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Exploring Relationships between Experience Realms and Satisfaction of Visitors within Festival Event

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Abstract

Festivals and special events are unique experiential products that able to produce ranges of sensations, imaginations, emotions, and involvement within visitors. Experiential concept is useful for the event organization to measure achievement or effectiveness of the outcome of their events and further understand the nature of visitor experiences within festival settings. Hence, this study attempts to explore the visitors' experiences in Bazaar Ramadhan or known as street food fiesta, a one-month festive event that is held only in the month of Ramadhan in celebration of the fasting month for the Muslims. Bazaar Ramadhan is place where Muslims and non-Muslims flock to these places for iftar food. Five experiential dimensions which comprises of entertainment, educational, esthetic, escapist, and festivity experience were used to engage visitors at event. A total of 132 responses were collected from visitors that visits bazaar Ramadhan and from visitors that had experience visiting the bazaar. Correlation and regression analysis were performed to test the relationship between the variables. Based on the results, there were positive associations between the five realms of event experience and visitors' satisfaction. The findings showed each realm intermingled with each other forming a visitor's unique, memorable and desirable personal event experience onsite of bazaar. The findings of this study assist event operators in providing the best experiences for visitors' satisfaction from the aspects of entertainment, educational, esthetic, escapist, and festivity experiences.

Keywords: Correlational Analysis, Regression Analysis, Realm of Experiences, Event Experience, Festival, Satisfaction

Introduction

Festivals and special events are one-of-a-kind experiential products that can elicit a wide range of feelings, thoughts, emotions, and participation from attendees. In Malaysia, there are many festivals and special events have been held, such as Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Chinese New Year, Gawai Festival, Wesak Day, and others.

Susic & Dordevic (2011) define events as a type of produced attraction that any place should have in order to plan a successful development. The same authors explain that events are continuing activities that "occur" at various times throughout the year, that they promote tourism to a destination by functioning as attractions in themselves, and that they stimulate

direct engagement and participation from tourists. Events, according to Susic & Dordevic (2011), have a unique appeal due to their short duration and natural simplicity, which distinguishes them from permanent institutions and artificial attractions.

Hari Raya Aidilfitri, the festival of the breaking of the fast, a religious holiday celebrated by Muslims in Malaysia. It is the day that marks the end of Ramadhan, the holy month of dawn-to-sunset fasting. During the Ramadhan month, Ramadhan bazaar, a kind of street food market were established in many busy areas. Normally it consists of stalls that sell foods and drinks operated from 3.00pm until 8.00pm by those interested to do this business. The bazaar have provide opportunity to the Muslim sellers who have closed their business from dusk till afternoon. It also provides opportunity for the public and tourists to buy variety of Malaysian cuisine and local foods, such as *nasi lemak*, *briyani* rice, *laksa*, roasted chicken, fruit juices, and others. The Ramadhan bazaar is included in Malaysian tourism calendar as an annual event under events and festivals. It is undoubtedly becoming a yearly event, with a wide variety of food ranging from traditional Malay dishes to local beverages.

According to Van Vliet (2012), a festival is defined as a gathering of a relatively large number of people in a specific public area for a predetermined period of time, during which visitors are offered a unique experience (planned and organised for a specific purpose), including transformation and play elements, allowing them to behave and feel differently than they do on a daily basis. Festivals are one-of-a-kind experiential products that can elicit a variety of sensations, imaginations, emotions, and participation from visitors. Elements from the experiential realms, such as entertainment, education, aesthetics, escapism, and festive experience, were employed to engage customers during the event. According to Pine and Gilmore, customers are involved in a range of aspects (or worlds) of interactions (1999). Consequently, these experiences should be understood as bipolar structures based on the extent and kind of client involvement in corporate offers. The experiential concept can help event organisers evaluate the success or effectiveness of their activities and better comprehend the nature of festival-goer encounters. During a festival, a person will be exposed to a variety of experiences that will remain long after the festival has ended. (Van, 2012). It's an event that brings joy and excitement to individuals. Even if he or she is busy in other areas, people will feel festive at this occasion. For instance, educational experiences in which attendees get new knowledge as a result of an event. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), an educational experience actively engages the mind of customers, capturing them and appealing to their desire to learn something new. Consumers play a vital role in co-determining their educational experience, as it is both active and absorbent. Then there was the aesthetic experience, in which it was submerged in a variety of circumstances. Bitner (1992) identified three dimensions of the physical environment: ambient conditions, spatial organisation and functionality, and signs, symbols, and artefacts. Multiple research have uncovered the significance of aesthetics in consumer behaviour, decision-making, and service evaluation (Turley and Milliman, 2000). In addition, the escapist experience can be defined as the extent to which a person is completely engaged and absorbed in a specific activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Immersive escapist experiences demand active interaction. Lastly, there is the entertainment experience, which is one of the oldest forms of experience and typically entails passive engagement on the side of the individual. According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), businesses have grown into "stages" for entertaining and pleasing customers. Live concerts and variety shows are two common kinds of entertainment.

During the month of Ramadhan, the Ramadan bazaar were reported to attracts a large number of individuals, particularly visitors and traders. Nowadays, visitors are just not looking for product and service, they are also looking for long term personal memory and significant experiences. The realm of experience framework bred by Pine and Gilmore (1999) have become increasingly involved as a way to meet visitors' demands for an engaging and dynamic experience. The realms of experiences: entertainment, education, escapism, esthetic and festivity are tended to enhance each of the understanding of the various features of experience consumption. However, the experience of attending Ramadhan bazaar have not yet been explored. In other words, the relationship between the Ramadan bazaar experiences and visitor's satisfaction has not been widely researched. This study is therefore aiming to reveal such issues and hypothesizes;

H1: Festivity influence satisfaction of Ramadhan bazaar visitors

H2: Education influence satisfaction Ramadhan bazaar visitors

H3: Esthetic influence satisfaction of bazaar Ramadhan visitors

H4: Escapist influence satisfaction of bazaar Ramadhan visitors

H5: Entertainment influence satisfaction of bazaar Ramadhan visitors

Literature Review

The Event Experiential Realms

According to Kuiper and Smit (2014), experience is one of the processes that will occur in a person who is experiencing it. The visitor's perspective plays a crucial role in this investigation. Instead than focusing on the experience of the event's organisers, O'Neill et al (1999) believe that consumers' expectations are the most crucial component of the event product experience. The purpose of the event experience is to provide a favourable personal experience for the visitor (Edvardsson, 2005). Event planners should prioritise the control of visitors' positive sensory and emotional components, which extends beyond the visible product and service attributes (Carbone, 1998).

The sphere of event experience includes entertainment, education, aesthetics, escapism, and festivity. The concept of event experience could employ Pine and Gilmore's framework of experience domains (1999). Experience domains are believed to be applicable and effective in various fields (Oh et al., 2007). Customers are engaged by the four aspects of experience (4Es): entertainment, education, aesthetics, and escapism (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Visitors' experiences at an event may be classified as entertaining, informative, aesthetic, or escapist, depending on the extent and kind of customer interaction. Still, it is believed that the 4Es are compatible with one another and can combine to create a unique and desirable experience for each individual (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Consequently, each experience component may add to the consumption experience of consumers (Oh et al., 2007). In the end, the most desirable experience is the sweet spot in the midst of axes that include all worlds of experience. In addition to the 4Es proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1998), a fifth element is added to the event experience measurement model. Since the 4Es are general and relevant to any type of consumer experience, a special dimension, festivity, is added to emphasise the celebration aspect in a special event context. As is common knowledge, special events are typically social occasions or gatherings of people for a specific purpose. Special events, especially festivals, are sometimes defined as a phenomenon rooted in the community (Getz, 1991). Consequently, it is appropriate to evaluate the success of an event based on the guests' sense of connection to the on-site collective spiritual celebration. The realm of festivity is

measuring the related surrounding people and atmosphere that suggest a celebration. In comparison to the individualised traits of the 4Es, celebration has a collective and community essence.

The term "Bazaar Ramadhan" is very synonymous with the Malaysian community throughout the month of fasting in the community's everyday life. This may indirectly pique someone's attention. In short, a brand becomes a conduit for an individual's amusement.

Experiential education is a common technique of instruction. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 2014) defines experience education as "the process whereby knowledge is generated through the transformation of experience." Knowledge is the result of a combination of transformational and emotional experiences. John Dewey's philosophy recommends an interdisciplinary curriculum, or one that focuses on integrating multiple courses and allows students to freely move between classrooms. Humans are endowed with the intelligence to think and acquire new information throughout their lives. One can get knowledge through experience.

Esthetics is the philosophical study of the perception, appreciation, and creation of art. Esthetic experience comprises a wide spectrum of emotional responses, including beauty, awe, and sublimity, as well as a few other (often knowledge-based) emotions. The Esthetic dimension of experience resides within nature and experience itself, along with creativity and the harmonious interplay of elements. Bazaar Ramadan may be one of a person's esthetic experiences, where festivals of this nature serve as a springboard for acquiring knowledge based on observation and emotion.

The American Psychology Association defines escapism as "the trend of retreating from the real world into the safety and comfort of a fantasy world." Because life is fundamentally stressful, coping mechanisms are required to survive each day. To have an escapist experience, customers must actively immerse themselves or engage in activities in a real or virtual setting (Dias, 2019).

Bazaar Ramadhan becomes a place where one can relieve stress as a result of the experience they have there. An individual will be exposed to a variety of experiences that will persist long after the event has concluded. Festival attendees leave with a variety of encounters, but this is not the end of the story. After the festival, participants will begin to discuss it with their friends, which will lead to the formation of many opinions about the event. They will also engage in the following behaviours as a result of their attendance: uploading photographs to social media, telling stories to their friends, etc (Van Vliet, 2012). Depending on a person's experience, a celebration or event can offer them happiness and elation. Events are frequently regarded as "unique" or "unique" experiences. According to Getz (1991), one of the most essential elements of a celebration is festivity. Falassi (1987) proposed the terms "gaiety, conviviality, and brightness" to describe the emotional aspect of celebration, specifically festival spirit.

Bazaar Ramadan is an annual gathering of food merchants serving a range of regional delicacies at iftar (breaking of fast). The Ramadan Bazaar has its own unique value. The Bazaar Ramadhan is radically distinct from the current morning and night markets in Malaysia, and it has a unique atmosphere compared to the numerous colourful and visually appealing events and celebrations in Malaysia. During the month of fasting, one of the most popular attractions is the Bazaar Ramadan.

Visitors Satisfaction

The effects of visitor pleasure and discontent should be studied in tourism and leisure studies in order to give adequate knowledge for decision makers in this field (Sadeh et al., 2012). For instance, the emotion tourists experience after completing a tour is known as visitor contentment (Baker and Crompton, 2000). The intention of visitors to recommend or revisit the events they have experienced in a given destination is largely dependent on the quality of the attractions they have encountered. In addition, positive or negative attitudes and future behavioural intentions can be evaluated following exposure to the product or service in question. If visitors have a positive experience with events, they are likely to have a positive disposition, and vice versa. According to studies, there is a correlation between visitors' contentment or discontent and their intention to return and positive or negative word-of-mouth. The level of satisfaction has a substantial impact on customer retention, intention to repurchase, and revisiting. Due to its significance in determining the profitability and long-term survival of the tourist company, visitor satisfaction has been one of the most researched topics in tourism studies (Chi et al., 2007). According to festival literature, a festival's perceived quality is the foundation for satisfaction and loyalty, and the concept of perceived value is tied to the festival's perceived quality (Hung et al., 2010; Yoon et al., 2010).

The Relationship between Event Experiential Realms and Satisfaction

The domains of event entertainment involve passive absorption experiences in which the participant observes and/or absorbs events and/or performances without affecting the outcome or surroundings. Oh et al (2007); Pine and Gilmore (1999), attendees of an event or festival will receive entertainment depending on their experiences. Satisfaction reflects the overall impressions of an activity and indicates the summative judgement of entertainment consumption as pleasing or unsatisfying (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Hedonic dimensions are one of the most important determinants of event effectiveness. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) described hedonic dimensions as positive emotions, enjoyable and pleasurable experiences, happiness, excitement, amusement, and intrigue. People seek social-psychological benefits, such as entertainment, gatherings, and shows, to spark their attention and induce gratification (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Thus, entertainment influences the contentment of visitors.

Oreopoulos and Salvanes (2011) found that education was one of the most influential predictors of an individual's physical condition, employability, and likelihood of being married, which are all well-known drivers of life satisfaction. Indeed, education is both an investment and a consumable (Schaafsma, 1976). Education includes two components: an investment component tied to future financial returns and a consumption component tied to the utility obtained from current consumption as well as the opportunity to enjoy a greater choice of goods in the future (Schultz, 1988). Event experiential education teaches someone something new when they have a strong want to learn; their desire to learn will benefit them in the future. Long-term life satisfaction can be achieved through event-based education (Getz, 1997). Previous research indicates that education influences tourist satisfaction.

Next, aesthetic is a philosophical idea in which we value things that affect our senses, especially in a pleasant way (Carlson, 2005). In the early 18th century, the term aesthetic was initially used to refer to 'sensory science,' or the information gained via the processing of our senses (Breiby, 2018). Kirillova et al (2014) discovered that the aesthetic quality of an item is a significant factor of a consumer's overall pleasure, hence influencing their intention to

return. According to Breiby (2018), aesthetic quality influences a person's loyalty positively through enjoyment. Baker and Crompton (2000) studied the relationships between festival participants' aesthetic experience, service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. They discovered that improved performance quality increased visitor loyalty and prompted attendees to spend more money at the event. According to Berridge (2007), festivals and unique events provide positive experiences for people, commerce, culture, fun, imagination, entertainment, desire, and memories. Aesthetics influence the satisfaction of visitors.

The escapist experience influences the emotions and levels of enjoyment of individuals (Hosany & Witham, 2010). Escapism is primarily motivated by the desire to "escape from normal existence." Escapism happens when the participant has an effect on real or virtual world performances (Hosany & Witham, 2010). The individual desires certain outcomes, such as putting something to reduce tension. The visitor's interactions with diverse cues within the staged environment constitute the backbone for the event experience model (Berridge, 2007); the environment of a place or ceremony becomes the starting point for a person to determine whether or not it is acceptable to relinquish himself for the term escapist for self-satisfaction. Escapist influences the satisfaction of the guest.

In conclusion, festive experience is an experience received via participation in an event or festival. Events and festivals are essential aspects of our social lives, and their nature needs good organisational skills due to their intricate structure (Ayob, 2013). Event satisfaction, like any other aspect of the service industry, is vitally important. Ayob et al. (2010) describe event satisfaction as a factor that determines how individuals feel about themselves when participating in other events. Additionally, there is a strong correlation between tourist pleasure and visitor experience, although the terms are not synonymous. A visitor may indicate high levels of satisfaction with the event despite the fact that it was not particularly memorable. Therefore, customer satisfaction is the key to success in the events and festival industries. From the perspective of the visitor, event experience is comprised of pleasurable, engaging, and memorable on-site events (Oh et al., 2007). Festivity influences the satisfaction of the guest.

A festival or special event must satisfy all five domains of event experience in order to be considered a "star" event, as it requires the satisfaction of several parties. According to Pine and Gilmore's (1999) realm of experiences, the event experience correlates with visitor's satisfaction.

Method

The data was collected from visitors that had experience and visited bazaar Ramadhan. A survey that consists of online questions was formed to obtain data from visitors. The questionnaires were formed using the google forms and were distributed through the online social media platforms and applications such as WhatsApp and Facebook. The questionnaire's items are derived from Ayob, Wahid, & Omar, 2011 study. A total of 15 items were used to measure event experiences, while 4 items to measure the dependent variable, satisfaction. A five-point Likert-scale was used. Testing of the reliability of instruments was conducted, and the Cronbach alpha value for all factors was above 0.700 ranges from 0.880 education, 0.773 for esthetic, 0.724 for escapism, 0.847 for festivity, and 0.814 for entertainment indicating good validity and reliability.

A total of 132 responses were recorded, however 100 were completed and used for analysis. Out of these respondents, 49% were male whereas 51% were female. 81% were having age

between 18-24 years, 39% were between 25-34 years and 10% were above 35 years old. With regards to respondents' race, 4% were Indians, 15% were Chinese and majority (81%) were Malays.

The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, where descriptive, correlation and regression were used to analyse the relationship between the variables.

Findings

Table 1 exhibits the Pearson Correlation Matrix for all the independent and dependent variables.

Table 1

Pearson Correlation

	SATISFACTI ON	EDUCATI ON	ESTHET IC	ESCAPIS M	FESTIVI TY	ENTERTAINM ENT
SATISFACTION	1.000	.444	.604	.445	.575	.610
EDUCATION	.444	1.000	.627	.560	.531	.575
ESTHETIC	.604	.627	1.000	.631	.754	.755
ESCAPISM	.445	.560	.631	1.000	.684	.498
FESTIVITY	.575	.531	.754	.684	1.000	.784
ENTERTAINM ENT	.610	.575	.755	.498	.784	1.000

Table 2

The coefficient range and strength of association

Coefficient Range	Strength of Association
0.10 – 0.29	Low
0.30 – 0.49	Moderate
0.50 – 1.00	High

Based on the table, the correlation (r) between variables are in the range of $.444 \geq r \geq .784$. There are moderate and high level of correlation agreement between all the variables indicating there are significant associations between them. Pallant (2013) suggested that Pearson Correlation (r) value can range from -1.00 to 1.00. This study followed Cohen (1998) to indicate the strength of relationship illustrated in table 2. The result shows high associations between esthetic and festivity ($r = 0.754$, $p < 0.01$), esthetic and entertainment ($r = 0.755$, $p < 0.01$), and between festivity and entertainment ($r = 0.784$, $p < 0.01$). The result of this study also show moderate associations between satisfaction and educational ($r = 0.444$, $p < 0.01$), satisfaction and esthetic ($r = 0.604$, $p < 0.01$), satisfaction and escapism ($r = 0.445$, $p < 0.01$), satisfaction and festivity ($r = 0.575$, $p < 0.01$), satisfaction and entertainment ($r = 0.610$, $p < 0.01$), educational and esthetic ($r = 0.627$, $p < 0.01$), educational and escapism ($r = 0.560$, $p < 0.01$), educational and festivity ($r = 0.531$, $p < 0.01$), educational and entertainment ($r = 0.575$, $p < 0.01$), esthetic and escapism ($r = 0.631$, $p < 0.01$), escapism and festivity ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.01$), escapism and entertainment ($r = 0.488$, $p < 0.01$). The results between the dependent variables and the independent variable can be concluded as having positive relationships.

To see whether there is a significant relationship between the five factors of experience and satisfaction of bazaar Ramadhan visitors, a linear regression was conducted. The outcomes demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between education experience, esthetic experience, escapism experience, festivity experience, entertainment experience and satisfaction. These five realms of event experiences were able to explain 42.7% (R-square = 0.428, F-change = 14.054, $p < 0.000$) of the variance in visitors' satisfaction to bazaar Ramadhan.

Table 3
Coefficients

Model	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant		3.220	.002
Education	.034	0.314	.754
Esthetic	.251	2.086	.047
Escapism	.053	.448	.655
Festivity	.099	.642	.523
Entertainment	.297	2.067	.041

Table 3 shows the value of beta coefficient for this study. The regression results found that only Esthetic and Entertainment showed a significant relationship with visitors' satisfaction in bazaar Ramadhan ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis for H3 and H5 were supported. Education, Escapism and Festivity experiences were found not significant, hence the hypothesis for H1, H2 and H5 were not supported.

Results from this study also show that entertainment experience is the most important factor in influencing satisfaction among bazaar Ramadhan visitors in Malaysia ($\beta = .297$), followed by esthetic ($\beta = .251$), festivity ($\beta = .099$) and escapism ($\beta = .053$). Meanwhile, the lowest value is education ($\beta = .034$).

Conclusions

This study attempts to examine the relationship between the five realms of experiences and visitors' satisfaction. The study found that all realms of event experiences are positively significantly correlated with visitor satisfaction. The study is in line with the existing limited literature such as, Mahdzar (2019); Mahdzar (2017); Mahdzar (2020) found visitors' realm of experiences had positive and significant impact on satisfaction. The study also shows that entertainment and esthetic are the strongest influence and have significant relationship on visitors' satisfaction.

These findings clearly show that it is important for event organisers to understand and evaluate visitors' event experiences in the event settings and not only focusing on physical aspects of products and services. Visitors experienced needs primarily of wanting to indulge, to be entertained, and to share experience at the event. Therefore, it is proposed that event organisers need to make sure that the activities and performances designed and staged at the event focus on consumers' indulgence, fun, amusement, and enjoyment, while allowing opportunities for social gathering and sharing at the event in order to create positive

evaluation of the event experience. Hence, the esthetic values of bazaar Ramadhan such as adding colourful tents and ambience for visitors to feel the pleasant, positive or artful appearance bazaar. This is to ensure the esthetic experience are continuously provided to visitors. The management of the bazaar may organise activities to further improve the entertainment experience for the visitors. For example, providing visitors with souvenirs and free food sampler of food sold at the bazaar which allow the visitor to always remember the place.

This study's concept of event experience allows an understanding and investigation of event outcomes from the perspective of event attendees. Event experience is about creating unique, individualised encounters and lasting memories that incorporate the positive subconscious sensory and emotional qualities of visitors. It is centred on emotional and value formation from the staged experience, as opposed to the physical features of the special event, such as quality, functionality, accessibility, delivery, and cost.

Like many other researches, this study has limitations. The selection of the event was the first restriction of the findings. In order to examine the association, data were gathered at a public community gathering. Therefore, the findings may not be applicable to other sorts of special events, such as sporting events, festivals, exhibitions, and tourism events. In order to establish and maintain the pleasure and loyalty of visitors, it is necessary to do additional research in a variety of special event contexts on the application of the five-event experiential domain.

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