



## Societal Discrimination and its impact on Live Music Industry in Pakistan

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### Abstract

*The global live music industry has become a significant income resource for national economies and artists associated with the music industry. Unfortunately, the live music industry could not contribute to the national economy and support artists in Pakistan due to certain factors. This study was carried out to investigate the influences of factors such as societal discrimination (SD) and lack of government support (LGS) on the live music industry in Pakistan. The online questionnaire was designed to collect data and collected data from 203 artists was analysed by employing SPSS techniques. The results of this study showed that both factors had an adverse impact on the live music industry.*

**Keywords:** Music industry, Statistical analysis, societal discrimination.

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## INTRODUCTION:

The business model of the music industry has changed after rapid development of technology and it has changed income resources of music artists. The artists have two income resources i.e., “royalties from recorded music sales and live performances” (Cho et al. 2017). Due to a decrease in recorded music’s sales, the artists’ source of income significantly switched to live performances from royalties on recorded music’s sales (Krueger 2005). For example, globally the music industry’s revenue registered an increase from US\$14.2b (billion) in 2004 to US\$17.3b. While, the live music industry’s revenue in the United States amounted to US\$9b in 2015. In 2016, the market of live music performance in China generated a revenue of around RMB¥4.81b (Chinese Yuan) (Statista, 2019a; Statista, 2019b). Additionally, live music shows, events, and festivals are becoming more popular in India (FICCI, 2018). Furthermore, the live music industry in the United Kingdom (UK) outperformed recorded music in 2011 (Frith 2007; Ashcroft 2011).

In the context of Pakistan, the sales of recorded music declined from US\$10.5m (million) to US\$9m between 1999 and 2000 and, it was US\$6.2m in 2001. Later, a small surge of US\$8.2m was observed in 2002, and it boomed again to US\$38.1m in 2003 and US\$40.1m in 2004 (IFPI, 2001; IFPI, 2002; IFPI, 2003; IFPI, 2004; IFPI, 2005). The sales of the album continued until 2007 and within three years of that time, sales went on par and then sales of recorded music started to dwindle before completely grinding to a halt (Syed 2017).

After a decline in album sales, live music events (especially concerts) have often been the bread and butter of the country’s musicians (Asad 2016). However, since the last decade, the frequency of live music events are dying. Figure (1) illustrates a sharp drop in the frequency of concerts in Pakistan from 2001 to 2016 and later, showed some improvement in the frequency of live concerts from 2017. However, there are some factors which have affected the frequency of live music events. Among them, societal discrimination (SD) and lack of government support (LGS) are major factors. The discrimination arose because “traditionally the caste “Meerassi” associated with music is considered an inferior one among the hierarchy of castes, whose job is to play music and entertain people and are looked down upon by people” (Rana et al., 2011). Aside from this, an issue like lack of government support (LGS) also emerged because there is no specific policy for promoting the live music industry, which also decreased the frequency of live music events in Pakistan.

Because of these two factors, the artist faced a lot of problems and could not avail opportunities to perform and so, famous singers and musicians left the country to avail good opportunities abroad and some of them did not leave the country but frequently traveled abroad for performing at concerts. However, there are still some singers who did not leave despite such challenges and are struggling for their livelihood and the promotion of music. These strugglers are not availing sufficient opportunities of performing. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine whether there is any influence or relationship between these factors i.e., societal discrimination (SD) and lack of government support (LGS) on or with the

frequency of live music events.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework has been developed by assuming the following hypothesizes:

**HA1:** To investigate the relationship between the frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) and Societal Discrimination (SD).

**HA2:** To investigate the relationship between the frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) and Lack of Government Support (LGS).

## LITERATURE:

Our work is related to three aspects of literature: the influence of piracy on copyrighted goods' sales and market dynamics in the concert industry and the impact of societal discrimination on the live music industry. In terms of piracy's impact on sales, from a theoretical point of view, economists have investigated the two digital piracy effects on owners of copyright (Liebowitz, 2008; Liebowitz, 1985): one is the positive influence of piracy and the other is the adverse substitution influence of piracy and the potentially positive sampling influence of piracy. In order to find these competitive effects, empirical studies have studied the effect and consequences of digital piracy in different types of contexts (Danaher et al., 2014). In the literature, a large number of studies have found a decline in sales of music linked to piracy. Some of these studies carried out by Peitz and Waelbroeck (2004), Zentner (2005), and Liebowitz (2008) studied the influence of Internet adoption on sales of music (Peitz and Waelbroeck, 2004; Zentner, 2005; Liebowitz, 2008). Similarly, another study by Zentner (2006), Rob and Waldfogel (2006, 2007), Hong (2013), and Michel (2006) employed survey data to analyze album and movie piracy (Zentner, 2006; Rob and Waldfogel, 2006; Rob and Waldfogel, 2007; Michel, 2006; Hong, 2013). Danaher et al. (2010) employed observation of P2P activities to measure the influence of digital channel usage on piracy (Danaher et al., 2010). In the same way, DeVany and Walls (2007) employed theatrical sales data to measure the influence of music piracy and found a decline in music sales like other studies (De Vany and Walls, 2007).

Although most studies have revealed that piracy damage recordings sales, while some theoretical studies suggested positive file-sharing aspects (Peitz and Waelbroeck, 2006). Especially, Gayer and Shy (2006) identified some conditions under which artists may get an advantage from the piracy of music representing that the live performances' demand can grow with the rising popularity of artists generated by the consumption of music copies legally and illegally (Gayer and Shy, 2006). Many studies have been carried out to examine the concert industry's market dynamics given the rise in consumption of live music and the drop in sales of recorded music (Holt, 2010). For instance, Connolly and Krueger (2006) revealed that the average rate of concert tickets has witnessed a rise in the transition to digital music from physical records (Connolly and Krueger, 2006). Black et al. (2007)

echo this argument by representing the quick increase in the rate of the ticket and the inflexible demand of the top 100 tours in North America from 1997 to 2005 (Black et al., 2007). As the concert market has witnessed a rise, researchers have also started to study the secondary market of the ticket (Bennett et al., 2015; Leslie and Sorensen, 2013).

Music consumption's economic perspective from recording and concert sales is focused on by another series of research. Institutionally, the change in the music industry is examined by Montoro-Pons and Cuadrado-Garcia (2011), which empirically represented the positive network of externality to live music from the recorded music (Montoro-Pons and Cuadrado-García, 2011). According to Waldfogel (2012), the distribution of the song at zero marginal costs would make concerts a more and more important business model for the industry (Waldfogel, 2012). The idea extended by Mortimer et al. (2012) shows that file-sharing has a positive but differential influence on the demand for live concerts, while it has also an adverse influence on music recordings sales. Especially, they further disclose that the file-sharing impact is greater for lower-rated artists than for top-rated artists (Mortimer et al., 2012). "These changes in the music industry initiated by a resurgence of the live music industry are giving rise to some expectations for the survival, growth, and sustainability of the music industry" (Naveed et al., 2017). New business models were developed due to a shifting focus from physical records to live concerts and royalties or licensing (Hiatt & Serpick, 2007; Salmela and Ylönen 2009; Hiatt and Serpick 2007).

However, a new challenge for the music industry has also emerged such as discrimination. Musicians face racial discrimination (Zhen and Krueger, 2022). An aspiring actor might face discrimination due to perceived identity (Topaz et al, 2022). Korean popular music industry exemplified that in its history of gender discrimination (Jonas, 2022). Besides, societal discrimination arose because "traditionally the caste "Meerassi" associated with music is considered an inferior one among the hierarchy of castes, whose job is to play music and entertain people and are looked down upon by people" (Rana et al., 2011). The widespread use of such a negatively-titled " Meerassi" completely reflects the low social status of professional musicians in Pakistan (Mohyuddin and Mahmood, 2014). Meerassi is a lower-caste community and is viewed through a derogatory lens (Kapuria, 2018). A lot of people from Meeraasis community or other communities, associated with this profession, gave up this profession (Ali, 2016; Azhar, 2013 ; Asad, 2016), because people in Pakistan, associated with the music profession, are mostly deemed as Meerassi. This has damaged the cultural fabric (live music industry) especially in Pakistan.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Data acquisition**

Before developing a questionnaire, we did read extensively published materials from different sources i.e. journals, newspapers and other media. In addition, we had face-to-face meetings with struggling music artists in Pakistan. Struggling

music artists (musicians, poets, producers and singers) are those who did not leave the country despite such challenges. Later, we developed an online questionnaire (Author, 2020) as a data collection tool. By employing a random sampling method, it was distributed through different sources including social media among respondents (strugglers) in Pakistan. We sent 400 questionnaires via different tools, i.e. online, email and other online media. We dropped 73 questionnaires because of incomplete information and ambiguous answers, while the rest 124 did not retort. From 400 questionnaires, we collected data of 203 questionnaires. We used the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) technique to analyze data collected from 203 respondents (SPSS 2015). For examining 203 questionnaires, we operated Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis. Table. 3 shows the definitions for each variable mentioned in the present article.

## Data evaluation

Econometrical Model. For investigating the relationship between the frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) and factors i.e., SD & LGS, the researchers have developed the following econometrical model to evaluate collected data.

$$\text{Equation. } E_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (SD_{it}) + \beta_2 (LGS_{it}) + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Where:	$E$	= Live Music Events (LMEs)
	$i$	= Area
	$t$	=Years
	$\beta$	= Degree of impact
	$SD$	= Societal Discrimination
	$LGS$	= Lack of Government Support

In this equation,  $E$  denotes the frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) in the area ( $i$ ) in the year ( $t$ ) as an explanatory variable. However,  $SD$  &  $LGS$  are independent variables and among them, the  $SD$  represents Societal Discrimination issues in area ( $i$ ) in a year ( $t$ ) and represents the degree of impact of  $SD$  on Live Music Events (LMEs) performed.  $LGS$  is 2nd variable which represents the Lack of Government Support Issues in the area ( $i$ ) in a year ( $t$ ) and represents the degree of impact of  $LGS$  on the frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) performed.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive evidence

Table (1) represents the demographics of the collected samples that included 169 male members and 34 females. The majority of our respondents were of older adulthood with having 31-40 years old and they were mostly college graduates with singers as a profession. Therefore, our respondents are musicians, poets, and producers as well with vast experience in their industry having experience more

than 15 years. Somehow, we also consider 37 new entrants with less than 5-year experience to perceive the challenges of freshmen. We dropped famous singers, producers, musicians, and poets because of the following reasons: Firstly, they are not suitable for our study to explain the extreme challenges faced by strugglers in this industry. Secondly, their issues are not like strugglers in the music industry of Pakistan. Thirdly, we dropped them due to the accessibility and cost of an appointment. Therefore, our respondents are mainly striving and having an average income scale is ambiguous that fluctuates in situations.

Table (2) represents the regression analysis of the equation. The OLS regression analysis was performed.

## INTERPRETATION

Model

$$Eit = 4.354 + (-0.411) (SDit) + (-0.424) (LGSit) + \epsilon it$$

**HA1:** To investigate the relationship between the frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) and Societal Discrimination (SD)

The value of beta for SD was driven by the OLS regression method, and it was -0.411, which showed that there is an inverse relationship between the frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) and SD. This relation is statistically significant because its p-value or significance level (0.006) was less than 0.05 (Table 2). For an additional increase in incidents of SD, the expected frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) will decrease by -0.411 on average, holding all other variables constant.

Reasons: In Pakistan, “traditionally the caste associated with entertainment is considered an inferior one among the hierarchy of castes”. The locally known as “Meeraasi caste, whose function is to play music and entertain people at weddings, social and cultural events are looked down upon by people, in spite of the fact that people enjoy listening to music”. Even, the term Meeraasi is regularly used in a derogatory way to symbolize someone who is involved in some lowly immoral activities or professions. The conservative society increases to an extreme level after rising ET in the country, the incidents of SD further witnessed a rise. Because, Meeraasis or anyone else associated with this profession, they are giving up this profession. Even, some senior artists joined another profession and even the majority of them opted to marry outside their communities and also change their names. However, some opted to continue this profession but decided to perform at selective live music events (Ali, 2016; Azhar, 2013 ; Asad, 2016). Such a situation forced artists to leave the profession or not participate in live events.

So, an increase in incidents of SD caused a decline in the frequency of live music events.

**HA2:** To investigate the relationship between the frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) and Lack of Government Support (LGS)

As shown in Table 2, the value of beta for LGS was driven by the OLS regression method and it was -0.424, which indicated that there is an inverse relationship between the frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) and LGS. This relation is statistically significant because its p-value or significance level (0.001) was less than 0.05 (Table 2). For an additional increase in incidents of LGS, the expected frequency of Live Music Events (LMEs) will decrease by -0.424 on average, by keeping all other variables constant.

### **Reasons:**

Before the creation of Pakistan, it was part of British India. Indian Muslims demanded from “British India to form a separate nation-state on the basis of religion and for this purpose, Islam was used as an effective instrument of political mobilization”. However, once the objective of creating a Muslim state was finished, then there was a decline in the emphasis of leadership on the religious’ role in state affairs. Due to this, the conflict of ideology arose because leadership yearned for a secular nation, whereas the people especially religious groups desired a Muslim state (Chengappa, 2001; Alavi, 2002). The intensity in the conflict of ideology has increased multi-fold after the Afghan war because the Afghan war supported religious ideologies and increased the religious extremism in the country. So, people sitting in the government desired a secular state and supported music and cultural activities and on the contrary religious groups yearned for a Muslim state and declared the music as un-Islamic. People with secular ideology are supporting the political party People’s Party of Pakistan (PPP) and other political parties, and while people with religious ideology are supporting the Political party Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan and other religious political parties. Islami Jamiat Taleba (IJT) Student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan has marred event celebrating arts and culture and playing music in Lahore – the capital city of Punjab province, Peshawar – the capital city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and other cities of Pakistan (Lybarger, 2011; Desk, 2019a). However, the number of people supporting religious ideology is increasing after every day because religious groups are insistently preaching their message door to door and whereas the number of people supporting secular ideology is decreasing day by day. As some officials or departments are supporting music activities and releasing funds for its promotion as the Punjab government did. On other hand, some officials sitting in the government are opposing it, as recently a federal government official issued a notification banning cultural activities or celebrations but it was rejected by the provincial government run by the People Party of Pakistan (PPP) (Correspondent, 2020). However, so far there is an issue with the government which could not develop a clear policy to resolve this conflict and overcome the situation that emerged after rising incidents of extremism and SD. Rather, the government departments and their officials banned music and dance. The situation became so worse that in some areas, police raided houses and weddings or music functions and arrested participants and hosts for playing music and locked up them in police stations. The story did not end there, even the resolutions were adopted or tabled by provincial assemblies of Pakistan demanding a permanent ban on music and dance performance. The Punjab School Education Department (PSED) banned dance and music in all private and government schools in the province and such an attempt of banning music and dance performance was made by the education department

of another province Sindh but later was revoked. Recently, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has decided “to shun playing soft music during flights and instead Qaseeda Bura Sharif will be played” (Rauf, 2011; Ahmed, 2017; Freemuse, 2012; Report, 2018; Dawn, 2005; TV, 2016; Desk, 2019b; US, 2004).

This lack of government support caused a decline in the frequency of live music events.

## DISCUSSION

Overall, the situation of Live Music Events (LMEs) in Pakistan has become worse because the factors i.e., SD and LGS had negative effects.

Discrimination based on caste prevails here for a long time as some castes in Pakistan including are considered highly respectable while some are disrespectful. (Rafique, 2014) and Meeraasi is one of them. The already derogatory term Meeraasi, considered to be inferior, lost its luster when conservative society increased to an extreme level after rising extremism in the country. The incidents of societal discrimination against artists either are from the Meeraasi family or not but they became the target of discrimination. In Pakistan, “traditionally the caste associated with entertainment is considered an inferior one among the hierarchy of castes” and anyone involved in music activities was symbolized as involved in some lowly immoral activities. So, musicians and professionals are derogatorily termed as people without honour (Shaheen Buneri, 2014). The brother killed her sister for playing a lute-like instrument because it brought shame and dishonour to their family (Mehsud, 2019). Because of this, discrimination against culture and music has been so deep-rooted in society that musicians continue to face discrimination (Correspondent, 2019). An ever-increasing religiosity has crippled the minds of our populace. Be it a famous singer or not (Nighat Chaudhary, Nabi Bakhsh, or Saif Samejo, Atif Aslam and Fakir Juman Shah), all are sad and dejected (Mahmood, 2018). Artists associated with the culture industry have to suffer even after death. Recently, the Paragon Housing Society administration in Lahore - (Capital of the largest province of Pakistan) did not allow the body of the artist to be buried there. The body of the great artist Amanullah was allowed to be buried when the Provincial minister intervene to resolve the issue (Desk, 2020; Afzal, 2020). The management of the housing society has been so discriminative against an artist, even the management of the housing society has exchanged hot words with the provincial minister over the burial of Amanullah. They can't allow a 'Meeraasi' [entertainer] to be buried in their society premises because “they are answerable to Allah (God) (Afzal, 2020; News, 2020). Such a situation did not prevail earlier in Pakistan as it is now and it is still worsening after passing each day in the country. Due to this, Meeraasis or anyone associated with this profession of music started to give up this profession. Even, some senior artists joined another profession and even the majority of them opted to marry outside their communities and also change their names. However, some opted to continue this profession but decided to perform at selective live music events (Ali, 2016; Azhar, 2013 ; Asad, 2016). This is the only reason that according to the study, in Pakistan 98.1% enjoyed listening to music, whereas only 8.9 % played a musical instrument (Rana et al., 2011).

Thousands of religious seminaries and training campuses for holy warriors to fight the Soviet Union forces in Afghanistan were established in Pakistan. The regime of then general Zia ul Haq banned festivals and discouraged music. In addition, the regime of Zia used the state-owned media for its Islamisation project of the state and society. Apart from this, the students' wing of Jamat-e-Islami (JI) occupied campuses of the universities and the Deobandi Tablighi Jamat expedited its preaching of Islam in the streets of the country (Shaheen Buneri, 2014). Due to this, People from different walks of life in Pakistan started to support the ideology of extremists because some of them became followers and the rest did not defy due to fear of retaliation. Even some music artists left this profession and joined religious preaching groups as preachers like Junaid Jamshed (Khan, 2016). That was the reason that government departments and officials banned music and dance. In some areas, police raided houses and weddings or music functions and arrested participants and hosts for playing music and locked up them in police stations. Even the resolutions were adopted or tabled by provincial assemblies of Pakistan demanding a permanent ban on music and dance performance. The School Education Department (PSED) banned dance and music in Punjab and Sindh province. However, such an attempt of banning music and dance performance was revoked in Sind province only. Recently, the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA)'s management has decided "to shun playing soft music during flights and instead Qaseeda Bura Sharif will be played" (Rauf, 2011; Ahmed, 2017; Freemuse, 2012; Report, 2018; Dawn, 2005; TV, 2016; Desk, 2019b; US, 2004). Societal discrimination and LGS witnessed a decline but the situation would be better, once the extremism was not completely eliminated from the country. It was still a long way to go to control the menace of extremism which took root during the Soviet Jihad Era in the 1980s (NACTA 2019).

Another reason beyond the non-revival of live music events is that the majority of music artists have either left their country or profession and none of them returned or resumed the same profession in Pakistan. However, very few, who struggled for music, could not avail of opportunities as they had before. The infrastructure of LMEs has collapsed and either investors or organizers have shifted their interests to other businesses where there is no fear of consequences either from religious clerics or government departments. In addition, the government has increased taxes on live music events (Syed, 2017; centerstageus, 2014; Salahuddin, 2016). Aside from this, listening to music in public places was prohibited somewhere. Apart from this, transport authorities of the government also banned music in public transport in various cities across the country (Haider, 2008 ; AGENCIES, 2014; Report, 2016).

When music and cultural activities are declared un-Islamic, the incidents of discrimination increased multi-fold against music and artists. The artists are harassed to leave the profession or not to perform and this affected live music events in the country. Overall, the cultural fabric was broken completely. There is no functional organization of music artists which can work for their rights and challenges emerged due to societal discrimination and lack of government support (LGS) because many artists have either left the profession or the country. However, some of them struggled to save the music industry but could not. Even though

the government did not develop a proper policy to control this situation emerged after these factors and rather some departments were seen supporting some groups because of either their affiliation with those groups or fear of retaliation. The situation may become better, if the government would develop a policy focusing on eradicating extremism, discouraging SD and ensuring support for the music industry.

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, we examined how these variables such as SD and LGS affected badly on the frequency of live music events in Pakistan. The frequency of live music events will increase as the impact or influences of SD and LGS issues will go down. A decrease in live music events did not only deprive music artists of their source of livelihood but also other people who are related to the live music industry directly or indirectly. The live music events were not only the sources of income generation for artists but they could also contribute to the national economy in terms of tax generation. Live music events boost other activities like cultural and social activities in the country. It is also a big source of entertainment for the people in Pakistan.

Keeping in view the overall situation of the live music industry in Pakistan, the government should develop a comprehensive policy focusing on eradicating extremism, discouraging SD and ensuring support for the music industry.

### **The following key points are suggested to improve the live music industry in Pakistan**

1. Comprehensive strategies should be developed to combat extremism.
2. The campaign should be launched through different media for building a positive image of music and music artists to end all kinds of prevailing discrimination in society.
3. Government departments should be strengthened to support the music industry and its related stakeholders.
4. Music should be encouraged in public settings and transport services for its promotions.
5. Music, its history and its importance should be part of the curriculum as our current and future generations should be aware of music, poets and its history.

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### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest

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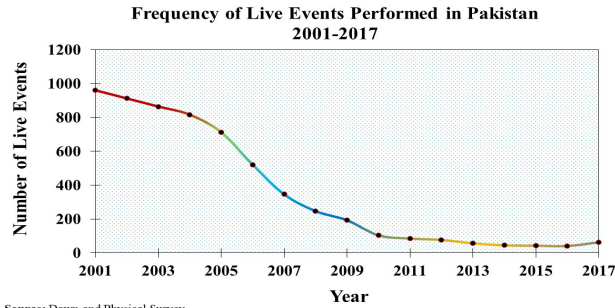
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Figure

Figure 1. Frequency of Live Events Performance in Pakistan



Tables Table.1. Description of respondents

Descriptions	Sex	Age	Qualification	Occupation	Experience	Monthly Income
Male	169					
Female	34					
18 – 30 Years		51				
31 – 40 Years		69				
41 – 50 Years		47				
Above 50 Years		36				
Primary			28			
High School			52			
College			44			
Under Graduate			64			
Graduate			12			
PhD			1			
Illiterate			2			
Musicians				66		
Poets				43		
Producers				20		
Singers				76		
Less than 5 Years					37	
06 – 10 Years					53	

11 – 15 Years						39
Above 15 Years						74
Less than PKR 10000						37
PKR 10001 – PKR 30000						37
PKR 30001 – PKR 50000						2
Above PKR 50000						17
Not Specified						110
Number of Ob- servations	203	203	203	203	203	203

This table depicts the descriptive analysis of respondents' demography.

**Table. 2.** Regression analysis of the frequency of live music events (LMEs) and Independent Variables

(1) Independent Variables	(2) *DV: <i>E</i> (Frequency of LMEs)
<i>SD</i>	-0.411
	(0.006)
<i>LGS</i>	-0.424
	(0.001)
Constant	4.354
	(0.000)
Number of Observations	203
Adjust R <sup>2</sup>	0.607

This table depicts OLS Regression analysis among variables of the equation. \*DV = dependent variable, E = represents the frequency of live music events, SD = Societal Discrimination and LGS = Lack of Government Support.

**Table. 3. Variable Definitions**

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Variable Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Dependent Variables:</b>		
Events	<i>E</i>	This variable describes the frequency of live music events (LMEs) performed by our respondents. We record events i.e. performances at music festivals, Concerts, performances at the national and local celebrations.
<b>Independent Variables:</b>		
Societal Discrimination	<i>SD</i>	This variable refers to the discrimination of society against respondents and music affecting their overall performance of the industry.
Lack of government's support	<i>LGS</i>	This variable describes that the government doesn't have a specific policy for supporting respondents or the music industry.
<i>I (i)</i> Area		
<i>T</i>	<i>(t)</i>	Year