

The rise and fall of live online music event consumption during the pandemic: an analysis from the perspective of practice theory

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Abstract

The phenomenon of watching live online music events became popular during the COVID-19 pandemic as a leisure activity practiced at home while social distancing. For 3 months, they were part of the routine of Brazilians and foreigners, before exponentially losing their audience. This trajectory is the object of research for this paper, studied under the prism of practice theory to understand the elements that form this consumption practice, its synchrony with other everyday practices, and external phenomena that act in the consolidation (or not) of a practice. In-depth interviews were conducted with 24 practitioners, and the results were analyzed through a thematic analysis. The findings provide clues as to why the practice declined, emphasizing the overlapping of practices belonging to the routine created during social distancing and the reduction of the initial originality (understanding) of more intimate lives that get lost in the search for innovations in practice. Possible developments in the future of post-pandemic live events and theoretical and managerial contributions are also discussed.

Keywords: COVID-19. Live online music events. Practice theory. Elements of practice. Consumption.

A ascensão e decadência do consumo de lives musicais durante a pandemia: uma análise sob o prisma da teoria da prática

Resumo

O fenômeno de assistir *lives* musicais popularizou-se durante a pandemia do COVID-19, enquanto um ato de lazer dentro de casa. Durante três meses elas pertenceram à rotina de brasileiros e estrangeiros, para então perder audiência de forma exponencial. Essa trajetória é o objeto de pesquisa desse trabalho, estudada sob o prisma da teoria da prática, o qual buscou entender os elementos formadores dessa prática de consumo, sua sincronia com outras práticas do cotidiano, bem como fenômenos externos que atuam na consolidação (ou não) de uma prática. Para tal, foram coletadas entrevistas em profundidade com 24 praticantes, sendo os resultados analisados por meio de uma análise temática. Os achados dão pistas sobre os motivos pelos quais a prática decaiu, com destaque para a sobreposição de práticas pertencentes à rotina criada no isolamento social pelos praticantes, e redução da originalidade (entendimento) inicial de *lives* mais intimistas, que se perdem em meio à busca por inovações na prática. Possíveis desdobramentos sobre o futuro das *lives* pós pandemia, contribuições teóricas e gerenciais também são discutidos.

Palavras-chave: COVID-19. Lives musicais. Teoria da prática. Elementos da prática. Consumo.

El auge y la decadencia del consumo de lives musicales durante la pandemia: un análisis desde la perspectiva de la teoría de la práctica

Resumen

El fenómeno de ver *lives* musicales se hizo popular durante la pandemia de COVID-19, como un acto de ocio en casa. Durante tres meses pertenecieron a la rutina de brasileños y extranjeros, y luego perdieron su audiencia de manera exponencial. Esta trayectoria es el objeto de investigación de este trabajo, estudiada bajo el prisma de la teoría de la práctica, que buscó comprender los elementos que forman esta práctica de consumo, su sincronía con otras prácticas cotidianas, así como los fenómenos externos que actúan en la consolidación (o no) de una práctica. Para ello, se realizaron entrevistas en profundidad a 24 practicantes, y los resultados se analizaron mediante un análisis temático. Los hallazgos dan pistas sobre las razones por las que la práctica declinó, con énfasis en la superposición de prácticas pertenecientes a la rutina creada en el aislamiento social por los practicantes, y la reducción de la originalidad (opinión) inicial de *lives* más intimistas, que se pierden en medio de la búsqueda de innovaciones en la práctica. También se discuten los posibles desarrollos sobre el futuro de las *lives* postpandemia y las contribuciones teóricas y gerenciales.

Palabras clave: COVID-19. Lives musicales. Teoría de la práctica. Elementos de la práctica. Consumo.

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spread across the continents during 2020, causing a worldwide pandemic. The virus is the successor to SARS and was discovered in 2019, and due to the lack of prognosis and a vaccine, World Health Organization and health agencies suggested several measures to limit the propagation of the virus, including social distancing (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). With social distancing, many public space activities were restricted, impacting several sectors, including culture, leisure, entertainment, and tourism (Guidolini & R. S. Silva, 2020; Sousa, L. V. H. A. S. Ribeiro, Santos, Soares, & Raasch, 2020).

Social distancing changed individuals worldwide' daily routine and relationships, transforming the home into a work and leisure habitat (O. C. F. Ribeiro, Santana, Tengan, L. W. M. Silva, & Nicolas, 2020; Teodoro, Brito, Camargo, M. R. Silva, & Bramantes, 2020). Leisure is contemporarily understood as stress relief, beneficial for physical and mental health, especially during the pandemic (Clemente & Stoppa, 2020; Ficanha et al., 2020; O. C. F. Ribeiro et al., 2020). Individual mental health is potentially destabilized by social distancing and the pandemic due to feelings of helplessness, boredom, loneliness, sadness, and fear, which in turn may contribute to increased levels of stress and anxiety, depression, among other collateral effects (Pereira et al., 2020; Lima, 2020).

Social media played a fundamental part in mitigating these effects, shortening perceived physical distances, bringing families together, as well as contributing to leisure in general, and saw a significant increase in use during the pandemic (Clemente & Stoppa, 2020; Ficanha et al., 2020; O. C. F. Ribeiro et al., 2020; Teodoro et al., 2020). Among popular online leisure activities, live music events were highlighted (Lupinacci, 2021).

Online live events are not a consequence of the pandemic. It had existed since 2008 when YouTube began allowing for live broadcasting, and intensifying from 2011, as major music festivals such as Lollapalooza, Coachella, and the Salvador Festival, previously only televised, joined the platform, allowing for a broader reach, redefining potential audience numbers (Sá & Bittencourt, 2014). Despite attracting users' attention across popular platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, these events still occupied a secondary position in user habits (Lupinacci, 2021). During the pandemic, user habits would change, and watching online live events gained in popularity in Brazil during February to April under the hashtag "*fiqueemcasa*" (stay at home) from a general need for leisure inside domestic environment, as well as in collecting of donations for the disadvantaged (Clemente & Stoppa, 2020; Cruz, 2020a; Guidolini & R. S. Silva, 2020; Lupinacci, 2021; Sousa et al., 2020). In evidence is that in the ranking of the ten largest audiences on YouTube, seven are from Brazil (including first and second place), culled from online live broadcasts during the pandemic (Cruz, 2020a), attended by a total of 85 million Brazilians.

However, watching live music events online saw a drastic drop in popularity, where Google searches for online live events had declined 67% by July compared to April, and by August had dropped an additional 41% (Cruz, 2020b). The online live music events even showed signs of resumption, but the search and engagement numbers do not come close to the 2021 phenomenon (Neves & Ortega, 2021). To have a basis for comparison, according to data extracted from YouTube, while the most watched online live music events by Marília Mendonça in 2020 exceed 50 million views, the most watched live of this year did not exceed 4 million views.

The reasons observed were saturation, either due to many online live music events on offer or due to a drop in adherence to recommended social distancing (Cruz, 2020b; Rosário, 2020). For the point of view adopted throughout this study, investigation of the phenomenon goes beyond human necessity, encompassing the consumption of online live music events as a practice, a set of activities, of doings and sayings, formed by understandings, procedures, engagements, and consumer items (Warde, 2005). This study suggests that the decline in attendance of online live music events would be more related to the strength of the elements mentioned above, reconfigured for the context of the pandemic, such as social distancing, synergy with other practices in daily life, as well as the strength of external factors affecting the normalization and consolidation of the practice.

This study is dedicated to understanding the rise and decline in consumption of online live music events. According to practice theory (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2001; Warde, 2005), social order is defined by practices in the collaborative environment, by way of elements which, when stimulated, come together in a juncture of doings and sayings that, when acted out, configure

and may (or may not) consolidate themselves. The level of consolidation depends on the strength of those elements and the connections between them (Philip, Ozanne, & Ballantine, 2019; M. Salo, Mattinen-Yurjev, & Nissinen, 2019), their synergy with other daily practices of the individual - here labeled a “practitioner” (Devaney & Davies, 2017; Hebrok & Heidenstrøm, 2019), as well as external factors that may aid in the normalization and consolidation of the practice (Bulmer, Elms, & Moore, 2018; Heisserer & Rau, 2017). The proposition that arises then investigates how these various elements interact to obtain a complete understanding of the phenomenon.

Theoretically, this study sees its innovation in focusing on the online live music event as a phenomenon, investigating its trajectory, systemically, the restructuring of its elements due to external stimuli, the strength of these elements, their synergy and resistance met on the path towards normalization of the practice, while searching for indications of a possible consolidation or decline (Retamal, 2019). In addition to an in-depth theoretical investigation of the empirical object in question, this study also meets a latent demand for further investigation of the practices of multiple forms of listening to music, as well as its new subjects and devices (Fuentes, Hagberg, & Kjellberg, 2019). This research is, most likely, the first one about the consumption of online live music events from the perspective of practice theory. From an economic viewpoint, this study may inspire better marketing strategies through its research on the factors that come into play to form an established practice and generate continuous consumption that extends beyond the uncertain future brought on by the pandemic.

The results show a weakness in the elements that comprise the consumption of online live music events. It highlights the importance of considering the strength of the elements that build the practice, and their synchrony with other traditional and consolidated practices that order the practitioner’s daily life. The article is divided into the theoretical foundation, providing an overview of the theory of practice and the practice of consuming music and online live music events; a description of the method used; the results divided into the broad categories of Sauerbronn, Teixeira, and Lodi (2019) and Warde (2005) and; final considerations, contributions, and suggestions for future research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Consumption practices

Reckwitz (2002) defines practices, or *praktik*, as routine behavior, consisting of a variety of interconnected elements – mental and physical activities, objects and their uses, knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, emotional state as well as motivational knowledge. A practice depends on these elements’ existence and interrelations and cannot be reduced to any single element. In turn, individuals act as carriers of practices, diverse, and often not coordinated with each other. Thus, a practice is a form of routine in which bodies move, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described, and the world is understood.

Most practices require or imply consumption. Here, consumption is beyond simple monetary exchange and is defined by Warde (2005) as a process by which agents engage in appropriation and appreciation, for practical, expressive, or contemplative use, of goods, services, performances, information, and scenarios actively sought out or not, for which the agent has specific criteria. Therefore, consumption is not just a practice but an element of each practice (Warde, 2005).

The practice, as an entity, can be stimulated by change, for example, through the introduction of new technologies, such as automated checkout counters in supermarkets (Bulmer et al., 2018), sustainable product-service systems (Mylan, 2015), carbon emission calculators (Naus & van der Horst, 2017) and Smart – Grid energy resource control systems (M. Salo et al., 2019); through institutional programs, such as pro-environmental business policies (T. Hargreaves, 2011; Heisserer & Rau, 2017) changes in the design of television programs (Pettersen, 2016), websites (Philip et al., 2019) own product (Gruen, 2017) and government programs, such as dietary control systems (O’Keefe, McMachlan, Gough, Mander, & Bowis-Larkin, 2016), food waste awareness-raising policies (Hebrok & Heidenstrøm, 2019), research in sustainable domestic cooking practices (Devaney & Davies, 2017) and economic reform (Hansen, 2017).

In conclusion, these articles show that the practice's strength lies in the coupling of its forming elements, directly proportional to its resistance to changes and innovations (Mylan, 2015; Pettersen, 2016). Therefore, successful interventions must take into account all forming elements of the practice, which support the nodes in the juncture of sayings and doings, strengthens them, and increases the probability that changes may successfully establish and integrate themselves within daily routine (Gruen, 2017, Naus & van der Horst, 2017; Philip et al., 2019; M. Salo et al., 2019). These elements must work in synergy, which may require compromises within both new and existing elements, between new practices and those already established in daily life – which highlights the need for broader knowledge so that the intervention and resulting reorganization of the practice can be effective (Devaney & Davies, 2017; T. Hargreaves, 2011; Hebrok & Heidenstrøm, 2019; Naus & van der Horst, 2017; Nyborg, 2015; O'Keefe et al., 2016).

The practitioner's routine is formed by a series of practices that shape up his daily life, and when he joins a new practice or reorganizes an existing one, it must work in harmony with the others, supporting them or being supported by them, as they compete for time and space in the practitioner's daily life (House, 2019; Koponen & Niva, 2020; Plessz & Étile, 2019; Robinson & Arnould, 2019). These practitioners can then face challenges when they cannot fit this practice within this nexus, or when they cannot emotionally stick to the practice – like the others that belong to his daily life; as well as when someone cannot feel responsible for the change that this new practice will incite in his/her daily life (Gonzalez-Arcos, Joubert, Scaraboto, Guesalaga, & Sandberg, 2021).

A practice of consumption does not exist in a vacuum. It is part of a juncture of adjacent and supporting practices (Schatzki, 1996; Warde, 2005). The **strength of external factors** – such as social pressure, supply systems, affective nature, media rhetoric, contact with harmful situations throughout life, and prescriptions – are also pointed as normalization factors of new practices throughout their social evolution (Bulmer et al., 2018; Hansen, 2017; Heisserer & Rau, 2017), in addition to its **contextual nature**, that is, for successful intervention, it becomes necessary to frame the practice socially and geographically (Devaney & Davies, 2017).

Music consumption practices

Music consumption as a practice is part of human culture, serving multiple purposes, such as leisure, therapy, learning (Cockrill, Sullivan, & Norbury, 2011), configuring itself around three objectives/engagements: (1) emotional regulation – the extent to which music may evoke particular feelings in an individual; (2) achieving self-awareness, which involves cognitive and emotional aspects, in terms of forming of personal identity and perception of self through social interaction and music consumption and; (3) establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, connecting with other individuals and provoking a sense of belonging (D. J. Hargreaves & North, 1999; Hesmondhalgh, 2008; Hollebeek, Malthouse, & Block, 2016; Schäfer, Seldmeier, Städtler, & Huron, 2013). Besides, Hollebeek et al. (2016) draw attention to musically infused states of escapism, amusement, and relaxation.

Music consumption practices have undergone a series of changes over the last few decades, mainly related to digitalization, which has allowed the ubiquity of music, accessed, limitlessly, at any time and place, without the need for physical storage and without the obligation of listening to a complete album in order to find the desired song (Cockrill et al., 2011; Morris & Powers, 2015; Sinclair, Tinson, & Dolan, 2019). This availability and pervasiveness changed the musical experience, promoting casual listening, often from the periphery of human attention, a blending-in with other practices, whether moving around a city, driving during a trip, going to the gym, jogging, working, functioning as support or encouraging element of these practices (Bull, 2005; Denegri-Knott, 2005; Fuentes et al., 2019; Heye & Lamont, 2010; Kerrigan, Larsen, Hanratty, & Korta, 2014; Sinclair et al., 2019), provoking a positive response during inappropriate consumption contexts (North & D. J. Hargreaves, 2000), where the individual adjusts consumption according to the demands of different spaces (Sinclair et al., 2019).

In the present context, social media platforms become essential, shortening the distance between consumers and artists, creating a sense of affinity and promoting interaction between participants, reinforcing their social identity, increasing the possible scope and geographical reach of the online live music event, where interactions both shape and are shaped by the meanings, perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences with the artist or brand, and continuously re-negotiated within a cultural and conceptual space (Obiegbu, Larsen, Ellis, & O'Reilly, 2018; J. Salo, Lankinen & Mäntymäki, 2013).

Social media also allowed for the broadcasting of live music events on digital platforms, reconfiguring the definitions of audience and entertainment (Sá & Bittencourt, 2014), intensified, redefined, and popularized during social distancing brought on by the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 (Clemente & Stoppa, 2020; Lupinacci, 2021; Sousa et al., 2020). The practice of attending online live music events became one of domestic leisure, bringing a sense of intimacy with - and the vulnerability of the artist into focus, and saw a dramatic surge in popularity from February to April 2020 with audiences of 85 million (Cruz, 2020a, 2020b), to the benefit of mental health of Brazilians and foreigners who, deprived of conventional forms of outdoor leisure, obtained relief in their lives; in addition to supporting artists disadvantaged by the pandemic and; in aiding the vulnerable population, a target of philanthropy in online live performances (Clemente & Stoppa, 2020; Ficanha et al., 2020; Guidolini & R. S. Silva, 2020; Lima, 2020; Pereira et al., 2020; O. C. F. Ribeiro et al., 2020; Sousa et al., 2020).

The redesigned online live music events during the pandemic state are configured as live musical performances inside the artists' houses, aiming to bring leisure to those at home and raise funds for people in vulnerable situations (Clemente & Stoppa, 2020; Sousa et al., 2020). According to four criteria, they differ from previous formats: temporality, spatiality, sense of reality, and sociability (Lupinacci, 2021). Temporality involves the originality, non-reproducibility, and instantaneity of performance – which is similar to performances not mediated by technology – but at the same time involves performance with technology itself, which denotes, for example, the need for broadcast quality (Lupinacci, 2021). Spatiality is located within the artist's space, where the backstage becomes part of the attraction and denotes little production and a possibility of proximity between artist and audience (Araujo & Cipiniuk, 2020; Lupinacci, 2021). The sense of reality denotes the performance spontaneity, with an absence of a script and an apparent lack of filter (Lupinacci, 2021). Finally, sociability is considered one of the most significant points regarding the redesigned online live music events: a sense of collectivity is created and maintained even in the face of social isolation - participants are led to interact with friends and strangers in chats and social networks, as well as with the artist himself who reads comments, asks for song suggestions, among other types of interaction (M. A. Aguiar & L. A. Aguiar, 2021; Lupinacci, 2021).

METHODS

The empirical portion of this study results from field research, consisting of 24 in-depth interviews conducted from June 4th to July 23rd 2020. These interviews lasted from 00:32:09s to 01:07:12s, counting a total of 18:40 hours of interviews, with 151,784 words transcribed. The interviews took place during the pandemic, were conducted through an online conference platform, and transcribed manually.

The interviews were conducted in Portuguese, analyzed, and the results were translated into English. Participants were recruited through initial advertisements posted on the authors' social media and then through snowballing. The sample size was determined through saturation. Around the twentieth interview, the data started to become repetitive and did not offer new data patterns, and then, four more interviews were carried out to confirm the saturation criterion. Box 1 presents an overview of the respondents' profile regarding gender, age, occupation, with whom they live, and how many online live music events they have attended.

Box 1
Sample profile

	Gender	Age	Occupation	Lives with	Number
I1	F	32	Dentist	Daughter	9
I2	M	28	Doctoral student	Parents and brother	9
I3	F	26	Doctoral student	Friends	8
I4	F	23	Master’s student	Friends	Between 15-20
I5	F	43	Social worker	Son and daughter	7
I6	F	21	Graduation student	Parents	8
I7	M	22	Graduation student	Girlfriend and mother	Between 5-6
I8	F	27	Public employee	Brother and mother	5
I9	F	36	Public administrator	Husband	10
I10	F	20	Graduation student	Mother and brother	7
I11	F	38	Professor	Alone	Between 10-15
I12	M	21	Graduation student	Parents and two brothers	10
I13	M	19	Graduation student	Grandmother, mother and brother	Between 5-6
I14	F	19	Graduation student	Mother and stepfather	12
I15	F	19	Graduation student	Parents, sister and godson	5
I16	F	19	Graduation student	Parents	7
I17	F	21	Supermarket attendant	Mother, sister and girlfriend	3
I18	F	23	Graduation student	Mother and two sisters	Between 5-6
I19	M	28	Professor	Friends	Around 12
I20	F	25	financial coordinator	Friends	7
I21	M	33	Public employee	Parents	Around 20
I22	F	32	Public employee	Alone	7
I23	F	30	Researcher	Parents and brother	Between 5-6
I24	F	27	Administrator	Girlfriend	Between 10-12

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In-depth interviews have been conducted in other studies of consumer behavior through the perspective of practice theory (C. Derbaix & M. Derbaix, 2019; Feiereisen, Rasolofoarison, Valck, & Schmitt, 2018; Fuentes et al., 2019; Gruen, 2017; Philip et al., 2019), under the justification of permitting the opportunity to investigate and reflect upon the behavior of practitioners, capture contemporary and historical practices, as well as allowing interviewees to discuss situations and respond to queries which, outside the present context could be considered invasive (Fuentes et al., 2019). Furthermore, the individual is a patchwork of practices, and it is through mental and assimilated *performances* that practices and their ties to consumerism may be fully understood (Feiereisen et al., 2018).

For data analysis, Thematic Analysis was employed to identify, track and report patterns within the collected data, which was organized and described in detail, following the methodology outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): (1) Data immersion, searching for significance and patterns; (2) initial coding of the data, deciding which parts are interesting for analysis; (3) searching for recurring themes, which involves grouping the codes into large potential categories - based on those proposed by Warde (2005); (4) reevaluation of themes, where codes can move and change places among themes and (5) preparing and writing down the results. The choice for thematic analysis was because major themes already existed in the literature and aimed to follow previous works that also used the theory of practice applied to consumption, such as Dyen and Siriex (2016), Nairn and Spotswood (2015), and Philip et al. (2019).

Every practice has a trajectory, a path of development, a history. The main implication of practice theory is that the source of behavioral change is rooted in the development of the practice itself. The practice is formed around an axis of practical and general understandings about what to do and how to do it; procedures, rules, instructions, and norms; and emotional and normative engagements that link practices to one another (Warde, 2005). Sauerbronn et al. (2019), following a socio-technical view, add consumption items to the analysis — as do other authors such as Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012) and Gram-Hanssen (2011) — as technologies, materials, and objects that are part of and support the practice to happen. This study will be based on these categorical elements: *understandings, procedures, engagements, and consumer items*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Understandings

Regarding practical and general understandings concerning the online live music event, the event is understood: (1) As entertainment; (2) concerning its technical quality; (3) as promoting a sense of belonging to a social context and; (4) as a form of social aid as well as promoting awareness during the pandemic.

Box 2
Understandings about the online live music event

	Entertainment	Technical	Sense of affinity, belonging	Social engagement
Definition	Meanings related to hedonism, which comprises a performance, intimacy and, spontaneity of the artist.	Related to sound, image, connectivity, and live ambiance quality.	Live’s collective experience, which involves socialization, belonging to something new, and the feeling of shared nostalgia.	Philanthropy and social awareness.
Example quote	“I think it’s been pretty cool right now, the entertainment issue, which unfortunately is very limited, [...] listening to music sometimes that doesn’t have the same vibe as a concert, where whether you like it or not, the singer is interacting with the audience, right, even if it’s online they’re interacting, acting more naturally, so this vibe is really cool” (I24 quote).	“[...] they started, and I watched for fifteen minutes and stopped because the audio was really bad [...]” (I14 quote). “But it was because, for example, the signal was dropping a lot, locking up a lot, [...]” (I4 quote).	“[...] unlike you watching a televised show, yeah, it makes many people watch it at the same time, then it gives a feeling of belonging to a group. And then my friends, some of them watched from their house, and we were able to talk at the same time about live, so I think the main advantage is that you can get together with people, even though you’re far away, that way [...]” (I4 quote).	“[...] for me, when they’re at their house it represents that, like, I’m at home, they’re doing their work and making entertainment for me, but they’re at their house too” (I10 quote).

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

For those who perceive the practice of watching an online live music event as entertainment, it is understood as a music concert, transmitted live online, available to anyone with internet access, free of charge, and far-reaching, which is consistent with the characteristics of an online live music event as formulated by Sá and Bittencourt (2014). In the context of social distancing, the online live music event also represents a way for the artist to gain visibility and to continue promoting their art in a scenario where cultural events have suffered under a multitude of restrictions (Guidolini & R. S. Silva, 2020; Sousa et al., 2020). The artist’s performance is also essential for these practitioners, denoting a change in significance, where the artist is expected to interact and identify with their audience, share anecdotes, show vulnerability in the face of social isolation, setting aside stage persona and show themselves while cooking, joking, or drinking. To paraphrase an interviewee:

“What we want the most during the pandemic is to communicate” (I6 quote). During the pandemic, the online live music event shortens the distance between artist and audience through interactions, making the practitioner want to turn off Spotify and watch the online live event.

For those who understand the online live music event in terms of its technical aspects, concepts such as sound, voice, image quality, and the importance of crash-free connection stability were mentioned. When a certain level of technical quality is not met, for example, if the transmission should fail and the problems are not corrected, these viewers withdraw from the event. For this category of practitioners, the event’s production quality is important, the value structure, scenography, and lighting. The significance of the online live music event remains close to that of a physically attended live concert, now transmitted over the internet, asynchronously, where *performance* is not as important – they are also more likely to watch the show at a later time, often an edited version without the interactive element, focusing solely on the music itself (Sá & Bittencourt, 2014).

Attending an online live music event is understood as a form of socialization with family, with a spouse or with friends – mainly through videoconference software or social networks, in an attempt to reproduce the sensation of physical proximity at a live concert in the domestic environment – or even with the other participants of the event through online live chat. All these attempts at socialization create a collective experience that accentuates a feeling of belonging and a renewal of significance compared to pre-pandemic events.

The need for belonging was related as having intensified during the beginning of the rise of the phenomenon (February through April 2020), through posts on social networks, and often involving elaborate preparation, aiming to demonstrate an affinity with the event, with that *experiential cyber-space*, and to relive sensations similar to those of pre-pandemic times (Skandalis, Banister, & Byrom, 2018; Skandalis, Byrom, & Banister, 2017). A feeling of nostalgia was also related, from musical compositions that referred to experiences before the pandemic and online live events by artists who had stopped performing otherwise and encouraged socialization, where interviewees would chat with friends, gather family, and recall the past, which highlights the importance of being in the company of peers and family to these practitioners (C. Derbaix & M. Derbaix, 2019; Meuleman, Lubbers, & Verkuyten, 2018), as well as the importance of music as a mood regulator (Hollebeek et al., 2016; Schäfer et al., 2013). However, due to the large volume of online musical live events, and the element of repetition, the novelty factor of the experience was soon in decline: “If I missed an online live music event, next week there would be another” (I4 quote).

Additionally, the online live music event changed its philanthropic character, as highlighted by a handful of interviewees who pointed out the importance of artists raising funds for charities and individuals in situations of vulnerability during the pandemic (Clemente & Stoppa, 2020; Lupinacci, 2021; Sousa et al., 2020).

Procedures

The procedures surrounding the attendance of an online live event involve: Searching for or receiving information about the event; preparations for watching the event; watching the event, and; post-event activities.

Respondents obtain their information in different ways. Some assume a playful attitude and search for online live events that have already happened, starting either from the pages of the artists they follow on social networking platforms – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, through news websites posting weekly schedules, or YouTube, which publishes time and date of upcoming performances. Others assume a passive attitude and receive their information through the artists’ social networks by notification, through friends and family, YouTube advertising, or a *digital influencer*.

Box 3
Procedures in the practice of watching online live music events

	Searching for/ receiving information	Pré-live event	During the live event	Pós-live event
Definition	How does the search for information about the date and time the live will take place?	The pre-event involves the preparation (or not) for the live.	Understands what are the explicit procedures/ explicit norms of what happens during lives.	Involves the extension or not of the leisure time.
Example quote	<p>“Oh, on the internet, there’s a website there that puts a grid, right, that consults and finds out about the lives” (I21 quote).</p> <p>“Look, sometimes I see on Instagram, an ad on Instagram, and sometimes someone comments to me, like, oh there’s going to be a guy’s live” (I8 quote).</p>	<p>“I leave it ready. And it’s usually fast food like that, because what I eat on Saturday night, right, assuming I’m at the bar, then it’s some fries over there [...] stuff like that [...]” (I6 quote).</p> <p>“Sometimes there’s no preparation at all, yeah [...] I just turn on the television, or turn on my cell phone, and keep doing things” (I5 quote).</p>	<p>“Chatting on WhatsApp too, but at most it’s [...] hangouts, live, eat and drink [...] I interacted, I always talked like this” (I6 quote).</p> <p>“We did like a warmup before the live, drinking, eating, then when the live started he plugged his cell phone into the sound of his truck, then we watched on the cell phone, and talked. And drinking and eating. Until the live ends” (I1 quote).</p> <p>“Normally we go up and watch it on TV, lying down [...] seriously I watch live lying down, without eating anything, with the bottle of water and such [...] and when I rarely went out and listened to music [...] I was drinking or eating too” (I16 quote).</p>	<p>“I am going to sleep [...] No, there were two or three that went in the afternoon [...] then it ended, and I went to dinner, like, I followed my routine. I comment, comment, like, say it was good or bad” (I16 quote).</p> <p>“I think there were twice that I was watching it with my friends, and then we looked for another live” (I6 quote).</p> <p>“I usually comment with a friend who had the live, which was cool [...] when it turns into a meme, we also comment [...] I usually put on another song [...] Yeah, I keep listening to music like this randomly, or I keep hearing music from the same singer who was playing, something like that” (I19 quote).</p>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Preparations for watching the event varies according to the purpose. The event, when purposed for individual leisure and relaxation, calls for synergy with everyday practices, coordination with previously scheduled *home office* activities, or deciding to skip watching something else in order to watch the live event (Devaney & Davies, 2017; Hebrok & Heidenstrøm, 2019; Naus & van der Horst, 2017; Nyborg, 2015) in addition to preparing internet devices and showering. The practice may involve the consumption of alcoholic beverages in order to evoke a semblance to pre-pandemic leisure activities, usually accompanied by a light snack, a change of clothes, posting on social networks, similar to the preparations before physically attending an event outside the home (Earl, 2001; Rondán-Cataluña & Martín-Ruiz, 2010; Sá & Bittencourt, 2014). The practice may not involve consumption of alcoholic beverages, and be part of a bedtime ritual, such as taking a shower, putting on pajamas, preparing the bed, enjoying an evening snack, brushing teeth; in a ritual similar to the practice which relegates the live event to background music and supplement to other activities, which may also entail preparations in order to avoid missing the beginning of the live event and the continuation of other activities, such as household chores. Some respondents related not going through any preparation, other than setting the alarm to wake up — a practitioner may learn about the live event at the last minute through social networks and start the practice as they are. When the live music event involves socializing with friends — whether via videoconference or in-person — preparations take on a semblance to those for leisure activities outside the home, involving the purchase of food and drink and dressing up. The preparation of food, drink storage, and devices’ connection occurs on the host, setting up a sound system at home or even in automobiles.

During the practice of attending an online live music event, it is noticed that a desire to be part of a collective experience is prominent, with respondents relating sharing the *link* to the event with family and friends with similar musical preferences, setting up a videoconference — that would last during a specific part of the event or throughout — commenting on the event on social networks or following their engagement. It was often sought to emulate the experience of physically attending a live concert, interviewees related beginning their event well before the live broadcast began, drinking, eating, and celebrating “as if it was a warm-up for a concert” (I1 quote). The focus can also be entirely on the live music event, with very punctual interactions, but this was rarer among respondents. In conclusion, emulating pre-pandemic conditions of live music consumption was sought out in one way or another, even for those who watched online live music events in practice similar to that of watching a movie, usually when getting ready for bed (Schäfer et al., 2013; Hollebeck, Maltthouse, & Block, 2016; Earl, 2001; Rondán-Cataluña & Martín-Ruiz, 2010).

During moments of socialization with family or spouse, the online live music event may exist as a backdrop, a soundtrack for dinners, games, drinking, or moments of relaxation resembling the practice of watching a movie. The online live music event as a focal point in these moments is rare, and music consumption is relegated to practitioners’ peripheral attention (Bull, 2005; Denegri-Knott, 2005; Heye & Lamont, 2010). While interacting on social networks, or even in the online chat section of the live music event itself prevails, the main focus is on socialization with family, where sharing of the live event with practitioners of similar musical tastes was common.

Finally, post-live music event activities tend to involve, mostly, sleeping or looking for something else to watch — a TV series, a movie, random videos on YouTube — or may involve extending leisure time listening to more music, attending other online live events, which may involve more food, drink and socializing. Participating in social media conversations is standard, and for those who use the live event to socialize by videoconference, extending the conference time further before going to sleep. It may also involve tidying up and organizing the living space.

Engagements

The practice of watching an online live music event can be motivated by a wish to complement one’s leisure activities for the weekend, as a form of palliative measure, as the social restrictions brought on by the pandemic oblige the interviewees to conduct their leisure activities within the confines of their home (Clemente & Stoppa, 2020; Lupinacci, 2021; Sousa et al., 2020).

Box 4
Engagements related to the practice of attending an online live music event

	As solitary leisure	Socializing	As background soundtrack
Definition	It works as a solitary moment of leisure, relaxation, or an escape valve.	A pretext for some socialization to occur.	The live occupies the secondary role — a supporting role — in relation to other activities performed by the practitioner.
Quote	<p>“We are very tense, right? With our situation, we are tense all the time, and when we see a live, we relax. We forget about the problems we’re experiencing” (I1 quote).</p> <p>“For me, live is a moment of [...] to take my mind off the pandemic, you know, it’s a moment like that, of relief, to get out of that context of pressure, anxiety, and everything else, and [...] have a kind of high moment, you know?” (I9 quote).</p>	<p>“Oh, I think it was a moment of interaction, right, to see other people, to socialize, but in a different way, right” (I2 quote).</p> <p>“As today you don’t have this presence of people at home, what we do to replace that is maybe what I told you, send a message “Oh, it’s playing that song we liked” or “Oh, I I’m watching it here, see there too, watch it there too” (I11 quote).</p>	<p>“If it’s a day when I have more activity, I can listen to the live and tidy the house, cleaning for example, making lunch, washing clothes, whatever” (I19 quote).</p> <p>“Working out is very rare, but it can happen in the afternoon. If you’re playing live in the afternoon and I’m working out, this has already happened [...] Yeah [...] cooking is also normal, because then I leave the sound in my room a little louder and go to the kitchen (I12 quote).</p>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The online live music event is a type of leisure that encourages social interaction, whether virtual or in-person (Obiegbo et al., 2018; Sá & Bittencourt, 2014; J. Salo et al., 2013). The live events shared interactively with distant friends, bring people together online to comment, share video clips, *memes*, and pieces of music, watching and interacting through social networks, a facilitator of the practice and the collective experience of watching online live music events (Ficanha et al., 2020; Lupinacci, 2021; Teodoro et al., 2020). Some may opt for video conferencing as a way to mitigate physical distance, attempting to bring the experience of attending the online live event as close to that of pre-pandemic socializing as possible. Furthermore, some ignore recommended social distancing, gathering in smaller quantities to watch the online live music event, placing focus on the event itself; or to socialize, where the event is relegated to the background as if it was pre-recorded, or a *Spotify* playlist, while chatting, interacting, or playing games. The online live event may also be part of a family gathering, employed by some interviewees as a frame for a family dinner, barbecue, as a time of family relaxation during the pandemic. In these moments, respondents put aside their personal musical preferences to please others and use the online live music event as a backdrop for socializing with family members.

When the interviewee cannot attend the live event in real-time, when it cannot be watched uninterrupted, or when watching it for a second time, the meaning of the online live music event changes. It becomes a soundtrack to other activities that the individual may perform (Fuentes et al., 2019; Kerrigan et al., 2014; Sinclair et al., 2019) not unlike listening to a regular live album on a digital platform. A few practitioners related that the online live music event was never a primary focus, always forming a backdrop for everyday leisure or domestic activities.

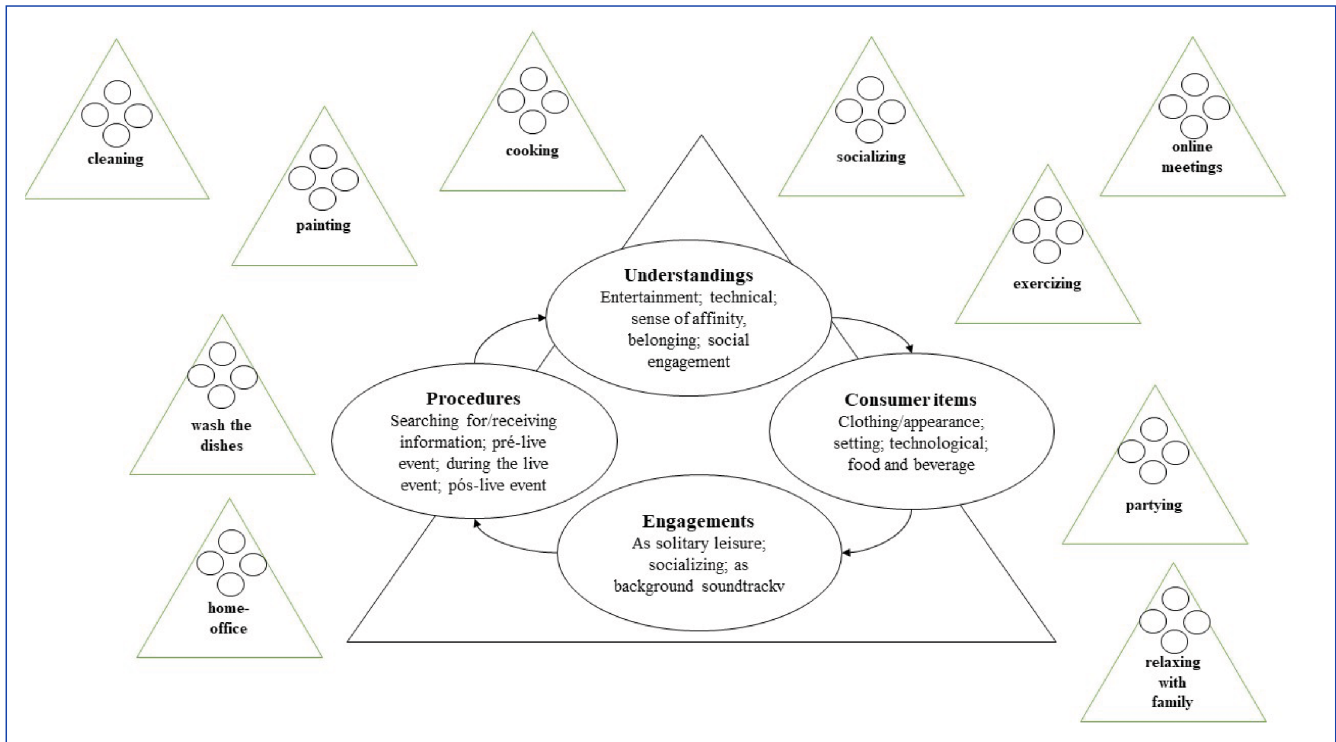
Consumer items

According to the engagements mentioned previously, certain consumer items were fundamental elements of each practice. For analysis, these items were divided into four major groups: Clothing/appearance, setting, technological, and food and beverage items.

Clothing and personal appearance are important elements. Pajamas are worn when there is no intention of socializing or recreating an experience of leisure similar to going out. Respondents also report getting dressed up in some practices, which may involve doing hair and makeup but are limited to the practices that focus on socializing, either face-to-face or online.

The setting is divided between bedroom, kitchen, living room, external area, and weekend residence. A bedroom can be configured for watching an online live event in a way that resembles watching a movie, involving at the most a simple meal and the practitioner casually prepared for going to sleep. In this case, the setting involves a sofa or bed, covers, pillows, food, and the company of parents or a pet. When a bedroom or living room is configured for leisure involving alcohol or socializing, other objects may be present, such as a desk, coffee table, dining table and chairs, bed, hammock, board games. Socializing may occur in the kitchen while dinner is being prepared, with the setting involving a table, a chair, and a stove. In an outdoor area, the setting can involve a barbecue, a swimming pool, games.

Figure 1
The practice of watching online live music events and the nexus to which it belongs



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Concerning technological items, computers and televisions are the most used, mainly because cell phones may limit social interaction, which is part of almost all practices. It involves the internet and a modem. The cell phone, involving a headset or not, works as a device, especially when the live event is relegated to being a soundtrack for other activities. Chargers are always nearby, as are power outlets - and when they are not, extension cords are present.

Finally, a prominent element in almost all practices is the consumption of food and drink, involving all the necessary utensils – cups, plates, trays, cutlery, refrigerator – and when the food calls for further preparation or is a full meal, other cooking paraphernalia – pots, stove, silverware, may be involved. The act of smoking is part of this procedure for some practitioners. It is reiterated that there are practices where food and drink are not present, mostly when the live music event is relegated to background music status when consumed as one would a movie or as part of a bedtime ritual. Figure 1 represents the practice of watching online live music events, based on interviews conducted, and the nexus of practices that comprise daily life.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The practice of attending online live music events, previously limited to sporadic transmissions from shows or festivals such as Coachella and Lollapalooza (Sá & Bittencourt, 2014), had its format redefined and popularized during the period of social distancing caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Lupinacci, 2020; Souza et al., 2020). The practice was stimulated and underwent a reconfiguration of its elements. Its nature was transformed, from transmissions of large concert events to intimate performances. Motives of engagement changed to maintaining a sense of belonging, promoting a collective experience mitigating feelings of isolation, either virtually or personally, reformulating the experience of leisure in a context where the entertainment sector had suffered a series of restrictions.

This reconfiguration of elements, in turn, generated conflicts. Firstly, regarding free time, which had to be allocated among other leisure activities and home office work. Practitioners, accustomed to isolation, would search for new hobbies and activities to fill their daily lives, social distancing adherence rates were dropping, as live broadcasts assumed a supporting role in online media. Secondly, the practice's fragility manifested itself when its primary purpose was to recreate leisure "*as it was the weekend before the pandemic*" (I7 quote), for example, in a practitioner's attempt to emulate the circumstances of physically attending a concert event at a venue. Thirdly, in innovation, changing scenarios, producing new artistic partnerships, which affected the reframed elements of the practice, such as the sense of intimacy with an artist or self-awareness in the face of isolation. Fourthly, the element of belonging was also gradually lost, where the interest in the collective experience of virtually socializing as opposed to physically began to decline, demonstrated in reduced levels of engagement on social networks and less preparation and elaboration.

Most respondents sensed the weakening insignificance of the practice and suggested a return to something similar to pre-pandemic reality: Online live events to promote a specific event or concert, but less frequent and with less clamor. Some interviewees, who managed to integrate the practice with their daily routine, either because it was already a practice before the pandemic, or because they used the moment for socialization — online or in-person — saw a favorable scenario, aiming to watch an online live event with friends, inside or outside the home environment. Nevertheless, in any case, the configuration of the post-pandemic practice elements would be different and deserve to be the subject of further research.

As a theoretical contribution, this study, even of a temporary phenomenon, could trace the practice's trajectory since its emergence, through the resistance caused by a lack of synergy with other practices, then weakened by comparison with already consolidated elements, until its decline. Even though the present study employs a transversal approach, it was possible to observe indications of what leads a practice to fail to firmly establish itself in its practitioners' daily lives, reinforcing the explanatory potential of practice theory when applied more broadly. Another theoretical contribution concerns musical consumption and the consumption of online live events, looking beyond individual and structural bias, to understand the practices that shape this consumption, demonstrating that in addition to individual taste, the practice of attending online live events must be inserted in the context of daily routine, also depending on the sense of belonging, level of awareness and identification of the practitioner, as well as the strength of the elements that form the practice, in order to be successful.

Finally, within the field of marketing research, it is believed that studies in the area of consumer behavior hold promising contributions through applying practice theory as it allows an understanding of consumption as ongoing accomplishments that are situated in the intersections of everyday practices and social relations (Halkier & Jensen, 2011), thus advancing the understanding of the complex phenomenon that is consumption.

From an economic viewpoint, so that the practice can consolidate as an ongoing phenomenon not specific to the pandemic, its forming elements must be reinforced in order to further the possibility of synergy with already established practices and support applied at the junctures of practices that form the daily life of the practitioner, strengthening the continuity of the consumption of online live events. The possibility of employing the online live event as a more personal form of communication rather than a replacement for the experience of attending a conventional concert event in person may be a path of great potential for diversification and for minimizing the distance between artist and audience.

The main limiting factor of the research was the collection of data solely through interviews. For future research, the adoption of multiple methodologies is suggested, such as secondary data analysis, photo-narrative processing, participant observations, and data retrieval at intervals over an extended period. The present study results were drawn from middle-class practitioners with easy access to the internet, in the predominant age group from 18 to 40. Individual behavior may vary according to socioeconomic level and demographics and proficiency in handling and access to the necessary technology, meriting further investigation. Many practices have been reframed during the pandemic, such as shopping, working, eating (both inside and outside the home), and other practices that have become popular, especially in electronic commerce. These fields promise a vast potential for an investigation into their possible consolidation in the near — and uncertain — future induced by the pandemic.

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