ways, being able to find and use them whenever you want. Thus, the experience would never end.

“I remember perfectly my first concerts, perhaps even more than the last ones”
Participant 6 (translated)

8.2
KEY FINDINGS

As it has been said, after reading the previous stories you can easily and deeply understand the experience of attending a modern music concert in a small venue and its more relevant aspects. However, why are the stories important? How can we use this valuable knowledge gained?

In the current section, the key findings that have appeared behind every narrative story are listed. These key findings are questions that try to find how we – designers, engineers, product developers, and so on – could make something to improve an aspect from the experience. Therefore, behind each of the following key findings, plenty of possibilities for new product, system or service designs undoubtedly show up. Note that these are the main key findings I found in each category, but more could be added if necessary.

A KIND OF MAGIC

- How can we take advantage of the fact that music makes people feel such deep things?
- How can we intensify these sensations and feelings that music generates on people?

BRILLIANT DISGUISE

- How can we help people to be in the good mood before getting into the venue?
- How can we control the lights so they act according to the music and the audience?
- How can we create, inside the venue, environments and elements typical from nature?
- How can we help people to know the history of the venue?
How can we give spectators the power of controlling and interacting with the elements which create the right mood?

What can we do to make the venue never seem too empty?

**HUMAN TOUCH**

How can we help on creating a true dialogue between audience and musicians during the concert?

What can we do to make that all the spectators are equally close to the artists?

How can we promote non-verbal communication in the band-audience interaction during the concert?

What can we do to help spectators to feel that they are actually part of the show?

How can we enhance the interaction and dialogue among participants?

**(I CAN'T GET NO) SATISFACTION**

How can we prevent light rays directly in the audience's face?

How can we ensure that everyone, even the smaller, are able to see every detail of the concert from anywhere in the venue?

How can we prevent people getting tired, both physically and mentally, of being pushed and touched when the audience is too crowded?

How can we ensure that people isn't too warm/hot?

How can we give the audience some control over external sound elements that bother them, such as people talking in the background, too loud music...?

How can the sound be homogeneous throughout the venue?

**IT WON'T BE LONG**

How can we help people coming to the concert quietly, without the need of a hurry and being sure that they'll be on time?

How can we satisfy the basic needs of the audience (hunger, thirst, bathroom ...), preventing them from missing a single detail of the concert?

How can we help people to rest during the concert, if it is too long and they are tired?

How should the room and its elements (entrance, bar, bathroom...) be structured to avoid queues and unnecessary annoyances?

**LAND OF HOPE AND DREAMS**

How can we improve the experience from the day the spectators buy the ticket, motivating them and empowering their imagination?

How to enhance the fact of feeling unique, special, and lucky to be at the concert?
- How can we help people to demonstrate their big knowledge about the band and their music, proving that they are the “biggest fan” in the venue?
- How can we get to know the expectations of the audience before the concert?

GLORY DAYS

- How can we help people to keep alive the memory of the concert?
- How can we make it easier for attendees to find high quality concert photos and videos, setlists..., even years after the concert?

8.3 RELATIVE WEIGHT

A quick analysis to the data from the different categories in the SEEing (lite) Excel worksheet reveals the relative weight of each category of the experience, as seen in figure 12.

As explained in the previous chapter, in the seventh step of the process I weighted all the essential meanings with a subjective numerical scale, rating from 1 to 7 in relation to how important the meaning was to the concert experience. Considering only the most powerful elements of the experience in each category (i.e. those elements weighted with a 5, 6 or 7), it is easy to see how important a certain category of the experience is to the global of the experience.

![Relative weight of every category of the experience](image)

A simple addition of the most powerful element weights (5, 6 and 7) in a certain category, gives a numerical value, which reveals that, not only the elements in that category were a common topic during the data gathering and therefore an important issue for the participants, but also these elements were weighted by the researcher with a high value. The result of these simple operations is a clear
picture of which of the categories are the most important for the experience, and therefore, where the future designers should focus on and put most of their efforts. In the following chart, the numerical values are presented, while they are illustrated in the previous Figure 12.

For example, if a certain category had only 3 essential elements, weighted by the researcher with a 4, 6 and 7 respectively, the addition of the value of the most powerful elements, 6+7, would be 13. In this case, the category would have a very small relative weight (13/1973 < 1%), which would indicate that the participants have rarely spoken about this topic during the interviews, and also that the researcher wouldn’t considered that those elements were highly relevant for the global of the experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of the experience</th>
<th>Numerical value of the category</th>
<th>Global value of all the categories</th>
<th>Relative weight (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human touch</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I can’t get no) Satisfaction</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant disguise</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A kind of magic</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land of hope and dreams</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It won’t be long</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glory days</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13. Relative weight of every category of the experience chart

As it can be seen, the most important category of the experience according to the data collected is the human touch (43% of the global weight), followed by (I can’t get no) Satisfaction (27%) and Brilliant disguise (15%). These results are not indicating that the other categories of the experience can be omitted, because they are still important for the concert experience. However, if designers concentrate their efforts on creating products, systems or services that focus on improving aspects from the most relevant categories, they can be sure that those new products, systems or services will be a success, as they will satisfy the most important user needs.

9 The addition of all the essential elements weighted with a 5, 6 or 7:  
5 + 5 + 5 + ... + 6 + 6 + ... + 7 + 7 + ... + 7 = 1973
At this point the research starts reaching to its end: the collected data has been analyzed, the summary of results has already been shared, and any designer, engineer, or whoever interested, can find in the previous chapter the priceless basis for developing new products, services or systems related to the concert area, being sure that these new business opportunities will become successful, as they will fulfill the –usually– hidden expectations and deeper needs of the attendees.

Therefore, it is now the moment to move from the qualitative research to the actual conception of new design ideas, trying to answer the important question of how to use the valuable information gained. I think this action is quite interesting because it finally shows up how a qualitative research can be extremely useful for the design process.

For the reader, the most valuable and interesting output of this research might be the summary of the results in chapter 8, which clearly states the experience insights and opens the door to plenty of possibilities. Nevertheless, during the next sections I will explain five preliminary ideas and concepts that I found after the research, in order to illustrate how I moved from research to design. Hopefully, these next brief sections will make clear how easy it is to go from the key insights to relevant design and services proposals, so other designers can use this section as an example of what to do with the information found in chapter 8 in their hands.

9.1 IDEAS AND CONCEPTS

If I had had more time, I would have liked to go through all the key findings in the previous chapter, and try to develop some ideas and concepts that were able to answer all of those questions. Probably, I would have, then, more than 25 new proposals, and behind each of those proposals, a new business opportunity might appear, which could easily be used for the creation of new young start-up companies, or for the conception of new products in big companies’ design departments, among many other options. However, as time limitation has been a fundamental factor for this research, I have just picked up five random key findings from the list above, and have tried to explore five ideas and concepts that could give a response to those particular questions. Mainly, brainstorming has been the methodology used for the conception of the ideas. Note that these are just conceptual ideas and, of course, they need further development before
being able to continue to the subsequent design process phases. In addition, note that they are not only related to new products, but also to systems and services.

The following are the five key findings extracted from the different categories that I have mainly used as a starting point, although the ideas and concepts may give answer not only to these five questions, but also to many others in the key findings’ list.

- How can we create, inside the venue, environments and elements typical from nature?
- How can we help people to keep alive the memory of the concert?
- How can we enhance the interaction and dialogue among participants?
- How can the sound be homogeneous throughout the venue?
- What can we do to help spectators to feel that they are actually part of the show?

The ideas and concepts are briefly explained in the following paragraphs, while in the next section (9.2) they are further analyzed.

**ADDING SMELLS INTO THE CONCERT**

Usually the sense of smell is overlooked in the concert experience, even when it has been proved that this sense is able to easily unlock forgotten memories, especially memories of past events (Stafford, 2012). Then, my proposal is to add some air fresheners that originate a certain atmosphere in the venue, creating the smell of natural environments such as beaches, forests, rain... in order to intensify the experience during the concert, and to help on remembering the event long time after it takes place. These smells should be related to the visual effects, such as video projections.

**WEBSITE WITH EXCLUSIVE MATERIAL**

The idea is that every concert ticket would have a printed code on it. Then, using this code, every attendee would have access to a private area of the new website with exclusive material of the concert, such as high quality videos and pictures, chronicles, interviews, videos from the backstage, pictures from the concert preparations, etc. This proposal is interesting because every attendee would want to keep his/her ticket in a safe place, using it as a physical memory, while at the same time it would give access to exclusive virtual memories, helping the spectators to keep the memory of the concert alive.
SPECIAL GROUP OFFERS
As simple as it sounds, the main idea is that concert promoters make special group ticket offers. That means that, for example, if you buy 6 tickets at the same time, you get a 25% discount on the global price. This could be done in order to encourage people to share the experience of attending concerts with their friends or relatives. Also, it could help on creating new links by purchasing the tickets with people you just met but who want to save some money.

HOMOGENOUS SMALLER SPEAKERS
It is very common, especially in small venues, that the volume of the music differs a lot depending on how far you are from the main speakers and amplifiers, which are usually on the sides of the stage. While sometimes you can become deaf due to the high volume, other times you cannot hear the music properly. The idea is to create a net of smaller speakers that generate a homogeneous sound through the entire venue, so you can hear the same wherever you are.

SMART PHONE APPLICATION THAT ENRICHES ATTENDEE-SHOW INTERACTION
As smart phones are becoming widely popular, I thought it could be very interesting to use them inside the concert area. Then, creating a smart phone app that allows spectators to interact with the different concert elements during the concert, would make the spectators feel they are more directly connected to the show. Through the application, attendees could vote and control, for example, the songs they want to hear, the videos or images they want to see projected, the lights colors, or contact the sound technicians, for example. The idea is to give certain control to the spectators, so they become even more immersed in the show experience.
9.2
ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE OBJECTIVE

A deeper analysis of the five concept proposals is done in order to relate the ideas to the previous research, the stories and the key findings. As it has been previously said, I took five random key findings, as a foundation for the five ideas and concepts. However, these concepts give answer to more than one key finding, which can be read in the next paragraphs.

ADDING SMELLS INTO THE CONCERT

This concept is quite interesting, because it satisfies different categories of the experience, such as Brilliant disguise, Glory days or A kind of magic. More concretely, it answers, at least, the next questions:
- How can we create, inside the venue, environments and elements typical from nature?
- How can we help people to keep alive the memory of the concert?
- How can we intensify these sensations and feelings that music generates on people?

As I have extracted from the research, people enjoy being in natural environments. For instance, a concert in a forest might be much more impressive than in a small venue inside the city. The sunlight, the wind, the smells... everything intensifies the experience of attending a concert. Then, it is highly interesting to try to move these natural environments inside the small venue, which would create more intense experiences to the audience. Then, generating a natural environment through smells inside the venue would definitely intensify the sensations and feelings that live music itself already generates on people. In addition, people want to remember everything from the concert, and as it has been already said, the sense of smell is very powerful when it is about remembering events. Probably, 5 years after the concert, if you are riding your bike in a forest which has exactly the same smell that you smelled inside the venue, those memories will invade your mind and you will feel like if you were in that concert again. You will think about the people you went to the concert with, about the band, about those days in the past and you will feel that the concert experience is still alive.

This sentence, extracted from the data (translated from participant 4), illustrates the importance of this concept: “Outdoor concerts make me feel more real and alive; everything looks more "genuine" to me.”

Looking at the market, it is not easy to find anything similar, so this is a great opportunity to develop something unique and innovative in the live music field.
The idea of creating a website with an exclusive material area which can only be accessed by the concert ticket possessors, explores different aspects that cover many aspects of the concert experience. At least 3 out of the 7 categories that define the concert experience are covered by this website concept: Glory days, Brilliant disguise and Land of hope and dreams. Also, the next key findings are answered:

- How can we help people to keep the memory of the concert alive?
- How can we help people to be in the good mood before getting into the venue?
- How can we improve the experience from the day the spectators buy the ticket, motivating them and empowering their imagination?
- How to enhance the fact of feeling unique, special, and lucky to be at the concert?
- How can we make it easier for attendees to find high quality concert photos and videos, setlists, ..., even years after the concert?

On one hand, this idea is extremely useful to help the audience to remember the concert experience and to keep the memory of the concert alive. As said in the previous section, it not only makes the spectators to want to keep the physical ticket with them forever, but also it allows them to have access to significant material from the concert day. Again, if for example 5 years after the concert, one of the attendees is at home and finds the concert ticket in an old box, he/she will instantly remember so many things about the concert. But then, he/she will probably want more, so he/she will take the ticket and look at the printed code in it. He/she will introduce that code into the website and suddenly hundreds of images, videos, and other memories will run through his/her mind thanks to the site. As participant 2 said during the interview (translated): “while we were waiting for the concert to start, we took a picture of us in front of the stage”. People want to have something that helps them to remind that experience.

On the other hand, from the day a spectator buys the ticket, he would have a unique code in the ticket, which would make him feel special and lucky to have access to exclusive material. In addition, he would be able to see some videos or images of the concert preparations, which would motivate him and would set a good mood. Then, he would start the concert with great expectations and feelings.

Comparing this concept with the ones existing nowadays, some similarities can be found. Today, it is quite common that bands upload pictures or videos in their social networks profiles, such as facebook or twitter. If you follow a band on facebook, for example, you can probably see a picture that they uploaded during the concert preparations. Or maybe another spectator uploads a picture of the concert on the band’s profile, so everyone can see it. There are other options, like
fan or professional videos uploaded on youtube, which you can easily find using the browser of the site. However, all these possibilities and others, can’t compete with the new concept, in the sense that now the information would be classified by concerts, so you could easily find the information of the concert you really want to remember. In social networks, usually the information is lost in infinity after a couple of days, while in youtube normally the quality of the videos is not very good, because they are fan videos uploaded from the cell phone. Plus, the new concept is decidedly interesting as it relates the virtual element memories to the physical ones (the ticket).

SPECIAL GROUP OFFERS

Although it may seem a very simple and plain idea, it is a very powerful one indeed, because it is able to touch the most important category of the experience: the human touch. As obtained in the research results, the human factor is key to the live music experience: not only the audience-musicians connection is relevant, but also the connection between the spectators themselves. This concept is able to answer, at least, the following key findings from the list:
- What can we do to make the venue never seem too empty?
- How can we enhance the interaction and dialogue among participants?

There are two relevant elements behind this idea: the first one, and most important, is the pursuit of enriching the interaction among the spectators; the second one, is aiming to make that as much people as possible attend the concert, so promoters can make the concert profitable, and also the feeling of emptiness is avoided.

This example will serve as an illustration for the first case. Imagine that you find out that one band you like is coming to your town. You and your best friend, who also loves the band, decide to buy two tickets as soon as possible. However, you realize that if you buy 6 tickets, you will get a 25% discount. Quickly, you will try to convince all your other friends, who maybe don’t even know the band, to come with you at that concert. In case you get to persuade them, you will finally buy the 6 tickets, which will make you twice happier: on one hand you will save money, while on the other hand you will share an unforgettable experience with a lot of your friends, which definitely will enhance your relationship. Nevertheless, if you couldn’t find other friends, you could maybe write and advertisement on internet, and easily find people up to buy the 6 tickets. Therefore, you would probably meet them the day of the concert to give them the printed ticket, which may result in a new relationship or connection with someone who has the same musical taste than you. As participant 1 stated during the interview (translated): “I like to make new friends during the concert”.
This simple concept, which is normally applied in other fields, is rarely seen in the live musical scene. While the application of this service is very quick and easy, the results might be quite interesting.

**HOMOGENOUS SMALLER SPEAKERS**

This proposal aims to cover a problem detected thanks to the research, which can mainly be found behind the *(I can't get no)* Satisfaction category of the live concert experience. The concept appeared directly when trying to give an answer to the next question extracted from the key findings:

- **How can the sound be homogeneous throughout the venue?**

As previously explained, it is very common in concerts that the sound is not homogeneous through the whole venue. This problem has appeared behind the research, which is only focused in small venues. However, I argue that this trouble not only happens in small and indoor venues, but also in huge outdoor concerts, like those in big stadiums or festivals. Nevertheless, my proposal is only aiming to solve this problem in small/medium indoor venues, as it is the objective of this research.

As manifested in the *(I can't get no)* Satisfaction category story, people must be able to hear properly the sound if they want to enjoy the show. That means that the sound cannot be too high nor too low. And sometimes you just can't choose where to stand, because the venue is too crowded that you can't get closer to the stage, or move away from the main amplifiers. Then, it is interesting to work on making the sound homogeneous and equal in volume, tone, intensity and quality, independently of where you are standing. Acoustic engineers should work hard on designing a net of small speakers, which intelligently distributed along the venue should solve this problem and improve the concert experience. Even though, it must be taken into account that usually the sound must come from the area where the musicians are, to create the feeling of real live music.

Nowadays, normally it works like this in every venue: musicians have their own amplifiers on the stage, which amplify the signal of the instruments. Then, this sound is amplified even more thanks to the main big speakers placed on the left and right sides of the stage, towards the front of it and elevated above the heads of the audience (Russell, 2011). This methodology seems to work fine in general, but sentences like “when I'm near the main speakers during the concert, I wish I could stop that awful noise!”, extracted from participant 6 interview, or “I hate when I hear more the people talking around me, than the music itself”, translated from participant 4, appear to indicate that some change should be done in this direction.
SMART PHONE APPLICATION THAT ENRICHES ATTENDEE-SHOW INTERACTION

The last of the five proposed ideas is maybe one of the most complete in terms of experience satisfaction. This concept is able to answer the next key findings:

- **How can we control the lights so they act according to the music and the audience?**

- **What can we do to help spectators to feel that they are actually part of the show?**

- **How can we give spectators the power of controlling and interacting with the elements which create the right mood?**

- **How can we give the audience some control over external sound elements that bother them, such as people talking in the background, too loud music...?**

Therefore, this conception can be assumed as truly successful when taken into practice, because it is capable of enhancing the most important categories and aspects of the concert experience: **Brilliant disguise, Human touch** and **(I can’t get no) Satisfaction.**

Normally, spectators are just looking at what the musicians and the rest of the artistic team has prepared for them to observe and enjoy. However, sometimes it would be very interesting that the audience was not only there to observe, but also to take—as far as possible—the control of the show.

This application is a much undeveloped concept yet. However, in my first conception, it could be understood as giving a “democratic” voice to the audience. For instance, everyone could download this app for free and use it at any concert. Then, before and during the show, everyone could open the app and vote his/her favorite settings. For example: in the app there could be a list of elements, previously chosen and uploaded by the band, such as songs, color and tone varieties, grading of light intensities, the themes of the visual projections, and others. In a democratic way, audience would vote and then musicians and their team would decide to play those songs, use those images and colors, increase the light intensity and so on. Also, they could send messages to the sound technicians, telling them, for example, that the sound is too loud or that the drums are quite mute.

This application would definitely give a certain control to the audience, and they would feel that they have participated much more in the show and in creating the right mood, which has been found in my research to be a key factor for a good concert experience. An extract from the collected data (translated), “**in my opinion, there was still too much light in the venue. I wish I could have done something**”, demonstrates the value of this new application for the experience.

This concept is being developed today by different researchers and designers from all over the world, who have also seen the importance of enriching

GLOBAL ANALYSIS

Once the five ideas and concepts have been further analyzed as an illustration of what can be achieved thanks to the previous research, it is now the moment for other designers, engineers and others to use the real value of my research by themselves. They can take advantage of the experience insights, the deep knowledge of the experience of attending a modern music concert in small venues, as well as the key findings or “how to...” questions, which can be used as a foundation for new developments that improve that experience. Before that, a global analysis of the experience is done in order to help those possible designers who might be interested in using my research.

If we go back to the beginning, we can read again the objective for this research:

The main objective for this research is to deeply understand the experience of attending a modern music concert taking place in a small-medium venue, using it as a foundation for innovative product, service or system developments that enhance the concert experience.

The key words here are: understand the experience of attending a modern music concert and taking place in a small-medium venue. Behind these key words, basic interrogations come into view: who is going to be the experiencer? Who are the participants in this experience? Where are these concerts going to take place? The answers seem to be quite obvious, and they suggest that there is a system surrounding this experience (Fig. 14-a). Apparently, the three main elements of this system are: the audience, the musicians and the small venue.

![Figure 14-a. The small venue concert experience system](image)
Still, let’s first try to relate them with the results found behind the research. If we move back to the summary of results chapter, we find the 7 category stories which define the experience. The seven categories are:

- A kind of magic
- Brilliant disguise
- Human touch
- (I can't get no) Satisfaction
- It won’t be long
- Land of hope and dreams
- Glory days

The first one, *A kind of magic*, suggests that music, and especially live music, is a powerful element with the capacity to transmit a wide variety of very deep feelings to the listeners. Then, the subjects in this category are: *musicians*, who create and play the music, and the *spectators* or audience, who listen to that music and feel the variety of feelings. *Music* itself is just the message that the sender sends to the recipient.

The second one, *Brilliant disguise*, announces that there are certain elements which may dress up the venue and the stage in order to set the right mood and to let the musicians to transmit the expected feelings to the audience. As it is clearly seen, the participants in this part of the experience are three: the *musicians*, who use the venue as a way to share their art with the *audience*.

*Human touch* is one of the most relevant categories, because it states that what gives a high value to the concert experience is the fact of sharing it with other human beings, both from audience and from the band. Again, in this category the main subjects are both the *spectators* and the *musicians*.

The fourth of the categories, *(I can't get no) Satisfaction*, talks about the external factors that may disturb a certain spectator, blocking him/her to fully enjoy the show. This spectator can be bothered by other *spectators*, but also by the different *venue* elements, which could act as an impediment to properly enjoy the *music* that the *musicians* are playing.

*It won’t be long* is a category that remarks the importance of having all the basic needs covered during the time that the concert takes place. Mainly, the *venue* should offer all the facilities to allow the *spectators* to fully enjoy the concert without worrying about these basic needs.

The next to last category of the experience is called *Land of hope and dreams* and asserts that the experience of the concert begins much before the concert starts. From the day you hear about that concert, your mind starts imagining yourself going to the *venue* as a *spectator*, listening to your favourite *music* and watching your favourite *musicians* play.
Finally, the last category –Glory days– affirms that the experience of the concert ends much after the show finishes. The spectators will always remember the experience of the concert, as it is a unique event, especially when they listen again to the concert music in the future, or when they go back to the same venue years after.

Through this brief analysis of the different categories of the experience, it has been proved that the audience, the musicians and the small venue are certainly the three main elements of the concert experience system. However, another element appears in almost all of the categories, which is the music. Globally seen, there is a sender (musicians) which send the message (music) to the recipient (audience) using the small venue as the channel for this communication. Therefore, the diagram in Fig. 14-a can be slightly modified and can be now seen in Fig. 14-b:

![Figure 14-b. The small venue concert experience system](image)

It is interesting to keep this diagram in mind when reading the key findings in chapter 8, as all of the questions appearing behind the seven categories are based on this spectators–musicians–smallvenue–music system.
The conclusions of the research and some reflections are shown in this chapter of the document.

CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of the research the next questions were formulated: how is the experience of attending a modern music concert in small venues? What can I do, as a researcher, to completely understand that experience? Why might this knowledge become interesting to me, as a designer, as well as to other designers?

1. What can I do, as a researcher, to completely understand that experience?

In order to answer this question, a human-centered qualitative research approach has been planned and completed. The main elements of the data gathering for the research are the embodiments and the interviews. While going to the concerts myself has been useful to get into the field and gain a deep knowledge about the experience of attending that kind of concerts, the six non-structured interviews have served as the main source of data gathering, proving the importance of the human voice in this kind of research. At this point, it must been said that the research wouldn’t have been successful if only the interviews had been done, but not the embodiments: I, as a researcher, needed to previously live the experience from the inside before doing the interviews where I could experience it from the outside through the other participants’ emotions, thoughts, impressions and feelings. It is by joining the immersion and the exploration when the research approach becomes truly advantageous and successful, and all the collected data are surely significant. While keeping in mind during the whole research the Taxonomy of Experience to comprehend the experience structure, all the data has been processed and analyzed with the SEEing method. Although slow and tough, this process has been very helpful to understand the deeper layers of meaning of the experience, as well as to run from a large amount of intractable data to a 7 category stories that accurately define the experience of attending concerts.

2. How is the experience of attending a modern music concert in small venues?

In short, the experience of attending a modern music concert in small venues is divided in 7 category stories. However, not all of them have the same weight to the global of the experience. The most relevant one for the experience is the Human touch category (43% of the global weight), followed by (I can’t get no) Satisfaction (27%) and Brilliant disguise (15%). As these three categories sum up to the 85% of the global experience weight, they must be strongly taken into
account when designing a successful product, service or system related to the concert area. Summarizing, these categories can be explained as follows:

- **Human touch**: what gives a powerfully high value to the concert experience is the fact of sharing it with other human beings, including other spectators and the musicians.

- **(I can’t get no) Satisfaction**: there are external factors that may disturb a certain spectator, blocking him/her to fully enjoy the show, such as other spectators talking loudly, big columns in front of the stage or powerful and annoying strong lights directly into his/her eyes, to name a few examples.

- **Brilliant disguise**: announces that there are certain elements which may dress up the venue, the stage and the show in order to set the right mood and to let the musicians to transmit the expected feelings to the audience.

Even though the other four categories together represent the remaining 15% of the global experience weight, they cannot be ignored, as they are still a relevant part of the experience:

- **A kind of magic**: suggests that music, and especially live music, is a powerful element with the capacity to transmit a wide variety of very deep feelings to the listeners.

- **Land of hope and dreams**: asserts that the experience of the concert begins much before the concert starts, when future spectators start using their imagination and expectations for that concert.

- **It won’t be long**: remarks the importance of having all the basic needs covered during the time that the concert takes place, such as hunger or thirst, to name a few.

- **Glory days**: affirms that the experience of the concert ends much after the show finishes, when spectators are able to remember the concert and keep the memory alive.

These categories help on creating a clear picture of what the experience of attending a modern music concert in a small venue is about. After having finished the research, I contacted most of the interviewed participants and let them read the complete category stories as they appear in chapter 8, asking them for their opinion. All of them agreed on telling me that these categories represent and summarize very well the global of the experience. Therefore, after getting this feedback, I can assume that no important aspect of the experience is missing and that there is not any excessive category.

**3. Why might this knowledge become interesting to me, as a designer, as well as to other designers?**

Once the main objective for this research has been accomplished and the experience insights are completely understood, it has been also interesting to
achieve the secondary objective: using this valuable knowledge as a foundation for innovative product, service and system developments that enhance the concert experience. Consequently, a number of questions or key findings have emerged behind every category of the experience. These key findings comprise the essential parts of the experience where a designer needs to focus all his/her attention before any innovative development occurs. ‘What can we do to make that all the spectators are equally close to the artists?’ and ‘How can we ensure that everyone, even the smaller, are able to see every detail of the concert from anywhere in the venue?’ are only two examples of these key findings. However, the rest of them can be read in section 8.2. Therefore, each of the key findings represents a priceless information that can be used by designers and engineers for the conception of innovative product, service or system developments, which fulfil the most deeper, both physical and metaphysical, user needs in the concert area.

**REFLECTIONS**

I can't avoid starting this section by explaining the difficulties I faced at the beginning of the research, at the time of developing the research proposal. As an engineer, my mind was used to work adopting the classical perspective of problem-solution (Shaw, 2001), when you usually have a clear problem, and you need to systematically obtain the best solution among all the possible ones. For instance, in the concert area, an exciting problem could have been “small spectators can’t see the stage when they have taller people in front of them”, and then I should have had to squeeze my brain to find the best idea of a product or system that could solve the specified problem, allowing small people to see everything on the stage. However, in this case nobody was telling me the explicit problem, so I couldn’t solve anything without previously having a real problem in mind. Then... what are the problems in concerts? I have attended hundreds of concerts during my life and I have always enjoyed them so much. Apparently they work pretty well for me and everyone seems to enjoy live music concerts quite a lot. Of course, sometimes I end the concert with a backache, or I feel that the music volume is too high and I can't do anything, but how can I be sure of the real problems people find when attending concerts? At this point, I had to change my mind and go from Product Developer to Researcher in the field of experience design. And, even when at the beginning this transition wasn't easy to me, I could slowly comprehend the importance of this research, as the true necessities of the users –in this case concert attendees– might not be easy to see at first sight, and most of the times they can even be unknown to the users themselves. In a field with apparently not many problems, it is vital to deeply dig into user’s mind and experiences, and once the experience is completely understood by the researcher, plenty of “problems” will appear without a doubt, as I have been able to prove during the present research. Therefore, this kind of research is strongly necessary as a previous stage of the problem-solution classical approach.
As I previously did in the document, I would like to reflect on the difference that this research presents over the other researches that are usually done in the field of experience design, and especially at the Experience-based Designing Centre.

On one hand, I had a notorious previous experience as a concert attendee. This fact can be both an advantage and a disadvantage at the same time, because while it is much easier to start researching about something that is not completely new for you, the previous experience can easily create preconceptions about what others may think or feel and about the concert experience in general. For instance, if I had researched about disabled people in the bathroom area, I would not probably have had any kind of preconceived idea because the field would be completely new to me, but at the same time I would be so inexperienced that probably the research would have required more embodiments and time.

And on the other hand, my research represents a novelty for the Experience-based Designing Centre because the topic differs considerably from the common topics that are carried by the researchers at the Centre, usually more related to the Healthcare area, medical domains and disabilities, to name a few. My research can be understood as the proof of the possibilities that Experience-based Designing may offer in any kind of field and topic.

Another reflection, which has also been mentioned earlier in the document, is about the difficulties that I have faced in order to deal with the different limitations of the research, especially time and economic limitations. I came to Denmark for a certain period of time, five and a half months, and consequently the research had to be finished during this period. In order to achieve the objective, I have had to follow the scheduled planning and work hard to complete every phase of the research on time. It has been particularly hard during the understanding and analysis phase, due to the difficulty of the transcription and treatment of all the collected data with the SEEing (lite) method. Personally, I would have liked to have a faster methodology, as the SEEing method is very time consuming. However, I understand the difficulty of treating a large amount of qualitative data and the complication of doing it in a quickly way. I would like to note, also, the impossibility to profoundly develop the five ideas and concepts proposed, due to time limitations. I would have liked to be able to dig deeper into those concepts, and even trying to find more than just five ideas. Nevertheless, I think that considering the limitations, those 5 concepts serve for the proposal of exemplifying the process of moving from the research to conceptual design of products, services and systems.

I have learnt many things by doing this research, but one of the most important aspects that I found is that giving the voice to the people, listening to their stories, opinions, feelings and understanding their experiences is the key factor for the success of new products, services or systems. In this sense, it is not only
interesting to listen to what people says (users, customers, and in this case spectators) but to understand the way they say it, why they say it, how it sounds and comprehend the real meaning, sometimes hidden, of their words and desires. The human experience must be at the base of every trustworthy innovative design process to ensure the success of the product, service or system.

However, I think it may not be easy to extract precise conclusions by only considering 6 people and myself. Coming back to the limitations, they have been an enormous influence to this fact: if I had had more time, I could have talked with more participants, gathered an even bigger amount of data, having the time to analyze it. Of course, this research is enough to have a general picture of what the experience is about, but as every human is unique an individual, what may be interesting for someone, can be tedious for another one. There are many different modern music styles and bands, and each of them has a certain audience, with different ways of understanding and enjoying the concert experience. For example, I found in the (I can’t get no) Satisfaction category of the experience that spectators don’t want to feel very strong and disturbing high-pitched sound which may damage their hearing. Nevertheless, it is sometimes the case —for example in some heavy metal or hardcore concerts— when having extremely high music volumes is part of the experience and ear damage is a must: for those kind of fans, the craziness of the moment and the lost of common sense act as a sufficient reason to enjoy a —commonly— disturbing noise. Therefore, I guess that even when this thesis results are accurate for the general audience, particular cases could not be covered by this research. I think this is one of the biggest difficulties that I have faced during the research.

Finally, I would like to add, as a short reflection, my global thoughts about the topic and the importance of the small music bands and small venues. As I see it, music bands are similar to small companies: they are a group of individuals who need to work hard together on the development of a product (their music), trying to sell that product (in the form of live music or recorded music) to the higher number of clients possible (spectators) in order to make some money and continue creating more products. There are a few big corporations and plenty of small companies, who are interconnected in business to deliver better products. As well as there are a lot of small bands around the world and just a few superstars and super-famous bands, and all of them are interconnected in some way. It is nowadays the use of personal computers, and more precisely the generalized use of the Internet communications, what is allowing both these small companies and small bands to survive and make a living working hard to survive in this competitive world, and not only without fearing the larger corporations, but interconnecting with them. These small bands need to play live concerts to sell their product and make a living, and therefore the creation of new design opportunities in the live concert experience is of high value to them especially and to the Music Industry in general.
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