

Managing Entertainment Events: Traditional Practices and the Impact of Digitization

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Research Question: How are entertainment events, such as concerts and fashion shows, traditionally managed, and what are the implications of their digitization for event management and key stakeholders?

Abstract

This paper investigates how entertainment events, specifically concerts and fashion shows, have traditionally been managed, and examines how their digitization is reshaping their management practices and influencing key stakeholders. Traditional event management relies on physical venues, manual coordination, conventional marketing channels, and in-person audience engagement. The rise of digital tools, however, has enabled the digitization of these events, transforming these processes and enabling global access, streamlined planning, and enhanced promotional possibilities. Through an analysis of contemporary digitalised events such as BTS virtual concerts and Metaverse Fashion Week, the paper highlights how artists, designers, sponsors, audiences, and event managers benefit from expanded reach, real-time engagement, and new revenue models. It also acknowledges the challenges that this transformation presents. The findings suggest that the fusion of traditional and digital approaches creates entertainment events that are more inclusive, efficient, and adaptable, while simultaneously redefining stakeholder roles in a rapidly evolving industry.

Keywords: digital event management, concerts, fashion shows, stakeholders, live-streaming, virtual events

Introduction

Fashion shows and live concerts have always been an exhilarating activity to connect with people, be creative, and make memories. In the past, handling such events relied heavily on manual scheduling and organisation, which involved arranging venues, selling tickets, designing security measures, and collaborating with performance designers, sponsors, and the production team. The skill of event managers and their capacity to multitask and coordinate numerous tasks were the key determinants of the success of any event.

In recent years, the world has witnessed a lot of digital innovations, including live streaming, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), etc, and these have helped in completely transforming how events, especially concerts and fashion shows, are planned, managed, marketed, delivered, and monetized. This can include anything from BTS's livestreamed concerts to the Metaverse fashion week hosted in recent years. Accordingly, this paper aims to answer the following research question: **How are entertainment events, such as concerts and fashion shows, traditionally managed, and what are the implications of their digitization for event management and key stakeholders?**

This paper argues that while concerts and fashion shows have traditionally been managed through a coordinated framework involving planning, marketing, operations, and stakeholder collaboration, the digitization of these events has significantly reshaped these processes, streamlining operations, expanding audience reach, and creating new revenue opportunities, while also introducing challenges related to authenticity, technological accessibility, and shifting power dynamics among stakeholders.

Management of Traditional Concerts and Fashion Shows

Concerts

A concert is a live music event in which artists perform for an audience. In the 17th and 18th centuries, concerts were typically small, intimate gatherings held in salons, private estates, or modest public venues. Over time, however, they developed into larger and more commercially significant events, eventually becoming a central component of the modern global music industry (Ray, 2019). Traditionally, organizing a concert has been a complex process requiring extensive planning and coordination across multiple stages, from early pre-event preparations to the event itself and its post-event evaluation.

Traditional concert management relies entirely on physical coordination and manual communication. Concert organizers work through a supply-side chain that involves promoters, artists, technical crews, venue managers, logistics teams, and equipment suppliers (Manners, Saayman and Kruger, 2015). Each stakeholder plays a crucial role: promoters secure venues and market the show; venue managers handle seating, safety, and crowd control; technicians ensure proper sound and stage setup; and suppliers provide lighting, instruments, and other necessary equipment. The effective interaction between these groups transforms a simple musical performance into a professionally managed, large-scale event. Historically, without digital tools, scheduling, communication, and troubleshooting demanded strong leadership, detailed planning, and constant on-ground coordination. The advent of internet technologies, however, has made these aspects comparatively easier to manage.

Marketing is another vital aspect of concert success. Traditional concert promotion relies on print media, radio announcements, posters, street flyers, and word-of-mouth publicity. These methods help build anticipation and drive ticket sales long before the event. Over time, as promotional techniques expanded, organisers began combining traditional advertising with emerging digital strategies, such as social media posts, influencer tie-ins, and online ticket advertisements, to widen audience reach and increase engagement.

Ticket pricing has also evolved. According to studies on cultural economics, modern concert revenue strategies include dynamic pricing models, early-bird discounts, and tiered ticketing systems that adjust prices based on demand (Fontana, 2025). These methods maximise revenue, reduce ticket scalping, and make concerts more accessible to different segments of the audience.

A strong example of successful concert management is Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, which has become the highest-grossing concert tour in history, generating over \$2 billion (Perez, 2024). Analysts highlight Swift's strategic marketing, such as emotional branding, scarcity-based release strategies, and the creation of a global cultural moment, as key factors driving demand.

Overall, concerts are a blend of creativity, logistics, marketing, and management. Every stage – planning, coordination, pricing, promotion, and execution – requires teamwork, foresight, and strategic decision-making. When managed effectively, concerts generate significant cultural impact and economic value on a massive scale.

Fashion Shows

Fashion shows originated in the mid-19th century, when Parisian designer Charles Frederick Worth introduced the idea of using live models instead of mannequins to display his garments (CNN, 2019). Over time, fashion shows expanded to major cities such as London and New York, becoming significant cultural events in the 20th century. By this period, shows had evolved into elaborate presentations combining art, music, staging,

and narrative themes (Zak, 2020). Even before the digital era, fashion shows shaped global trends by showcasing the creativity, craftsmanship, and innovation of each fashion period.

Fashion shows play an essential role in the industry as they allow designers to present new collections, express brand identity, and exchange ideas with the broader fashion community. They generate excitement around upcoming trends and connect fashion houses with buyers, journalists, celebrities, and loyal followers (Sharma, 2022). Scholars also emphasise that fashion shows serve as powerful marketing instruments, reinforcing the cultural relevance and artistic value of brands while driving global visibility (SanMiguel, Rus-Navas and Sádaba, 2023)

Traditionally, a fashion show begins with extensive planning. Organisers first determine the purpose and theme of the show, whether it is a seasonal collection, a brand debut, a couture presentation, or a charity-driven event (Weezevent, 2024). Once the concept is clear, the next step involves selecting a venue that aligns with the brand's aesthetic. The venue has to accommodate the runway, lighting systems, backstage dressing areas, audience seating, and media setups. Selecting the date and time requires strategic consideration, as shows have to attract press, high-profile buyers, and key industry influencers (Krishnakumar, 2023)

Team coordination is another major part of traditional event management. Organisers work with designers, models, stylists, makeup artists, photographers, stage managers, and sound and lighting professionals (Kirycuk, 2025). Rehearsals are crucial to ensure smooth pacing on the runway, proper transitions, and effective visibility of the garments (Krishnakumar, 2023). Event planners have to ensure efficient backstage operations, timely outfit changes, and a comfortable, safe environment for both models and guests.

Marketing plays a significant role. Traditional fashion shows rely on print invitations, press releases, fashion magazines, and in-person media coverage to build anticipation. Although modern shows incorporate social media teasers, influencer promotions, and livestreaming (Schiffer, 2019), historically, brand reputation and exclusive invitations were the primary drivers of attention and audience turnout.

On the day of the event, smooth coordination determines the show's success. Teams handle guest reception, especially VIPs and media, manage timing, respond to last-minute challenges, and ensure that the program runs exactly as planned (Weezevent, 2024). A professionally organised fashion show relies on clear communication, strong leadership, and detailed logistical planning.

A strong example of exceptional event management is the Chanel Haute Couture Show during Paris Fashion Week. Chanel is known for its imaginative staging, such as transforming the Grand Palais into a library, a garden, or even a seaside boardwalk. The combination of high-concept sets, coordinated artistic direction, celebrity-filled front rows, and extensive international media coverage demonstrates how meticulous planning and creative production can result in a memorable and influential fashion event.

Overall, traditional fashion shows represent a complex blend of creativity, logistics, coordination, and brand strategy. Every stage – from concept development and venue planning to rehearsals, marketing, and execution – requires careful management. When done well, fashion shows generate cultural impact, shape global trends, and reinforce a brand's artistic and commercial identity.

The Digitization of Events: Implications for Managing Concerts and Fashion Shows

BTS Concerts

BTS, a popular South Korean K-pop band, has led the way in applying digital technology to reach fans. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person events were impossible, so BTS organised several online concerts,

including Bang Bang Con: The Live (pictured in Image 1) and Map of the Soul ON:E (pictured in Image 2). Millions of spectators worldwide watched these events in real time. For instance, 756,000 spectators from 107 countries attended Bang Bang Con Live, generating approximately USD 20 million in ticket revenue (Punt, 2020) – far surpassing the capacity of a traditional stadium concert, which typically seats around 50,000 people. This demonstrates how digital platforms remove geographical and physical barriers, enabling global fan participation and new forms of artist–audience interaction.



Image 1: Bang Bang Con (Delgado, 2020)



Image 2: “Map of the Soul” ON:E concert (Dodson et al., 2020)

Traditionally, concert management required stadium arrangements, physical ticketing, merchandise booths, crowd control, and complex on-ground logistics. In contrast, BTS transformed the concert model through high-quality live-streaming, interactive features, and advanced visual effects. Fans could purchase digital tickets, watch the show from home, and even participate via real-time chats and synchronised fan light sticks. These features created an immersive, community-driven experience that replicated aspects of physical attendance while adding new digital layers of engagement.

As analysed previously, traditionally, organising a concert involved stadium arrangements, ticket windows, physical sales of merchandise, and crowd management. In contrast, BTS transformed the concert model through high-quality live-streaming, interactive features, and advanced visual effects (Balmain, 2020). Fans could purchase digital tickets, watch the show from home, and even participate via real-time chats and synchronised fan light sticks. These features created an immersive, community-driven experience that replicated aspects of physical attendance while adding new digital layers of engagement.

The success of these virtual concerts significantly reshaped responsibilities within event management. Organisers saved on venue costs, security, staffing, and physical logistics, yet required far greater investment in digital infrastructure, streaming technology, and cybersecurity. The shift also altered stakeholder roles:

- Artists and labels gained expanded global reach and more flexible revenue models.
- Fans benefited from lower costs, accessibility, and inclusivity.
- Sponsors and brands enjoyed exposure to unlimited international audiences.
- Technical teams, rather than on-ground logistics teams, became central to event execution.

However, these changes introduce new challenges as well, such as risks of technical failures, dependence on stable internet networks, and the need for event managers with specialised digital skills.

The digital concert model pioneered by BTS illustrates how the music industry is transitioning from traditional, hands-on event management to technology-driven experiences. While it offers increased reach, reduced travel requirements, and new avenues for fan engagement, it also brings operational risks and demands new forms of managerial expertise. This example suggests that the future of concerts will likely involve hybrid formats that integrate both physical and digital elements to maximise accessibility, creativity, and commercial impact.

Metaverse Fashion Week

Metaverse Fashion Week (MVFW) is a virtual fashion event held in Decentraland, a blockchain-based virtual world where participants attend shows through customisable 3D avatars. The inaugural MVFW in March 2022 marked a major turning point in digital fashion, showcasing how advanced technology can fundamentally reshape the experience, accessibility, and management of fashion events (Hirschmiller, 2022).

More than 108,000 visitors from across the globe participated virtually, exploring runway shows, digital brand pop-ups, and after-parties (Shirdan, 2022). Over 55 brands, including Tommy Hilfiger, Dolce & Gabbana, Etro, Forever 21, and Estée Lauder, took part in the event (Moore, 2022). Attendees walked virtual runways, purchased NFT-based clothing, and dressed their avatars in exclusive digital wearables. This introduced a new layer of consumer behaviour, blending entertainment, retail, and virtual identity into a single event.



Image 3: Tommy Hilfiger at MVFW 22' (Gupta, 2022)



Image 4: Virtual fashion shows at MVFW 22' (Gamecaan, 2022)

In several ways, MVFW replicated the structure of a traditional fashion week, but with added interactivity. Attendees could view new collections and simultaneously purchase virtual outfits in real time, something impossible in traditional runway shows. Avatars allowed guests to “try on” digital items instantly, removing physical constraints such as sizing, production time, or limited inventory. Vogue Business notes that the virtual format also offered small and emerging designers a level playing field, allowing them to showcase their work without the high costs associated with physical venues, travel, staging, or model hire (McDowell, 2022).

Sustainability emerged as another key advantage (RMCAD, 2025). Physical fashion weeks require extensive travel, custom manufacturing, elaborate set designs, and large teams, all of which contribute to carbon emissions and material waste. In contrast, MVFW operated entirely electronically. This significantly reduced environmental impact and aligned with the fashion industry’s growing emphasis on sustainable and innovative alternatives.

However, the event also revealed challenges. Some participants reported lag, navigation difficulties, and hardware limitations, highlighting the technological barriers that can affect user experience (Shirdan, 2022). Despite these issues, many experts concluded that MVFW represented a major step toward digital innovation by demonstrating how the metaverse can merge creativity, accessibility, and sustainability within a unified virtual environment.

From an event-management perspective, MVFW shifted responsibility away from venue logistics, backstage coordination, and physical show production toward digital infrastructure, UX design, cybersecurity, and virtual-world development. Stakeholders experienced tangible shifts as well:

- Designers and brands gained access to global audiences without traditional costs.
- Event managers needed expertise in web3 platforms, 3D modelling, and digital crowd management.
- Consumers benefited from accessibility, customisation, and new forms of engagement.
- Sponsors and advertisers reached borderless, highly scalable markets.

Overall, MVFW demonstrates how fashion events are expanding beyond physical constraints, suggesting a future in which hybrid physical-digital formats will redefine how fashion is produced, consumed, and experienced.

Conclusion

Entertainment events such as concerts and fashion shows have undergone a significant transformation. Traditional event planning for concerts and fashion shows relies heavily on physical venues, in-person coordination with artists or designers, manual stage setups, and conventional advertising through posters, magazines, and television. Some integration of digital technologies has made event management faster, more efficient, and far more creative.

However, technological digitalisation, through live-streaming, social media platforms, virtual venues, and data-driven tools, has also introduced an entirely new format for these events, expanding access beyond geographical boundaries. As seen in the case studies of the BTS virtual concerts and Metaverse Fashion Week, the impact of this transformation on event management and stakeholders has been substantial. Designers, musicians, and sponsors benefit from new avenues for promotion, collaboration, audience engagement, and revenue generation. Digital platforms allow them to personalise their branding, gather consumer insights, and strengthen long-term relationships with fans or customers. At the same time, audience expectations have evolved: while digital access provides convenience and inclusivity, the emotional and cultural significance of an in-person live experience remains irreplaceable and continues to influence how events are curated.

Overall, the blending of traditional event management with digital technologies has made entertainment events more inclusive, interactive, and adaptable. The evolution not only enhances operational efficiency but also reshapes stakeholder roles, responsibilities, and opportunities. As the industry continues to innovate, successful event management will rely on balancing technological expansion with the preservation of authentic, human-centred experiences.

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