



A study about to what extent a visit to any bar can be considered healthy within the concept of therapeutic landscapes.

## The healthy side of a bar



Helmer Hoenink  
S3188647  
Supervised by: Tess Osborne  
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## ABSTRACT

A bar can be experienced in multiple different ways by visitors. It can be seen as a healthy place, a relaxing spot, or a meeting place for work related affairs. Multiple studies have already been looking into the healthiness of drinking alcoholic beverages and relating them to social events. None of them however has researched how a bar might be seen as a place where people can get energy from or feel safe. Shortly said, a therapeutic landscape. This study tries to lay the connection between a place that is regularly seen as unhealthy and the perceived health that this place might give to people. Within this research, questionnaire data has been compared with responses from an interview with a bartender to see whether there has been any correlation between how they perceive the healthiness of a bar. This data has been analyzed by performing a chi-square test and a multinomial logistic regression. Both of these tests have given no significant results. They contradict however with the responses that came from the interview. Therefore, it is hard to draw a strong conclusion, but a preliminary conclusion can be drawn. There is no direct relationship in how healthy people perceive a bar within the concept of therapeutic landscapes, compared to the researched variables.

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## Chapter 1: Reasons for research

With the ever-growing amount of individualistic and stressful lives we live, a place to relax is needed. (Tartaglia et al, 2018) A therapeutic landscape, one might say, is the way to get rid of the stress we endure. A therapeutic landscape, as defined by Gesler (1992) can be any place around us where a person can get energy from, places where someone feels better after visiting those. Usually therapeutic landscapes are seen as parks, waterfronts or anything related to getting away from the business of the city. But a therapeutic landscape might as well be within the density of the cities we live in, bars for instance.

Usually bars are seen as places where people drink alcoholic beverages, whether it is alone or with a group. This is, mostly, labeled as unhealthy, since alcoholic beverages and snacks are goods that can cause you to die earlier. People drink to get positive outcomes or to get rid of negative consequences (Tartaglia et al, 2018).

However, can bars, next to the unhealthy factor, be seen as healthy areas as well, since bars can enhance social life and personal well-being. A research by Sayette et al. (2012) even suggests that social drinking is an enhancement towards bonding with others, and mental well-being. This study researches if people feel mentally healthier after visiting a bar, and thus if a bar can be seen as a healthy place within the concept of a therapeutic landscape, as defined by Gesler (1992). With this research, a general idea amongst society that bars are generally unhealthy places, might have people thinking otherwise about health inside of bars. The main research gap that this research focusses on is between the social side of drinking and viewing a pub as a healthy place.

### 1.1 Research problem

In the research that has been done until now, the healthy part that a bar can possibly have, has not been discussed yet. The main focus that there is within, for instance the media, is that drinking in a bar has an unhealthy influence on our lives. But isn't there another side to drinking at a bar? Therefore, the main question this research focusses on is:

“To what extent can the perceived health in a bar contribute to the bar as a healthy space within the concept of a therapeutic landscape?”

The topic boundaries are to be found into what extend something can be seen as healthy, what healthy means in general and what can be seen as a bar.

### 1.2 Thesis outline

This thesis is outlined in the following way. In chapter 2, the used concepts of social drinking in relation to therapeutic landscapes will be explained. In chapter 3 the methodology will be discussed on how the questions will be researched and how is dealt with the ethical problems that might arise. Within the fourth chapter, the results and the relation between social contact and health will be discussed and afterwards placed into relation with well-being in a bar. After this the discussion will take place in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter, and lastly, the conclusions can be found in chapter 6.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

Becker & Murphy (1988) mention that there is a form of rational addiction with every consumption someone makes to maximize their utility. This, in relation to Gesler (1996) therapeutic landscape means that every beverage in a bar can positively contribute to someone's well-being, since this maximizes utility. But when the maximal utility level has been reached, shortly said, when someone gets drunk or addicted, it might be that in a bar, a drink no longer contributes to the enhanced wellbeing of a person. A bar as a therapeutic landscape, as defined by Gesler (1996), might thus be a place where someone can get energy out of. This study looks at the first part, where someone's mental wellbeing is considered within the concept of therapeutic landscapes. But other aspects will be considered within the study as well to see if any relation between health and a bar can be found in general

### 2.1 Therapeutic landscapes

There are a lot of different ways of looking at a therapeutic landscape. Gesler (1992) first introduced the term as a place where someone can get energy out of. A lot of research followed on the topic, for example the research by Volker & Kistemann (2013) on how therapeutic landscapes combined with urban blue areas contribute to human well-being within cities. The term therapeutic landscape refers to a place where someone can get energy out of (Gesler, 1992, 1996). For most people, this relates to being outside, walking in a park or as this research suggest, having a drink in a bar.

A therapeutic landscape, as a place, cannot be seen independent of wellbeing (Philips et al., 2015). The definition of wellbeing this research uses is explained in chapter 2.3 below. Kahn & Juster (2002) have stated that wellbeing is a hard term to conceptualize. They state that wellbeing is a goal for any individual and a major criterion for any government or society, to improve one's evaluation. With this being said, looking at Becker & Murphy (1988) every consumption is done to maximize the utility, the goal that every individual tries to improve their wellbeing, is being confirmed. This wellbeing related to the therapeutic landscape as defined by Volker & Kistemann (2011) gives a clear idea on how a bar can be beneficial to mental health. Within this research, the focus will lay on the social drinking and wellbeing aspect of the therapeutic landscape.

### 2.2 Social Drinking

In Sayette et al. (2012) a notion is being made on the aspect of social drinking and to what extent alcohol has an influence on happiness. They state in their research that alcohol increases social behavior, within groups and between groups. Linking this to the energy people can get out of a place or activity, as defined by Gesler (1997), shows that there is a possibility that drinking, combined with the therapeutic landscape has a positive effect on one another. Another point that Sayette et al. (2012) make in their research is that relaxation, in terms of facial expressions and emotions are positively influenced by a certain (small) amount of alcohol. This relaxation as stated by Sayette et al. (2012) relates to the consumption that maximizes utility as stated by Becker & Murphy (1988) and the wellbeing as stated by Volker & Kistemann (2011). Shortly said, social drinking can be beneficial for the mental wellbeing of someone.

Both of these theories, combined with the general concept of a bar, a place where you go and get a drink outside of your house, will be the main theories and concepts used to lay the basis for this research.

### 2.3 Conceptual model

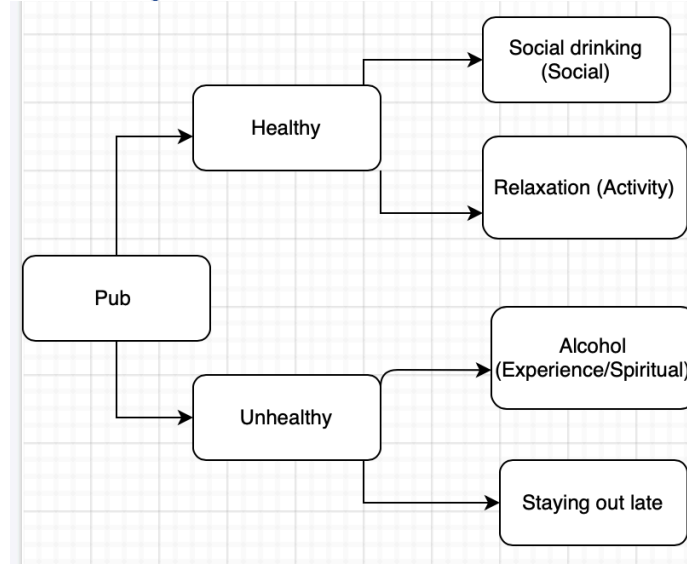


Figure 1: Conceptual model

In figure 1 the conceptual model is shown. Within the model the relation between the bar and the possible healthy and unhealthy aspects are shown. Those aspects will be discussed within the questions asked during the interviews and in the questionnaires. With the answers given in the interviews, the relation between the healthy place that a bar might be or might not be, can be placed into the concept of therapeutic landscape. The study however will focus on the perceived health of a visitor of a bar and to what extend someone thinks a bar can be healthy.

### 2.4 Expectations

Haucap & Herr (2014) discuss in their research the possibility that social drinking is a way of generating trust. As stated in chapter 2.2 social drinking helps with relaxing and making connections. So social drinking might be one of the main factors that influences someone's mental health while visiting a bar Placing this in relation to the main research question: "To what extent can the perceived health in a bar contribute to the bar as a healthy space within the concept of a therapeutic landscape?", expected is that a bar can be seen as a healthy space within the concept of therapeutic landscapes as defined by Volker & Kistemann (2011). This means that a bar in a way can be seen as a therapeutic landscape, and is not merely an unhealthy place, as it now generally is seen.

### 2.5 Covid-19

Due to the current situation in the world, with regards to the Coronavirus, a lot of normally possible forms of research were not allowed to be conducted. Interviews in public that are usually used to research therapeutic landscapes and well-being were no longer allowed. This had a huge impact on this research, wherein the feelings of people now had to be captured within questionnaires, and outside of the location that is being researched, the bar. This has given this research an extra layer on how to deal with researching in times of global crisis.

Nevertheless, the data gathering for the research has been adjusted as good as possible to fit into the regular research trajectory.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Data collection & analysis

To answer the main question, the concepts, aforementioned in chapter 2 and the available literature have been used to help explain the gathered data. By looking at the stated research problem in different ways, more usable information can be gathered. The data will be collected by the collection of questionnaires and digital interviews. This mixed method is used to see if there is any similarity or any difference between the given answers in the interviews compared to the questionnaires, wherein the quantitative data get prioritized. This method is called concurrent triangulation (Santos et al, 2017).

### 3.2 Questionnaires

Within the research, questionnaires have been sent out to gather useful data for the research. The answers on the questions will show whether a bar can qualify as a therapeutic landscape and to what extent someone sees a bar as a mentally or physically healthy location. The preset group of questions as set by Volker & Kistemann (2013), which will be explained later on, will be transformed into usable questions for the questionnaire. The questionnaires, together with the interview guide provide the data for this study. The reason that this preset group of questions has been used is because of the amount of details that this interview guide has and how closely related it is to this study on the subject of therapeutic landscapes and someone's perceived health in a certain place.

A few changes however will be made. The questions that have been asked have more regards towards the social satisfaction in relation to alcohol consumption, which in its place relates more to the perceived health of a bar. Tartaglia et al. (2018) is referring to multiple researches that all have found different reasons why people tend to be drinking. The life satisfaction can be lower when someone is having difficulties with the critique on the drinking habits, they have regarding to the person they are in a relationship with (Levy et al., 1980). That does not necessarily mean that the drinking part is regarded as lowering their life satisfaction or their wellbeing. The difference that should be noted is that drinking in a group can increase the life satisfaction more, since it increases the feeling of friendship, which can be seen as positive in regards of wellbeing. (Sayette et al. 2012, Haslam et al. 2009 & Tartaglia et al, 2017) These three studies mention the social aspect of drinking more than any other, and in this research, focus will be placed on this aspect more than any other.

To gather as much data as possible, open answer questionnaires have been placed online in a Google form, so it was accessible to everyone with an internet connection. The link has been placed on the Social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp) of the researcher, to make it available to as many respondents as possible. This sample is called a simple random sample. Although most of the respondents were known by to? the researcher, this had no influence on taking the sample or be weary for biased answers, since every respondent was anonymous to the researcher. The questionnaires are multiple answer, so people can express the reasons why they feel like they feel in a certain bar and what makes them feel that way. Usually this would have been researched by interviews, but as explained in 2.5 Covid-19 has placed limits on this study. The questions asked in the questionnaire have been based on the



generalized question scheme adapted from Volker & Kistemann (2013). All of the questions that were asked are related to the preset group of generalized questions that were used within the semi-structured interviews. This was done to make the coding more accurate and to be able to make stronger claims, where the interviews play a supportive role. Appendix 1 shows the questions that were used in the questionnaire.

Google forms has been used so the digitally collected data could easily be converted to an excel-sheet where after the excel sheet was transformed into an SPSS dataset. In SPSS the hypotheses have been put to the test. One chi-square test and one multinomial logistic regression were computed. The Chi-square null hypothesis is the following:

- There is no relationship between the perceived health of a bar, and the amount of drinks that someone consumes when visiting a bar.

The null hypotheses of the multinomial logistic regression are the following:

- There is no relationship between the perceived health of a bar and the reasons someone believes a bar as healthy.
- There is no relationship between the perceived health of a bar and the people that the respondent is visiting the bar with
- There is no relationship between the perceived health of a bar and the gender of the respondent.

### 3.3. Interviews

“Qualitative research is good in discovering the meaning, experience and feelings of people (Punch, 2014).” Due to the implications of Covid-19, interviews inside of these bars and face to face interviews are no longer allowed and possible. Therefore, questionnaires have been sent out, instead of conducting interviews inside of bars. Within the limitations however, an interview still has been conducted with a bartender, to see if any of the claims made in the questionnaires are supported or seen differently by someone who works in a bar.

The interview that was held, was held with bar staff from random bars, to see if they came up with the same answers as the respondents gave in the questionnaire. The interview questions were thus based on the same generalized guide from Volker & Kistemann (2013) as the questionnaires and have a comparative role for the answers that the respondents have given in the questionnaire. The questions as seen in figure 2, are the adapted generalized interview questions. These can be seen below. These questions will be further changed to fit into a semi-structured interview. The questions are more a guideline that helps getting to answers to the research question.

(Modified after Volker & Kistemann, 2013)

- 
- A1. What do I already know about this bar?
  - A2. What makes this bar interesting to me?
  - B1. What does this bar mean to me?
  - C1. How does it differ from other bars?
  - C2. What are the aspects that make me feel good about this bar?
  - C3. What do I see, hear, smell, feel?

- 
- C4. Does this bar make me feel at home or at ease? And why does or doesn't it?
  - C5. What does this bar invite me to do?
  - C6. Which people frequent this bar?
  - C7. How do people behave with each other? Bartenders and guests, and guests with another?
  - C8. Do I feel healthier when I am here or have been here recently?
  - C9. What effects does visiting or not visiting this bar have on me?
  - C10. Do I feel like I am mentally healthier when being here?
  - C11. Do I frequent other bars as well?
  - D1. Comments
  - E1. How often do you visit this bar?  
- daily; - weekly; - 1–2 times per month; - less frequently; - never visited before
  - E2. Since when/in which period is/has this city been your home town?
  - E3. Age
  - E4. Gender  
- female; - male – else – I'd rather not say

*Figure 2 General interview questions.*

All of these questions together will form the framework in which the main question: “To what extent can the perceived health in a bar contribute to the bar as a healthy space within the concept of a therapeutic landscape?” will be answered. The interview was semi-structured to make sure that every possible answer could be given, with leaving space for the participant to give input. The transcribed interview can be found in Appendix 2.

### 3.4 Recruitment of the participants

All of the participants will be random respondents from the internet. Due to Covid-19, regular surveying and interviewing is not safe and not allowed to conduct, so every filled in form or held interview will have to be from an online respondent. All the respondents are free to participate. All that has to be done to participate is to click a link within a social media post where people are asked to join this research.

To set up this meeting bars have been contacted via email and asked if a bartender is willing to take part in the interview. The interviews with bar staff have been held with willing bar staff, through skype meetings.

### 3.5 Ethical considerations

Within this research, a few ethical issues might occur. The participants of the online questionnaire might not give honest answers, because the questionnaires are not handed out face to face. Another issue might be that the feeling of a bar can only be described when being inside a bar. With the current closure of all bars due to Covid-19, the feeling of the bar

cannot be experienced directly. This might influence the responses bar staff give in the interviews which also might occur in the answers of the respondents to the questionnaire.

Keeping those problems in mind, I as researcher should be aware of the social distance that people might live in right now. Their answers and their feelings might be different than they are in regular times. However, all answers are valuable data, and should therefore be treated the same way as in regular times. This means that all the data will be safely stored on the researcher’s laptop where only he has access to. Furthermore, all of the respondents can always reach out to the researcher when they want to cancel their participation or have questions about the research and how their answers will be used.

## Chapter 4: Results

### 4.1 Background

To answer the main question: “To what extent can the perceived health in a bar contribute to the bar as a healthy space within the concept of a therapeutic landscape?” multiple tests have been conducted. The data that has been used to perform the chi-square test and the multinomial logistic regression all come from the questionnaires that have been placed online. A few questions from the questionnaire have been placed in comparison with the research question whether respondents consider bars as a healthy place.

Figure 3 shows that only 25% of respondents would consider a pub or a bar a healthy place. In the next question, where asked if people saw their favorite bar as healthy, an additional 3.3% more of the respondents answered with yes, but the same happened with the no as an answer, and the don’t know variable wasn’t selected. This is not a huge difference, statistically speaking not significant, but it shows that respondents might have a different view of health within bars in general compared to their personal favorite bar. But more research needs to be done on this, before anything can be said.

#### Do you consider pubs or bars a healthy place?

156 responses

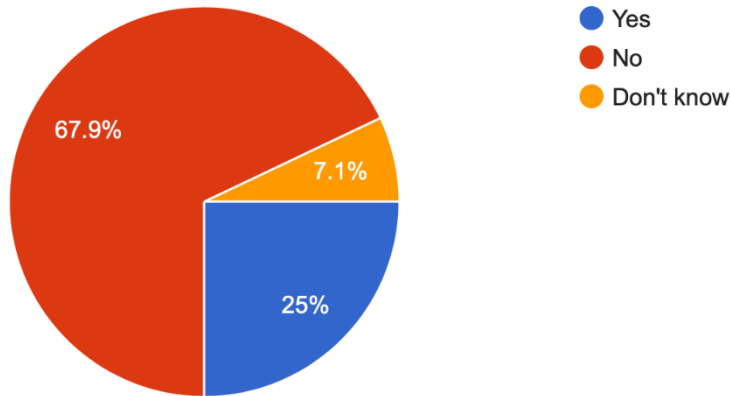


Figure 3, Pie chart made by researcher that shows the percentage of respondents that see a bar as healthy.

I would like you to now take your favourite (type of) bar into mind. When thinking about you favourite bar specifically, would you see this as a healthy place?

156 responses

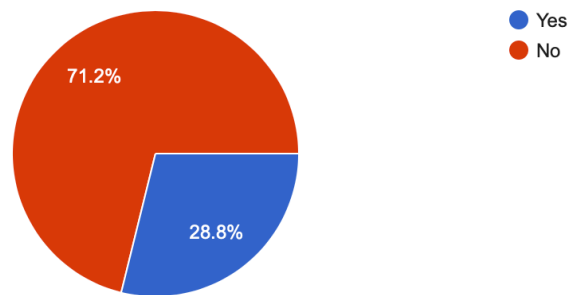


Figure 4, Pie chart made by researcher that shows the percentage of respondents that see their favorite bar as healthy

## 4.2 Quantitative data

### 4.2.1 Descriptive statistics quantitative data

The total sample size that has been collected by carrying out the questionnaires is 156. Of this sample 78 respondents are male and 75 are female, where 3 have decided not to disclose their gender, as can be seen in figure 5.

#### Q23 What is your gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	75	48,1	48,1	48,1
	Male	78	50,0	50,0	98,1
	Prefer not to say	2	1,3	1,3	99,4
	Else	1	,6	,6	100,0
	Total	156	100,0	100,0	

Figure 5. An overview of the collected data on the respondents gender in an SPSS output.

The most represented age group is people from the age of 18-30; they take up 93.6% of the respondents. This means that the sample lacks an accurate representation of all age groups. This hinders the possibility to see if there are any differences within age groups, with regard of considering bars as a healthy place.

Looking at figure 6, of the respondents, most people have selected options related to mental health: for instance, the options easing stress, socializing and distraction have been selected more than any other. This related to the research done by Sayette et al. (2012) as well as

Tartaglia et al. (2017) should suggest that the respondents, in a certain way view a bar as a mentally healthy place.

In what ways does visiting the bar make you feel better/well? (Multiple answers possible)

156 responses

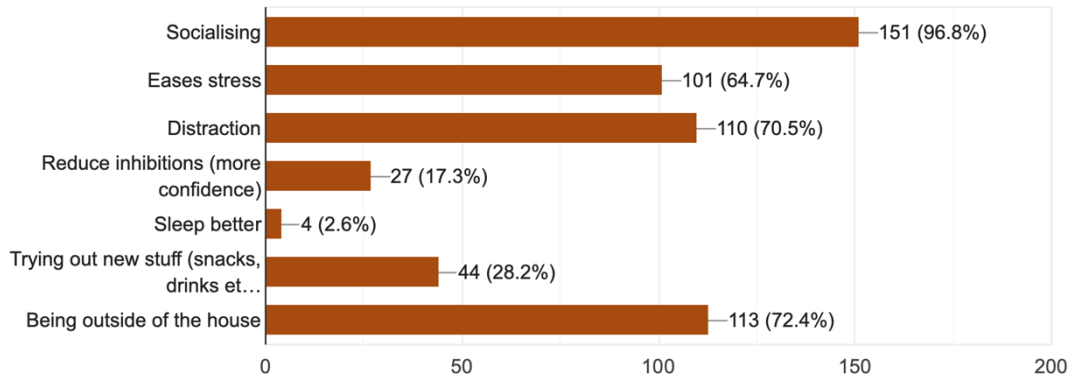


Figure 6, bar chart made by researcher from the responses on the questionnaire

#### 4.2.2 Chi-square test

For the chi-square test only 145 cases are selected, since within the dataset, some respondents have selected “don’t know” as the answer to the binary dependent variable, which cannot be used further in the method selected. The questions selected to perform the chi-square test with were regarding the perceived health of a bar, and on how many drinks someone consumed when visiting a bar. This has been done to see if someone who drinks less, has a different view on the healthy aspects of a bar compared to someone who drinks more when visiting a bar.

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3,753 <sup>a</sup>	4	,441
Likelihood Ratio	4,030	4	,402
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,668	1	,196
N of Valid Cases	145		

Figure 7, Chi-Square tests.

The hypothesis of the Chi-square test is that there is no relationship between the perceived health of a bar, and the number of alcoholic beverages that someone consumes when visiting a bar varies in the population. This hypothesis can be accepted. In figure 7, the last column with the value of 0.441 shows that there is no significant correlation between the perceived health of a bar and the amount of drinks someone consumes. Most striking however is that all of the significance values are higher than the 95% confidence interval. Therefore, we can assume that how much someone drinks during a bar visit, does not significantly influence his or her opinion on how healthy they think a bar is. Due to the insignificance of the chi-square test, no further

measures of association have been tested, and thus nothing can be said about the strength of the performed test.

#### 4.2.3 Multinomial loglinear regression

To see if any kind of relationship can be found between the perceived health of a bar and the selected variables that can be seen in figure 8 a multinomial loglinear regression has been conducted, with the question: “Do you think a bar is healthy” as a dependent variable. The following questions are the independent variables in the multinomial loglinear regression:

- For what reasons do you think your favorite bar could be healthy?
- What people do you visit a bar with?
- What is your gender?

The regression shows that there are no relationships between viewing a bar as healthy and the independent variables. Every option for every variable has been placed into comparison with the intercept question: “do you view a bar as healthy?” And, as can be seen in figure 8, there are no significant variables

All of the null hypotheses:

- There is no relationship between the perceived health of a bar and the reasons someone believes a bar being healthy.
- There is no relationship between the perceived health of a bar and the people that the respondent is visiting the bar with
- There is no relationship between the perceived health of a bar and the gender of the respondent.

as stated in part 3.2 of the methodology can thus be accepted. This results in the fact that a conclusion can be drawn that there is no direct relationship between how the perceived health is compared to the reasons someone believes a bar is healthy. There is no significant relationship between how healthy someone believes a bar is, looking at the mental health of someone and with the people they visit a bar with. Lastly, there is no relationship between the perceived health of a bar and someone’s gender. So, it doesn’t matter if you are a male or a female, the perceived health of a bar is not different.

Likelihood Ratio Tests				
Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	133,744 <sup>a</sup>	0,000	0	
Q3, Opt1: Food and drinks served	133,763	0,019	1	0,890
Q3: Opt2, The Ambience	133,798	0,054	1	0,816
Q3, Opt3, The location	133,913	0,169	1	0,681
Q3, Opt4, The socialising opportunities	133,790	0,045	1	0,831
Q3: Opt5, The nice bar staff	136,801	3,057	1	0,080
Q3, opt6, The people that visit this place	135,079	1,335	1	0,248
Q12, Opt1, Friends	135,266	1,522	1	0,217
Q12, Opt2 Family	133,744	0,000	1	0,991
Q12, Opt3, Colleagues	134,160	0,415	1	0,519
Q12, Opt4, Date	133,844	0,100	1	0,752
Q12, Opt5, Girlfriend or Boyfriend,	134,834	1,090	1	0,296
What is your gender?	134,873	1,128	1	0,288
The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The null hypothesis is that all parameters of that effect are 0.				
a. This reduced model is equivalent to the final model because omitting the effect does not increase the degrees of freedom.				

Figure 8 The variables and values from the multinomial logistic regression

In figure 9, the amount of explained variance is showed. The numbers suggest that the variables used within the research are not the variables that will explain why people see a bar as healthy, and that a large number of other different variables will have an influence on the perceived health as well.

Pseudo R-Square	
Cox and Snell	0,071
Nagelkerke	0,104
McFadden	0,064

Figure 9 The pseudo R-squares from the multinomial logistic regression

As can be seen and concluded from both tests, there is no direct relationship between perceived health of a bar and the researched factors that might have an influence on this. Within the research, the therapeutic landscape as defined by Gessler (1992) is thus not to be found inside of bars. Looking at figure 10, the data collected from the questionnaires does not suggest this either. This shows that the results that are found within the computed chi-square and multinomial logistic regression are not unexpected.

### What places would you consider healthy? (Multiple answers possible)

156 responses

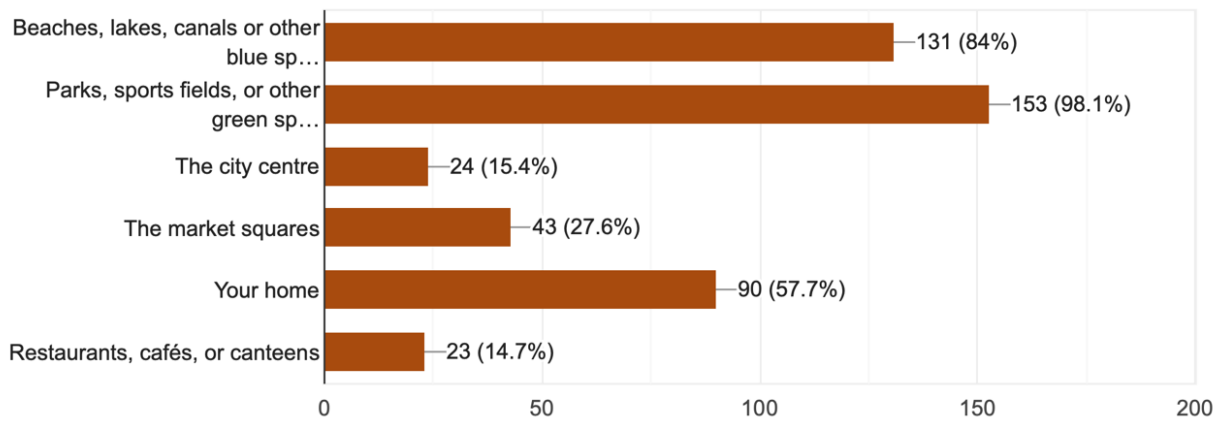


Figure 10 Bar chart made by researcher from the responses on the questionnaire.

Concluding the quantitative analysis, it is highly unlikely that with the current data can be said, that a bar can be perceived as healthy within the concept of a, mentally healthy, therapeutic landscape. The chi-square test has shown that there is no direct relationship between the amount of drinks that someone consumes during a bar visit and the perceived health of a bar. The multinomial loglinear regression has shown that a lot of different factors can have an influence on the perceived health. Those factors have not all been researched and are possibly not all directly researchable from this questionnaire. The only striking factor that connects with other researches like Tartaglia et al. (2018) for instance, is that most topics concerning social drinking and health have found that there are many variables that might have an influence on perceived healthiness.

## 4.3 Qualitative data

### 4.3.1 Background

Two interviews have been conducted with two bar staff members. These bar staff members have randomly been selected after there had been contact with different bars in the city of Groningen. Unfortunately, there are only two interviewees. This is, because most of the bars were closed due to the Covid-19 outbreak and had to take the measurements provided by the government into account and so they were not really able to help in this research. However, the two who answered were more than willing to help.

### 4.3.2 Descriptive statistics:

Figure 10: Personal characteristics of the interviewee

	Interviewee A	Interviewee B
Age	22	25
Gender	Male	Male
Kind of workplace	Bar/Eetcafe	Bar/Nightcafe



### 4.3.3 Analysis

The preset questions of Volker & Kistemann (2013) have been adjusted and used to see if someone who works as a bar employee would feel the same as a customer about the perceived healthiness of a bar. On questions that were asked if the interviewee thought if a bar was healthy, the response was, that on a physical note, a bar could according to interviewee A: “not be seen as a healthy place, with the snacks and calories that are consumed by drinking a beer or so.” But on a mental level, the bartender mentioned that you could see people relax, the attitude of people, where they first came in stressed, totally disappeared after the guests have settled in. This results in a happier atmosphere, and with this feeling, people tend to socialize more. Interviewee B has given the same response on this question. Both bartenders seem to support the ideas of social drinking, as explained by Sayette et al. (2012).

This contradicts the results as shown by the statistical analysis. Looking at the strength of the tests, the responses from the bartenders are surprisingly in contradiction with what the tests have shown. The bartenders both mention in the interviews that in their view a bar can contribute in a certain way to mental health. There might thus be a different perception of health within a bar from the point of view from a bartender, compared to that of a visitor.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

A bar, as a healthy place, is certainly something that should be looked further into. As the data from the interview suggests, there are a few aspects of health that can be defined more precise. Physically healthy is something that a bar is not often considered to be. But mental health, especially on the aspects of socializing and relaxing, have been mentioned often in the responses from the interview and within the multiple answer categories of the questionnaire. However, no significant levels have been found on how healthy a bar is perceived, in relation to the drinks, so the physical health part, as well as for the socializing part, which relates more to mental health. It can of course not be said for certain, that a bar cannot be healthy, but the results show that, within this research, most respondents do not see it as a healthy place. This results in the bold statement that people do not see a bar as a healthy place, which is unexpected, since the articles by Sayette et al. (2012) and Tartaglia et al (2017) both suggest that social drinking is beneficial to someone’s mental health. And looking at figure 6 for instance, you would have expected that people would view a bar as a healthy place. The indication, given by the multinomial loglinear regression however shows that the model used has a weak explanatory value, and that there are many other variables that can be of influence.

The biggest flaw within this research is the size of the not usable collected data for statistical analysis. Of the possible explanatory variables, not everything that has been asked within the questionnaires was useful in the end to use within any statistical analysis. A big reason for this has been that the questionnaires first were meant to be interviews, but with the coronavirus crisis at hand, everything had to be rewritten. The collected data is thus not fully collected for the same purpose as it was intended. The results are however most likely the same, since with online surveys far more people have been reached then normally with interviews would have been the case.

The most striking contradiction that has been found between the interviews and the questionnaires is that, although many respondents have labeled a bar as a mentally, and socially

relaxing place (figure 6), no significant values have been found. Whereas in the interview with the bartenders and the research done beforehand by other researchers, the essence of the social and mental health was mentioned in a more positive way than any other aspect of health. This might have been the case because of the way it has been researched. Where the bartenders have been interviewed, they could express how they thought and felt about the subject. Whereas the respondents from the questionnaire were less able to do so.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

### 6.1 Conclusions

The main research question of the research is: “To what extent can the perceived health in a bar contribute to the bar as a healthy space within the concept of a therapeutic landscape?” The data gathered to answer the main question has given the ability to conclude the following: There are many known and unknown factors, that can have an influence on the perceived health and wellbeing of visitors of bars. The factors that have been researched in this thesis have not given any significant results. This leads to the conclusion that a bar most likely cannot be seen as a healthy place within the given context of a mentally healthy therapeutic landscape.

### 6.2 Reflection & recommendation

Within the research, there are a few points that need to be considered as far from ideal, especially taking the restrictions that have been put in place around Covid-19 into account. Due to Covid-19, interviews in bars couldn't be held, and this results in less data that is specifically useful for a local bar. The data that has been collected is useful, but the data is less specific than the first data would have been if interviews could have been carried out inside bars. The statistical analysis used, is based on a questionnaire that was made for supporting the interviews. But right now, it unfortunately had to be the other way around. Misunderstandings in questions and answers with questionnaires are more likely to occur and are less likely to be clarified.

There are not many researches focused on this specific subject, and that is why it is hard to relate it to any form of other research that has been done yet. The only correlation that has been found with other researches, as for instance by Tartaglia et al. (2018) and Levy et al. (1980) have been on the part that there are many variables influencing someone's perceived happiness in relation to alcohol consumption. This is unfortunately pretty much all that there can be related to in this research.

For further research, a suggestion could be to looking more into taking more factors that can have an influence on mental health and physical health in account, to see if the bar can be considered as a healthy place or not. Another interesting point of view would be to look at the respondents mental health, before they are selected as respondents, to see whether that has any influence on their perception of health. And lastly, it would be interesting to look if there are any differences with social drinking between countries or even regions, or to see if there are differences between a bar in a city compared to the bar on the countryside.

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## Chapter 8. Appendix

### 1. Questionnaire questions

Do you consider pubs or bars a healthy place?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

I would like you to now take your favourite (type of) bar into mind. When thinking about your favourite bar specifically, would you see this as a healthy place?

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

For what reasons do you think your favourite bar could be seen as healthy? (Multiple answers possible)

- The food and drinks served
- The ambience
- The location
- The socializing opportunities
- The nice bar staff
- The people that visit this place
- Other:

For what reasons do you think your favourite bar could be seen as unhealthy? (Multiple answers possible)

- The food and drinks served
- The ambience
- The location
- The socializing opportunities
- The drinking habits that come with visiting this bar
- The people that visit this place
- Other:

What drink do you normally consume when you go to your favourite bar? (What you consume most regularly during a bar visit)

- Craft beer
- Pilseners
- Wine
- Cocktails
- Shots
- Soda's (Coca cola and such)
- Water
- Other:

What snacks do you normally consume when you go to your favourite bar? (Multiple answers are possible)

- None
- Nuts or crisps
- Hot bar snacks (e.g. bitterballen)
- Cheese and/or dry sausage (droge worst)
- Olives, bread and tapanades
- Healthy snacks
- Other:

On average, how many drinks do you have when visiting a bar?

- 1 or 2
- 3 or 4
- 5 or 6
- 7 or 8
- More than 8
- Prefer not to say

What places would you consider healthy? (Multiple answers possible)

- Beaches, Lakes, canals or other blue spaces
- Parks, sports fields or other green spaces
- The city centre
- The market squares
- Your home
- Restaurants, cafes or canteens

In what ways does visiting the bar make you feel better/well? (Multiple answers possible)

- Socialising
- Eases stress
- Distraction
- Reduce inhibitions (more confidence)
- Sleep better
- Trying out new stuff (snacks, drinks etc.)
- Being outside of the house

What makes a bar appeal to you? (Multiple answers possible)

- The drinks
- Social interaction
- The ambience of the bar
- The sports
- Music
- Every bar is the same to me
- Other:

Do you visit a bar more often alone, or with people?

- Alone
- Others
- Equally so

If you go with other people, who are they? (Multiple answers possible)

- Friends
- Family
- Colleagues
- Date
- Girlfriend or Boyfriend
- Other

On average, how many times within a month do you visit a bar?

- Less than once a month
- Once every two weeks
- Every week
- More than once a week
- (Almost) every day

What would it take for you to consider a bar as a healthy place? (Multiple answers possible)

- The ambience
- The drinks
- The snacks
- The location
- The interior
- The people that I am with

- Other

When being at a bar, on a terrace or in a pub, what do you want to experience? (Multiple answers possible)

- A good time
- Meeting new people
- The quality of the drinks
- Forgetting about the world
- A deep conversation
- The music
- Other

What specialism does your favourite bar have? (Multiple answers possible)

- Craft beer
- Sports (to do yourself, e.g. darts and snooker)
- Music
- Food
- Wine
- Cocktails
- Socialising
- (Board) games
- Sports (e.g. screens with football or rugby)
- Other:

Would you consider that having a drink at a bar more than once a week is unhealthy?

- Yes
- No

Would you consider drinking at the pub at all to be unhealthy?

- Yes
- No

Why do you consider drinking alcohol healthy or unhealthy? (Multiple answers possible)

- It is unhealthy because it is a sort of drug
- It is unhealthy because you can get fat from it
- It is unhealthy because of the snacks that you eat when drinking it
- It is healthy because it helps you relax
- It is healthy because it helps you socialize
- Other:

When a bar promotes that it has a healthier ambiance, would you consider visiting it sooner than your regular bar?

- Yes
- No

If your favourite bar would change its menu towards one with more healthy snacks and beverages, would you feel healthier after your visit to this bar?

- Yes
- No

What is your age?

- ----

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other

## 2. Interview transcript 1

The transcripts both have been anonymized to guarantee the respondents privacy.

Both transcripts are direct transcripts, the text has not been altered in any way except for the anonymity of the respondents.

Questions:

H- Welcome, before we start, just for the record, do you accept the consent I have read out to you, and do you accept the recording of this interview?

A- Yes, I accept

H- Please describe the type of bar you work in right now.

A- Currently I work in a bar called ----- It is as we call in Dutch “eetcafe” from 3 till 9, and after 9 the kitchen closes, where after it turns more into a brown café, so a cosy little place where people enjoy their drinks till late. Some nights, we have our weekly swing nights, but due to Corona, that obviously can’t go on anymore. It is a relaxed atmosphere there usually. You have students that don’t want to get drunk, so they mostly have a date or a relaxed evening or so. It is more of having a conversation type of bar.

H- Please describe the type of visitors you have at your bar.

A- Students that are further in their studies, so 23 years and older, and a lot of 50+ people.

H- Does your bar have any regular guests?

A- We definitely do have a lot of regular customers.

H- Do these guests then have a common characteristics? So are they open minded, healthy, friendly? Or what kind of people would you expect?

A- I think, for the majority with the dinner it is families. So 40/50 year old people with their children. Further when the kitchen closes, we have regular groups coming in, like a volleyball team or a clarinet group. It is mostly their hang-out spots.



H- Do you think that your bar is a healthy environment, if not physically, then mentally? And why/why not?

A- I'll start with the negative aspects of it. I wouldn't consider it healthy if it is like constantly drinking, just sitting by themselves and drinking and never talking to other people. On the positive side you see however that people really have a possibility to relieve their stress and find social contact. Seeing people that are acquaintances, also not friends but people you know more often, and socializing with them a bit as well. I see people get relieved when they sit down.

People are mostly a bit awkward when they come in with people that they don't know so well. But after a while, there are no boundaries anymore. Especially when instead of working, last week I finally sat down with a few friends again, and then I remembered how important it was to actually have social contact again. Being out of the house, where you are having less limitations than when you are in a house. So I'd definitely call a bar mentally healthy.

H- So, as you just mentioned, as someone from behind the bar, you can really see the relief that the people have, when they sit down for a drink, could you describe that? How could you see them feel the relief/ get rid of the tension?

A- I think that, as soon as people sit down, and order something, they feel more at ease, since a part of the pressure is gone. Mostly, it looks like, since they are getting in an environment where nothing really is expected from them anymore. Since most people come right out of work, or from a day at home where stuff had to be done/pressure was applied. You rarely see people getting out of a bar more stressed than they go in. It does happen, but they are exceptions.

H- So could you say your bar is being a healthy one, without of course taking those exceptions in account?

A- Yes, definitely when mentally speaking.

H- Do you think that, if you or the owners of your bar promoted more healthy options, your regular guests would leave?

A- If we are speaking about the physical aspect right now, yeah I think that the regular guests would leave. Since you would oppress them sort of. You take away their choice, at least that is how I feel it. So if you push them too much, people would feel uncomfortable. The problem rises with putting people unwillingly in a situation, that takes their comfort away.

H- So you could say that guests want to say, let me decide what's best for me.

A- And I think that the responsibility of the bar tenders or owners is that there are no excesses on how much people drink. If the guests are getting too drunk, bar personell should say that they cannot have another drink.

H- So what you are actually saying is that, a pub/ a bar can have an influence on someone's health, be it physical or be it mental.

A- Yeah, and I want to add on that, for instance when I see a regular, and he looks bad, sad or he is drinking too much, I would as a bartender start a conversation with him, to

see if I can help him or do anything for him at that given time. That's probably also the difference with a club, a club is probably mostly unhealthy because there are no personal connections at all.

H- Do you as a bartender feel healthier then, after you've been working, or how would you see yourself in your position? Especially with just mentioning the regular guests that you can help, do they cheer you up sometimes as well?

A- It's really dependent on the day of course, some days you are really exhausted, and don't even want to drink a beer after work but just go straight to bed. This mostly happens when you have annoying guests, or arguments or so. And then you feel like, I don't get paid enough for this. But in general, I feel like have a good click with the regulars, and I think that we really can support one another sometimes. Right now, due to Corona, I really miss those connections, you don't have the guests to talk to anymore. I sometimes really miss the days that you get out of work like at 4 o'clock in the morning, and you feel broken, but you've had a great night. So mentally as well, it is good for me, physical is something different.

H- If you would personally visit a bar, does the perceived healthiness of a bar attract you or scare you?

A- Could you give me an example?

H- So when you go to a bar, and for instance, when you order bitterballen you get falafel or something like that, cause that is all that they are willing to serve?

A- Yeah well, it feels like scaring someone away/ not giving them the freedom of choice as I said before. Personally I'd feel like probably going to a different bar the next time that I go out for a drink. I would go through with the experience, to see if I like it, but I'd prefer to have a choice. It's really a niche market in my point of view, and it's a shift that I am not that comfortable with.

H- Okay, so now we've disclosed mostly what a bar does for you, but for the record, what do you see as a healthy place in general?

A- I think anything that has to do with sports, that helps me a lot for instance, helps relieve stress. Socializing with friends by playing football and such. Besides bars, restaurants and parks are healthy in my opinion. It's a new environment.

H- So what you are actually saying is that the change of environment is more of an influence on your state?

A- Yeah definitely so with being so much home during a quarantine, like this, you are feeling refreshed when being outside of your house/ room. Since there are not many other places.

H- Well, I actually believe that I've asked anything I've wanted to ask right now, is there anything you want to add to this interview, or do you have any questions or remarks left?

A- No, thank you for the interview and this interesting insight.

## Interview transcript 2

Questions:

H- Welcome, before we start, just for the record, do you accept the consent I have read out to you, and do you accept the recording of this interview?

B- Yes, I do

H- Please describe the type of bar you work in right now.

B- I am working in a bar called the ----- It is more of a craft beer pub and a night cafe located in the city center of Groningen. Usually all kinds of groups visit our café, since we have much to offer. I would personally call this a brown café.

H- Could you describe what kind of people come to your bar?

B- Literally everyone, but mostly young people, from 18 till about 35 are our regular customers.

H- Does the bar have any regular guests then?

B- Yeah, we do! One guy named Willem always comes in around 4 O clock in the afternoon when we open, and then he just drinks one lager from draught, it's amazing to see. But he is not the only one that we see a lot.

H- If you would describe your guests, the characteristics of them, what are things to notice?

B- We have a lot of young people, dates, and groups of friends coming in. It are mostly people that really want to experience some quality beers if I may say so. They are mostly young, as said before, are really social and mostly study or have studied in Groningen.

H- Then, why do you think that those people choose your bar to visit every time?

B- I think that the variety of the drinks and the ambience are really the key factors that make this bar so popular.

H- And do you think that this bar can be seen as healthy then as well as reason to visit it? Physically as well as mentally.

B- Well, yes, on the mental part a bar can be seen as healthy in my opinion. But physically, not really, since you still consume a lot of goods that are not necessarily beneficial for your bodies health. What I mostly do see however is that people tend to be more social when they've had a few drinks and snacks. You see people relaxing and getting rid of the formal tensions that there can be. This is especially obvious with dates, for instance when people do not know each other, after a few drinks they are either chatting and having fun, or are like nah, you are not the one for me.

H- So, you really see that people start to relax? How do you see that happening?

B- Well, as soon as people have ordered something, they make a commitment to the place, so you see them going from like okay, what do I have to do, towards ah right, for now, this really is my place. The facial expression changes, and after a few drinks, people start chatting me up as bartender as if they have known me my whole life.

H- So could you say your bar is being a healthy one, without of course taking those exceptions in account?

B- Yes, totally, if we are speaking about mental health of course haha. Physically I really cannot see a healthy side to it, except for me walking at least 10 kilometers at an evening.

H- Do you think that, if you or the owners of your bar promoted more healthy options, your regular guests would leave?

B- I am not sure, our regular guests have been here for so long, and they only take one or two drinks. So only when we remove those things from the menu, I think that our regulars would stop visiting,

H- Do you as a bartender feel healthier then, after you've been working, or how would you see yourself in your position? Especially with just mentioning the regular guests that come in a lot

B- It depends, some days, guests are just annoying, and you are tired, so that doesn't make it feel healthy at all. You are exhausted for two days sometimes after a difficult shift. But on the other hand, when a shift goes the way it is supposed to, you really enjoy the vibe, and will feel so energetic after your shift that you will still be thriving after you've shut the bar. So I can feel healthier, but it is not always the case.

H- Then, next to a bar, what could you see in your position as a healthy place, something you could get energy out of?

B- For me personally I would say parks, green areas in general. The fresh air, the relaxedness and the space around me at that time makes me feel energetic. Another place is the beach for me really, it has the same vibe sometimes as the woods, just the space around you. But I hate crowded beaches though.

H- And looking outside of those parks and beaches, so green and blue areas, could you see yourself getting energy out of anything else?

B- Yeah, sporting for instance, or being outside of the house in times like these even. And work of course, when the days are not too stressful. Gatherings with friends, you can add that to the list too. Actually, quite a lot. But right now, Corona has been a bit hard on those things.

H- Well, I think that I've asked everything that I've wanted to ask. Is there anything you want to add to this interview, or do you have any questions or remarks left?

B- No, I don't! I hope to see you in our bar soon again.

H- Haha, we'll see. Then this concludes the interview. Thanks a lot.