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Entertainment Attendees Judgments of Satisfaction, Quality, and the associated Behavioral Intentions: The Case of Cricket Arena and Ovens Auditorium

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Entertainment Attendees Judgments of Satisfaction, Quality, and the associated Behavioral Intentions: The Case of Cricket Arena and Ovens Auditorium

Abstract

This paper assesses the impacts of visitor satisfaction on quality dimensions and future intentions of visitors who attended entertainment shows/events at Ovens Auditorium and/or Cricket Arena, two large entertainment venues. A structural analysis of 8,446 responses obtained from the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority in Charlotte (NC) indicates that visitor satisfaction seems to be a sound predictor of the three quality dimensions (the entertainment offered, the services associated with the venue, and the treatment by staff). The result also supports a strong relationship of satisfaction with future intentions. In addition, the services/areas associated with the venues, one of the quality dimensions, appears to be a strongly associated to future intentions. The findings may contribute to the conceptual development of the existing literature and offer managerial directions in the event and entertainment market.

Keywords: Entertainment; Satisfaction; Service Quality; Future Intentions

1. Introduction

The United States Census Bureau (2006) reported that approximately 93 million adult visitors attended a form of classical music, opera, or live theater in 2005, yielding an estimated total spending of \$12.7 billion. The information indicates that the arts and entertainment industry has the potential to become an enormously profitable source for destinations and related venues that cater to entertainment related offerings. From this perspective, many studies associated with events have highlighted the economic benefits of such event on domestic or international tourist destinations (e.g., Breen, Bull, & Walo, 2001; Dwyer, Forsyth, & Spurr, 2005; Gnoth & Anwar, 2000; McHone & Rungeling, 2000). However, it should be recognized that research on visitor spending may not be sufficient to clarify a greater understanding of consumer behavior inside the entire event and entertainment system (Jones, 2001; Wood, 2005).

From this perspective, destination directors and event promoters are constantly designing and positioning a variety of entertainment shows/events as an effective way to attract and retain visitors while creating a competitive tourism destination. To attain such goals, it is essential to scientifically understand consumers' specific behavior towards entertainment shows/events. One of the important research issues in the event/entertainment market has been measuring service quality perceived by consumers (Lee, Petrick, & Crompton, 2007). The main premise of related studies is that research on quality at various service venues, events, or festivals helps identify consumers' preferences or perceptions (Gursoy, Chen, & Kim, 2005; Hsieh, Lin, & Lin, 2008), which are directly or indirectly linked with satisfaction and future behavior (Yuan & Jang, 2008).

Given that quality should be understood by multiple dimensions (Crompton & MacKay, 1989; Kelley & Turley, 2001), it is considered essential to measure various quality constructs in order to better understand consumer behavior at diverse markets including entertainment shows/events. Nevertheless, there has been a lack of helpful research on appreciating visitors attending arts or entertainment events (Putler & Lele, 2003). While prior researchers have investigated the relationships of quality with satisfaction and/or future behavior (e.g., Baker & Crompton, 2000; Lee, Petrick, & Crompton, 2007; Yuan & Jang, 2008), they have not addressed whether visitor satisfaction directly influences quality and future behavior inside arts and entertainment. As implied, the specific quality dimensions that are directly influenced by visitor satisfaction and their links with future intentions have not been assessed. Therefore, by adopting prior marketing studies focusing on the effect of satisfaction on quality (Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991), the current study empirically examines the relationships of visitor satisfaction with quality dimensions and future intentions (e.g., revisit and recommendation) by analyzing secondary data provided by the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA) located in Charlotte, NC. It is believed that such results can be useful for suggesting sound managerial directions and specific marketing plans in the entertainment industry.

2. Theoretical Background

Consumer Satisfaction, Service Quality, and Future Intentions

With respect to the relationships among satisfaction, quality, and future intentions, there are three types of general verifications in related literature. First,

satisfaction is influenced by diverse constructs such as perceived value (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Lee et al., 2007) or service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Heung & Cheng, 2000; Master & Prideaux, 2000). Second, satisfaction also plays a significant role in anticipating event awareness (Yuan & Jang, 2008), involvements (Kim, 2008), and future behavior (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Yoon & Uysal 2005). Lastly, unlike these studies that view satisfaction as a mediating variable, some studies argue that satisfaction can be a good predictor of quality (Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991; LaBarbera & Mazursky, 1983). Applying their works, it is suggested that testing the effect of satisfaction on quality, which has not been well-known in the entertainment or travel market, can contribute to the event/entertainment literature.

Consumer satisfaction is measured from the service recipients' perspectives (Baker & Crompton, 2000). In marketing, consumer satisfaction is viewed as affective or emotional responses toward tangible and intangible products or services. Peter & Olson (1999) underline that consumer satisfaction has been of a great interest to marketers and researchers as an essential element in predicting affirmative future behavior (Getz, O'Neill, & Carlsen, 2001). Among numerous theoretical frameworks relevant to consumer satisfaction, marketing researchers contend that the expectancy and disconfirmation theory better describes how the customer expects and thus is satisfied or dissatisfied with a certain product than other existing approaches (Bearden & Teel 1983; Peter & Olson, 1999; Tse & Wilton, 1988). Peter & Olson (1999) explain the theoretical background of the concept by identifying the differences between the prepurchase expectations and the postpurchase perceptions of consumers.

~~Service quality is defined and assessed not by service providers, but consumers~~
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(Ford & Heaton, 2000) as “the ability to consistently meet external and internal customer needs, wants, and expectations involving procedural and personal encounters” (Martin, 2003, pg. 29). Thus, visitors’ overall satisfaction can be minimized by poor service quality (Getz et al., 2001). It also indicates that service providers’ continuous efforts and analysis on consumer evaluation based on various quality dimensions are essential for understanding whether they meet individual needs or anticipations.

Diverse dimensions of quality have been revealed at various markets. Kelly & Turley’s (2001) study suggested nine dimensions that exist in service quality, including employees, price, facility access, concessions, fan comfort, game experience, showtime, convenience, and smoking. Based on the travel concept, Kashyap & Bojanic (2000) identified three quality dimensions: quality of room, quality of public areas, and quality of staff services. Within the festival context, Baker & Crompton (2000) also tested and confirmed four quality dimensions strongly linked with visitor satisfaction. These were revealed to be generic features, specific features, information sources, and comfort amenities. Many researchers have argued that quality plays a significant role in predicting consumer satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Heung & Cheng, 2000; Master & Prideaux, 2000) along with future behavior (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Petrick, 2004). Conversely, some studies disconfirmed the existence of the relationship between quality and satisfaction (e.g., Lee et al., 2007) or between quality and future behavior (e.g., Yuan & Jang, 2008), which might result from a survey conducted within a short period at a single destination.

~~In the current competitive market, marketers are attempting to build a~~
strong/positive future behavior toward a certain product or service that consumers choose and use (Peter & Olson, 1999). When it is applied to destination management, promoting and retaining tourists' future visits would be a primary concern to be sustainable and competitive to related businesses and associations. The behavioral intentions of consumers has been well studied in various industries, by value (Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000; Petrick et al., 2001), attitude (Lazarus, 1991), past/repeat experience (Bentler & Speckart, 1979; Sonmez & Graefe, 1996; Petrick et al., 2001), quality (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Petrick, 2004) and satisfaction (Kim, 2008; Yoon & Uysal 2005). From these studies, a study by Petrick et al. (2001) supported that past behavior, satisfaction, and perceived value were directly associated with future intentions to revisit the destination.

Lee, Graefe & Burns (2004) tested the possible relationships among quality, satisfaction, and the behavioral intention of forest visitors. In regard to the cruise market, Petrick (2004) also reported that quality was the best predictor of repurchase intentions rather than satisfaction. While a study by Yoon & Uysal (2005) disconfirmed the direct association of quality with future behavior within a festival context, a number of studies have proposed and supported the significant relationship among such constructs at various service and event locations (e.g., Baker & Crompton, 2000; Oh, 1999; Petrick, 2004; Thrane 2002). Yet, the studies did not attempt to examine the effects of visitor satisfaction on quality and/or future behavior in the entertainment venue context. Thus, this paper focuses on the influence of satisfaction on quality and future intentions (e.g., revisit and recommendation).

Based on the concept that satisfaction can be a predictor of quality (Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991), which is multi- dimensional (e.g., Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000) and, also, can be a predictor of future intentions at diverse markets, the current study suggests the following hypotheses.

RH1. Visitor satisfaction can be a good predictor of quality of the entertainment show.

RH2. Visitor satisfaction can be a good predictor of quality of the services/areas.

RH3. Visitor satisfaction can be a good predictor of quality of the staff treatment.

RH4. Visitor satisfaction can be a good predictor of future intentions.

RH5. Quality of the entertainment show can be a good predictor of future intentions.

RH6. Quality of the services/areas can be a good predictor of future intentions.

RH7. Quality of the staff treatment can be a good predictor of future intentions.

3. Methods

Data and Event Venues

The data provided by the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA) was used for analysis. A monthly survey covering a period of twelve months from July 2006 to June 2007 was administered to patrons who attended at least one show/event at Ovens Auditorium and/or Cricket Arena. Ovens Auditorium is a 2,400 seat venue that opened in East Charlotte in 1955 and is operated by the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority. Ovens Auditorium has hosted more than 7,000 events including rock concerts, Broadway shows, opera recitals, religious crusades and even graduation ceremonies (Ovens

Auditorium – Blumenthal Arts Performing Center, 2009). Adjacent to the Ovens

Auditorium, the Cricket Arena, also operated by the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, has a capacity of 10,000 seats and has hosted events such as rock concerts and sporting events (Two Charlotte Original – Together at Last, 2009). Invitation emails were initially sent to patrons who purchased tickets through Ticketmaster, and who voluntarily supplied an email addresses with their purchases. Only those who agreed to participate in the survey were invited and directed to an online-survey. A total of 8,446 responses with no missing values on quality dimensions, satisfaction, and future behavior were found to be adequate for analysis.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used by the CRVA mainly consisted of five sections including: 1) residency and information sources used, 2) types of entertainment events and venues attended, 3) the dimensions of show quality, quality of services/areas, and quality of staff treatment), 4) satisfaction with the experience, and 5) future intentions. Specifically, respondents were asked to rate quality of the show (i.e., sound, music, lighting, value, overall), quality of the services/areas (i.e., auditorium, restrooms, parking, ticket services, concessions, security), and quality of the staff treatment (i.e., ticket takers, ushers, concessions staff). A five-point Likert-type scale anchored by '1 = Poor' and '5 = Excellent' was utilized.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the experience at the event venue based on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from '1 = Completely disagree' to '5 = Completely disagree'. Applying the same scaling method, their future

behavior was then measured based on “I would attend another event at Ovens

Auditorium/ Cricket Arena” and “I would recommend attending an event at Ovens

Auditorium/ Cricket Arena to a friend or relative”.

Analysis Procedures and Measurement

The test of the hypotheses was completed by the following analytical procedures. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) linked with AMOS (16.0) was first performed to test the measurement model of the constructs. Structural Equation Model (SEM) using the Maximum-likelihood estimation (MLE) procedure linked with AMOS (16.0) software was then performed to assess the hypotheses. SEM is a technique used to determine the relationships between or among a set of latent constructs and the MLE method simultaneously calculates estimates of all model parameters by maximizing the probability of the data drawn from the population (Kline, 1998).

During the procedures, five goodness-of-fit indices were reviewed to assess the goodness of fit: 1) χ^2 statistic: non-significant p -values are desirable, 2) NFI (normed fit index): values greater than 0.90 are satisfactory; 3) GFI (goodness-of-fit index): values greater than 0.90 are acceptable, 4) CFI (comparative fit index): values greater than 0.90 are acceptable, and 5) RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation): values less than 0.10 are favorable.

4. Results

Profile of the Sample

In-state visitors (North Carolina) consisted of 76% of respondents, while the remaining respondents (24%) were from outside the state (e.g., South Carolina, Georgia).

Regarding the event venues, they attended either Ovens Auditorium (56%) or Cricket

Arena (44%) located in Charlotte, NC also only a few miles away from the South Carolina border. Respondents selected concerts (46%) as their top entertainment show, followed by family (29%), others (11%), comedy (8%), and Broadway (7%). Electronic mail (26%) and other websites (20%) were found to be the major information sources used by respondents to learn about the entertainment events. Others included radio (18%), television (14%), references from friends (12%), and newspaper (10%). They largely used the Internet (96%) to purchase tickets, rather than box office and phone. Other demographics such as gender, income, or marital status were not included in the dataset.

Assessment of the Measurement Model

Results of a Confirmatory Factor Analysis using the Maximum-likelihood estimation procedure suggested that all of the indicator loadings were significant ($p < 0.001$) at a 0.01 significance level and their t -values all exceeded 2.58 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The reliability values of the latent constructs also exceeded the minimum values (0.60): “*quality of the show*” = 0.93, “*quality of the services/areas*” = 0.86, “*quality of the staff treatment*” = 0.84, and “*behavioral intentions*” = 0.97. In this procedure, satisfaction was excluded since it was measured using only one item. The overall model fit of the measurement model was satisfactory (NFI=0.94; GFI = 0.91; CFI = 0.94; RMSEA =0.08) after dropping one variable (auditorium) in quality of the services/areas since it was highly interrelated to other constructs. The chi square statistic was: $\chi^2(110) = 6,404.93, p < 0.001$. However, the Chi-square statistic has, by nature, two

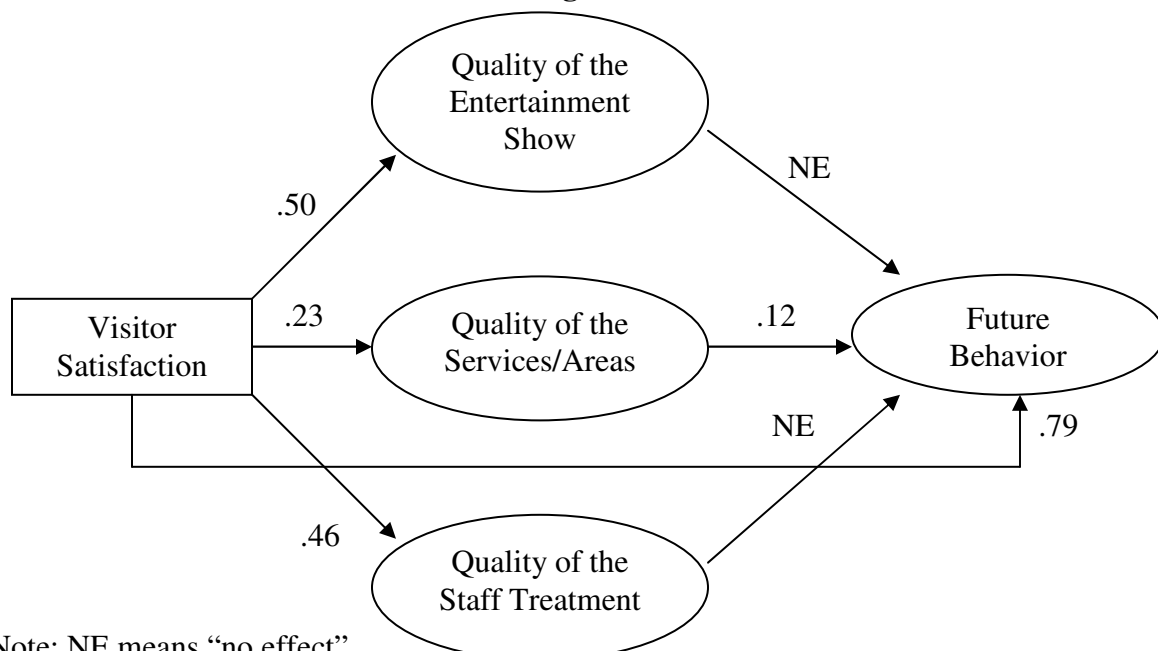
problems including the inability to be interpretable in a standardized way and sensitivity to sample size (Kline, 1998).

Table 1
Results of the Proposed Model

Research Hypotheses	Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Decisions
RH 1: Satisfaction → Quality of the Entertainment Show	0.50	45.84	Accepted
RH 2: Satisfaction → Quality of the Services/Areas	0.23	22.18	Accepted
RH 3: Satisfaction → Quality of the Staff Treatment	0.46	41.95	Accepted
RH 4: Satisfaction → Future Behavior	0.79	87.57	Accepted
RH 5: Quality of the Entertainment Show → Future behavior	-0.05	-5.50	Rejected
RH 6: Quality of the Services/Areas → Future behavior	0.12	8.31	Accepted
RH 7: Quality of the Staff Treatment → Future behavior	0.04	3.47	Rejected

Overall Model Fit Indices
 $\chi^2(110) = 4,434.97, p < 0.001$;
NFI (normed fit index): 0.96;
GFI (goodness-of-fit index): 0.93;
CFI (comparative fit index): 0.96;
RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation): 0.07.

Figure 1
Results of the Significant Effects



Note: NE means “no effect”
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Assessment of the Proposed Model

The convergent validity of the model was confirmed since all the standardized factor loadings from the latent constructs to the indicators were satisfactory, ranging from 0.62 to 0.98 (Hair et al., 1998). All the indicator loadings were also significant ($p < 0.001$) at a 0.01 significance level, implying that all t -values exceeded 2.58, rendering the indicators on each latent construct as valid. Four goodness-of-fit indices for the proposed model were within an acceptable range (NFI=0.96; GFI = 0.93; CFI = 0.96; RMSEA = 0.07), except for the Chi-square statistic for the model which was significant ($\chi^2(110) = 6,404.93, p < 0.001$) at a 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the proposed model was considered to be statistically acceptable with five of the hypotheses accepted and two rejected (Table 1 & Figure 1).

In particular, satisfaction was found to be a good predictor of all three quality dimensions that included the entertainment show (0.50), the services/areas (0.23), and the staff treatment (0.46). As predicted, satisfaction (0.79) was a strong predictor of future behavior. Interestingly, quality of the services/areas (0.12) was found to be a sound predictor of future behavior.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The current study surprisingly suggests that visitor satisfaction seems to be sound predictors of three quality dimensions that include the entertainment show offered, the services/areas associated with the venues, and treatment by the staff. Although an early study by Cronin & Taylor (1992) suggested that satisfaction was not an antecedent of service quality, these results are consistent with the research proposed by Bitner (1990)

and Bolton & Drew (1991), who revealed that consumer satisfaction was a predictor of the quality construct. It is important to note that the most critical part of this study is to understand the impacts of visitor satisfaction on quality dimensions and the impacts they have on future intentions (revisit and recommendation).

As investigated by prior researchers, visitor satisfaction has been known as a strong predictor of future intentions (e.g., Heung & Cheng, 2000; Master & Prideaux, 2000; Petrick, 2004) and quality has been known as a good predictor of visitor satisfaction (e.g., Baker and & Crompton, 2000). However, the current study demonstrates that 1) visitor satisfaction can be good predictors of quality dimensions and 2) a quality dimension (the services/areas) can be a sound predictor of future intentions, which is partially consistent with previous research (Lee et al., 2007). Thus, the findings may conceptually contribute to the development of the existing literature as well as practical application of related managerial directions in the current entertainment market.

First, event and entertainment directions should extensively acknowledge that visitor satisfaction has direct effects on the three quality dimensions, and more specifically that these areas work hand in hand. By ensuring that a satisfactory level of quality is substantial to service providers in retaining consumers as well as maximizing financial benefits (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985), strategies for increasing the level of customers' overall feeling or satisfaction should be developed and executed in the service and entertainment market beyond the event itself. In particular, there is a need to consider that the show and the staff treatment as strongly associated with satisfaction, and therefore, this can be translated into the development of related management programs and allocation manageable efforts.

The finding that quality of the services/areas has a direct effect on future behavior is also critical to facility management and destination management though it is found to be inconsistent with a previous study by Yuan & Jang (2008), who reported the nonsignificant relationship between the constructs. Grönroos (1983) points out the importance of providing high levels of service quality on functional areas (e.g., parking, restrooms, or the arenas) as another challenge to achieving efficient facility management and satisfying visitors. Specifically, since the attributes connected with quality of the services/areas are controllable by management (Lee et al., 2007), such attributes should be extensively manipulated and improved in order to maximize visitor satisfaction and build a strong visitor loyalty.

The current study confirms the theoretical framework that satisfaction can be a strong and positive predictor of consumer future behavior (e.g., Haber & Lerner, 1998; Lee et al., 2004; Peter & Olson, 1999; Petrick, 2004; Tse & Wilton, 1988). As indicated, it will be essential for event directors to place significant portions of management time and efforts on maximizing visitor satisfaction since it is strongly related to quality of the services/areas. As discussed earlier, entertainment facility managers are encouraged to find effective ways to enhance service quality on restrooms, parking, concessions, ticket services, and security in order to exploit patrons' future visits. Furthermore, confirming whether such service areas are improved should be followed and periodically documented by management.

Although quality of the staff treatment and quality of the show are not associated with future intentions, a previous study by Getz et al. (2001) addressed that staff members were found to be a good source of event visitors' satisfaction and could directly

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affect their future visits. Service staff was also one of the important components chosen by visitors attending a convention center (Breiter & Milman, 2006) and the most important effect on visitor satisfaction (Heung & Cheng, 2000). Thus, it would be necessary to maintain a positive interaction between staff members and visitors since they can tell other people whether or not to attend the specific venue.

Overall, the analysis suggests that the hypothesized model seems to be acceptable in the event/entertainment market, which indicates that visitor satisfaction has a strong association with perceptions of quality (Bolton & Drew, 1991) and future behavior (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The model, as implied, can be applied to other industries such as special events, sports, or festivals. Specifically, entertainment researchers and directors should realize that the results are quite different from previous studies (e.g., Baker & Crompton, 2000; Heung & Cheng, 2000; Master & Prideaux, 2000; Lee et al, 2007; Petrick, 2004). Thus, by understanding the study results, entertainment program and destination directors may find ways to enhance visitor satisfaction, provide high quality in tangible and intangible service, and as a result, achieve higher frequency of future visits.

For future research, it is suggested that events be divided according to type of event in case there are different relationships with satisfaction and quality and future intentions based on type of events and venues visited. Additionally, a study that classified service attributes into satisfiers and dissatisfiers would be interesting in this context and would add further specificity to the research that has already been conducted. For example, certain venue specific things may dissatisfy attendees if not above a certain par (i.e., bathrooms, concessions, etc.). However, after a certain par of performance, those

same venue specific outputs may not be important to visitors while, likely, the show purchased is the greatest proportion of the assessment of the satisfaction judgment. In this case, venues always subcontract portions of the attendee satisfaction to the group that is performing. Finally, studying the demographic profile based on venue and satisfaction may also shed new light for venue marketers and managers as well as contribute to the growing body of entertainment literature.

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