



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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ISSN: 2222-6990

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i7/4394>

DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i7/4394

Received: 07 June 2018, Revised: 25 June 2018, Accepted: 29 June 2018

Published Online: 18 July 2018

In-Text Citation: (Ramli, Januri, & Ghani, 2018)

To Cite this Article: Ramli, N., Januri, N. F. A., & Ghani, W. S. W. A. (2018). The Influence of Event Performance Quality on Attendees' Satisfaction. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(7), 520–530.

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Vol. 8, No. 7, July 2018, Pg. 520 - 530

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The Influence of Event Performance Quality on Attendees' Satisfaction

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Abstract: This paper attempts to study relationship between quality of event performance and attendees' satisfaction. A total of 250 attendees served as a sample of this study using the convenience sampling method. Pearson correlation was used to analyze the simple relationships between the dimensions of event performance and satisfaction. The results show that there is a significant relationship between event performance and attendees satisfaction. Regression analysis was used to identify which dimension influence the satisfaction. Based on the findings, it was found that all three dimensions of event performance significantly influence the satisfaction. This finding therefore will help event organizers in improving the quality and performance in event industry.

Keywords: *Event Performance, Event Design, Event Quality, Attendees' Satisfaction*

Introduction

Event industry has significant impact in term of economic, social and cultural towards host organization and community (Chen, Dipendra, Ozturk, & Makki, 2014; Deery & Jago, 2010; Jago & Shaw, 1998). The industry has been regarded as important contributors to host community economic development through commercial activities and job opportunities provided to local community (Chen et al., 2014). In addition, events can generate media interest and develop beneficial outcome to community residents (Ko, Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2010). In special events industry, the success of event organization, design and program implementation are judged from attendees perception and evaluation of service quality and event performance (Chen et al., 2014). This view also supported by Crompton and Love (1995), that contends performance is the most convincing predictor of event success. Events are service based industry whereby customer satisfaction is the key to success (Ko et al., 2010). Event organizer needs to grasp the implication and importance of quality as according to their type of event and its goal (Getz, 2005). The improvement of service quality has been recognized as the main approach to enhance levels of customer satisfaction. Increased customer satisfaction provide many advantages as satisfied customer are less price sensitive, willing to add purchase and sustain customer loyalty (Hansemark & Albinson, 2004). Baker and Crompton (2000), has been emphasizing on the fundamental relationship between suppliers, performance, customer satisfaction

and organization success. They found that loyalty and repeat visitation, considerable tolerance on high price, and greater reputation are emerged from increased quality of performance and high level of satisfaction.

Numerous studies have found that service quality positively influence customer satisfaction (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Cole & Illum, 2006; Kim, LaVetter, & Lee, 2006; Yoshida & James, 2011; Zhang, Lee, Judge, & Johnson, 2014). However, despite many existing studies on service quality and satisfaction, there is a lack of study on relationship between event performance and satisfaction. Hence, there is a need to assess the quality of event performance and how it influences attendees' satisfaction. Therefore, this study aims to identify the relationship between event performance quality and satisfaction and to determine which event performance significantly influences the attendees' satisfaction.

Service quality is described as the result of the gap between customer expectation and perception (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1988), to measure the scale of service quality identified five dimensions of service quality: Tangible, Reliability, Responsiveness, Customer Assurance and Empathy. This scale is extensively used in numerous service industries. In event and festival context, service quality has been frequently explored with various factors and dimensions according to the types of events including wine and music festival (Tkaczynski & Stokes, 2010), cultural festival (Yan, Zhang & Li, 2012), and sports events (Theodorakis, Kambitsis & Laios, 2001). Crompton and Love (1995), measured five types of relationships operationalized in evaluating quality, including: attribute expectations; attribute expectations and importance; attribute performance and importance; attribute performance and expectations; and attribute performance, expectations and importance. They found that performance-based operationalizations were the best predictors of quality, while the least accurate predictors were the disconfirmation-based operationalizations. Tkaczynski and Stokes (2010), proposed a FESTPERF model to assess the quality of music festival through three dimensions: professionalism, environment and core service. A previous study by Baker and Crompton (2000), suggested that the quality of performance also identified as quality of opportunity, refers to the attributes of a service provided by the suppliers. It is the output of tourism or event provider. Thus, the evaluations of the quality of performance are assessed from visitors' perceptions of the performance of the provider. They measured the four factors of quality performance; generic features, specific entertainment, information sources and comfort amenities with satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

Quality of performance describes the quality of tourism opportunities or resources supplied by service provider (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Specifically, performance quality refers to event features (activities, programs, facilities, etc.) provided by the event organizer for the visitors. Meanwhile the quality and performance are evaluated from attendees' perception (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the festival visitors' perception of the performance of the service provider (Ayob & Said, 2010). Event planners should design and market their events that relates with value equity and service marketing mix to influence attendees' perception (Moscardo, 2007; Rosenbaum & Wong, 2010). Event performance can be categorized as the process of performing an event, whether it succeeds to reach the event objective, mission and satisfy the unique characteristic of the event itself (Chen et al., 2014). The quality of the performance or service experience will determine the success of an event (Chen et al., 2014). The implication of assessing and enhancing the quality of events is demonstrated through increased visitation and income, plus positive word-of-mouth promotion of the event (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Good event

performance depends on the attendees' satisfaction. The event organizer must deliver a good event performance as it can lead to memorable and positive experience or satisfaction to the event attendees as well as achieving the event goals. Event performance can be determined by many different factors as every event hold different identity that needs to be achieved. The level of performance in event is according to the objective of the event itself, whether it is achievable to the organization or not (Brown, & Hutton, 2013). Any event has unique and creative characteristics as the uniqueness of appeal of an event can be influenced by the performance of participants, authenticity of the experience or the location's natural or cultural heritage and community pride (Bowen, & Danials, 2005).

One of the important aspects of event performance is hedonic dimensions (Chen et al., 2014). Hedonic dimensions measure the good feelings, fun and pleasant experiences, joy, excitement and interesting (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Ryu, Heesup, & Jang, 2010). Hedonic values are non-instrumental, experiential and sentimental and more related to non-tangible service features and can be stimulated by certain behaviors such as play, leisure activities, sports, aesthetic appreciation, games, creativity and hobbies (Ryu, Heesup, & Jang, 2010). The other compulsory basis of event performance is including maintenance factors such as infrastructure, parking and information services (Baker & Crompton, 2000). However, it requires more than these factors to create attendees' satisfaction. Instead, visitors seek social-psychological benefits such as entertainment, activities and shows to grasp the visitors' interest and enticing the satisfaction (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Effectual event design has been regarded as one of the important elements of event success. Beside planning and organization, event design has appeared as a main aspect of overall event management (Silvers, 2012). Event design can be defined as the creation, conceptual development and staging of an event using event design principles and techniques to capture and engage the audience with a positive and meaningful experience (Brown, 2012). The event design experience capitalizes on the efficiency of interaction with the visitors and hence enlarges the possibility of the event to achieve its aims and objectives (Brown, & Hutton, 2013). Besides, event design articulates on artistic interpretations and expression of the aims and objectives of the overall event (Morgan, 2009). The design must play an imperative role in stimulating the sensory experience of visitors to enhance the attraction to the visitors (Chen et al., 2014). It is important to comprehend the motivations, the behaviors and the tendency of audiences and how event design principles and techniques can be employed to influence the audience, event organizer is able to execute a successful event that meets the goals and objectives (Brown, & Hutton, 2013). The information sources and comfort amenities domains are also determining the base level of quality, and if these domains are not attained, then participants are likely to become dissatisfied with the event itself (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Andereck and Caldwell (1993), specify that the process of obtaining various sources is including scrutinizing, seeking and obtaining of information in advance.

Satisfaction is a response to an evaluation process or evaluation of the experience value derived from the experiences at various service providers (Prebensen & Rosengren, 2016). Study by Baker and Crompton (2000), found that satisfaction is subjective to the social-psychological state of attendees outcome, such as mood, disposition and needs as well as unrelated occurrence such as climate and group interaction that are beyond organizers' control. Thus, they conclude that performance quality is assessed from provider or organizer's output, while the satisfaction is determined from attendees' outcome. The higher level of attendees' satisfaction is likely to be influenced by the higher quality performance in facility provision, programming, and service (Baker & Crompton, 2000). The satisfaction of the event attendees is also one of the aspects in measuring

the event performance. The factors that provide satisfaction and needs of event attendees must be taken into consideration by event organizers for an event to be successful (Lade & Jackson, 2004). When the event can achieve the satisfaction of the attendees, it creates joy and motivation for attendees to come to future event. It is important to determine what leads a good event performance and, thus, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between event performance and attendees satisfaction. By performing this research, it indicates how far the event performances affect the attendees' satisfaction level.

Methodology

The study was conducted at a festival event which attracts over 1000 attendees at one day it operates. The event took place in Shah Alam, Selangor and the highlights of the event include community run, bike gatherings, demonstrations, local performances and local food vendors. A total set of 250 questionnaires were distributed using convenience sampling to the event attendees. All 250 questionnaires were returned which constituted a response rate of 100%. All questionnaires were valid and used for analysis. The questionnaire items were adapted from Chen et al. (2014), that measures three dimensions of event performances as hedonic dimension (quality of food and beverages, location, etc), design dimension (layouts, event objectives, adequate number of tables, number of vendors, etc.) and informative dimension (availability of event information, staff and volunteers knowledge, entertainments etc.). Satisfaction was measured by 5- item scale which was adapted from Rosenbaum and Wong (2010). All items for event performance and attendees' satisfaction were assessed with 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree (1) to "strongly agree (5).

Descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were conducted to analyze the data. Reliability analysis was performed to measure the consistency of the item by using Cronbach's Alpha. According to Gliem and Gliem (2003), the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. The closer Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the Likert-type scale. The Cronbach's alpha value of attendee's satisfaction items is 0.929 indicating that the items consistency is excellent. Meanwhile, the Cronbach's alpha for all three independent variables show the values of 0.822 (hedonic), 0.827 (design) and 0.859 (informative). The findings indicate that all the variables obtained the good internal consistency.

Results

Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Profile of respondents

Items		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	150	60
	Female	100	40
Age	Below 18	9	3.6
	18-30 years	201	80.4
	31-50 years	40	16
	51 and above	0	0
Education Level	SPM/STPM/Certificate	45	18
	Diploma	67	26.8
	Bachelor Degree	108	43.2
	Master	12	4.8
	Others	18	7.2
Marital Status	Single	194	77.6
	Married	56	22.4

As shown in Table 1, out of the 250 of respondents, man represented 60% of the attendees and women 40%. Most of the respondents aged between 18-30 years old representing 201 (80.4%) of respondents. With regards to education level, 45 (18%) have SPM, 67 (26.8%) have diploma, 108 (43.2%) have bachelor degree, 12 (4.8%) obtained master level of education and 18 (7.2%) others. The marital status stated by respondents indicates that 77.6 % of the attendees were single.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

	M	SD	1	2	3
Hedonic	3.66	.669			
Design	3.72	.703	.699**		
Informati ve	3.79	.713	.704**	.776**	
Satisfacti on	3.91	.731	.704**	.775**	.832**

Table 2 indicates that attendees of the festival perceived informative dimension as the most dominant of event performance (mean = 3.79), followed by design (mean = 3.72) and hedonic (mean = 3.66). The results imply that the performance of the festival is moderately rated.

Correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were performed to examine the relationship between event performance and attendees' satisfaction. The Pearson correlation was performed to assess the association between the dimensions of event performance and attendees' satisfaction. Results on table 2 show that all three dimensions of event performance are significantly correlated with attendees' satisfaction. Results show that there is a significant relationship between hedonic event performances with attendees' satisfaction ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.704$) in which r value indicate strong relationship. Event design performance also significantly influences attendees' satisfaction ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.775$) which r value also show strong relationship. Next, informative event performance also has a positively and strong relationship with attendees' satisfaction ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.832$).

To further examine the impact of event performance on attendees' satisfaction, a multiple regression was conducted. The standardized coefficients can be seen as correlation coefficients to measure the degree of correlations between variables and attendees' satisfaction. Based on Table 3, the results show that the standardized coefficients (β) are all positive, indicating that event performance has significant positive impact on the attendees' satisfaction. The adjusted R^2 of this study is 0.741 with the $R^2 = 0.744$ indicates that the linear regression explains 74.1 percent of the variance in the attendee' satisfaction explained by hedonic event performance, event design performance and informative event performance. Results shown the dimension of informative exerted the strongest influence on attendees' satisfaction ($\beta = .0516$, $p < 0.01$), followed by design ($\beta = .0269$, $p < 0.01$) and hedonic ($\beta = .0153$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Beta Value	Sig (p<0.01)
Hedonic	0.153	0.002
Design	0.269	0.000
Informative	0.516	0.000
R	0.863	
R ²	0.744	
Adjusted R ²	0.741	
F	238.918	
Sig F Value	0.000	

Discussion

Based on correlation analysis, all the event performance dimensions have positive and significant relationship with attendees' satisfaction. The results indicate that increase in each event performance quality will lead to increase in attendees' satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis revealed that all the dimensions have significant impact on attendees' satisfaction with informative event performance is found to be the major influence on the satisfaction, followed by design event performance and hedonic event performance. These findings support a study by Baker and Crompton (2000), that identify information sources and comfort amenities domains are determining the base level of quality, and if these domains are not attained, then participants are likely to become dissatisfied with the event itself. The event has provided sufficient information that encourages attendees to understand more about the objectives of the event and this lead to their satisfaction. However, a study by Chen et al. (2014), found that hedonic event performance was solely determines the event quality. The results of this study point out that event performance significantly predicted 74.1 percent of attendees' satisfaction. This implies that all aspects of hedonic event performance, event design performance and informative event performance have great impact on attendees' satisfaction. This finding consistent with previous studies (Naehyun, Lee, & Lee, 2012; Yoshida & James, 2011), that found positive relationship between event performance quality and customer satisfaction.

Conclusion

The study aim was to examine the impact of quality of event performance towards attendees' satisfaction at a festival event. This study examined three dimensions of event performance, which are hedonic event performance, event design performance and informative event performance. Informative event performance was found to be the strongest influence on the attendees' satisfaction. The results revealed strong, positive and significant relationship between event performance and attendees satisfaction. All three dimensions of event performance quality were found to have positive impact on the satisfaction. This finding provides useful insights of impact of event performance towards attendees' satisfaction. The findings can be applied by event organizer to improve the quality of event performance thus lead to the success of an event. The result of this study should be interpreted with prudence. The research sample of the study is limited to the attendees at the festival event. The use of event attendees from one particular event limits the

generalization. Future studies may consider replicating the study at different setting with different types of events. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the findings provide useful information for event organizers in continuing providing and improving service quality in event industry.

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