



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

**RETAINING AUDIENCE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS BY IMPROVING
THE QUALITY OF SERVICES**

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**BACHELOR'S DEGREE WITH HONOURS
(ARTS MANAGEMENT)**

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**RETAINING AUDIENCE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS BY IMPROVING THE
QUALITY OF SERVICES**

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This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Applied and Creative Arts With Honors
(Arts Management)

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
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Final Year Project Report

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PhD

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ABSTRACT

This study emphasizes on the importance of the peripheral aspects in the performing arts industry. This study aims to investigate the relationship between the peripheral aspect in a performing arts setting and the audience attendance. Other than that, to analyze ways to improve the quality service and to study the importance of added value on the audience experience. At the end of this study, it will bring awareness to the importance of the organizers of the peripheral aspects of the performing arts industry.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menekankan kepentingan aspek periferal dalam industri seni persembahan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaplikasian faktor periferal dalam memberi kesan positif kepada penonton yang hadir ke acara seni persembahan tersebut. Di akhir kajian ini, ia akan memberi kesedaran kepada para penganjur akan kepentingan aspek periferal dalam industri seni persembahan.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS

SYMBOLS

INDICATIONS

%

Percentage

SPSS

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study is conducted to discover the relationship between the peripheral aspect in the performing arts setting and the audience attendance. Apart from that, is to find ways to improve them. Past studies have shown links between the peripheral aspect of the show and the audience attendance. The peripheral aspect of the show can affect the audience attendance be it on a small scale or on a bigger scale. Audience development should focus not only on development strategies but also on retention strategies (Rentschler et al., 2002: p. 40, in the International Journal of Arts Management, 2008). In addition, services-marketing researchers acknowledge that it is more practical to retain customers rather than to continually seek new ones (Ennew and Binks, 1996: p. 40, in the International Journal of Arts Management, 2008).

The audience should be treated heartily as they are one of the important stakeholders in the performing arts industry. They are the ones determining the success of every show. Imagine a concert without audience or empty seats during a play. How are the organizers or artists supposedly rate their success if there are no one available for them to present their masterpiece to? The audience has invested their precious time and money, so it goes without the saying that they would want to be treated in a way that they feel appreciated for their investment.

Consequently, the organizers have got to step it up a notch in their service quality management. Organizers should not focus only on the quality of artistic value and

content, but also on service quality. The organizers should establish a good relationship with the audience. In the book *The Essence of Total Quality Management* by John Bank (1992), three Cranfield marketing academics put forward the idea that:

“Relationship marketing has its concept the dual focus of getting and keeping customers. Traditionally, much of the emphasis of marketing has been directed towards “getting” of customers rather than the “keeping” of them. Relationship marketing aims to close the loop.” (Christopher et. al., 1991: p. 4)

When the audience is feeling like they have received the proper service in exchange for the amount of time and money they have invested, they might want to re-attend the show or performance. Radbourne (2007) in the *International Journal of Arts Management* (2009 p. 16) asserts that

“audiences... will be fiercely loyal if they can experience fulfillment and realization in the arts experience.” (p. 16)

The phrase arts experience does not just mean the experience that they encounter during the show or performance, but also the pre and post experience. The peripheral aspect of the show contributes as much in the arts experience. Therefore, it is essential for organizers to keep tabs on their frequent audience and make an effort to keep them coming for the next performances. It is essential that we fully apprehend the consumption experience and the reasons why customers are or are not returning (Hume, 2008: p. 40).

Furthermore, added values play a vital role in the audience experience. It could be one of the variables that can influence their attendance. Recognizing the varied measures and relationships present in the consumer mindset assists high arts managers in better segmentation and customization of the offering and delivery of the service experience maximizing return on investment and advocate for further research into a range of areas,

including the various factors that are affecting customer likelihood of repurchase in the performing arts (Hume and Sullivan Mort, 2008: p. 16).

1.1 DEFINITIONS

Audience

Audience refers to the people gathered to see a play, concert, film, etc (Oxford English Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 2005: p. 51). The audience can also be referred to as customers or consumers. It is vital to treat them with proper treatment as they are one of the stakeholders in the performing arts industry.

Peripheral

Peripheral is defined as anything that is of secondary importance (Oxford Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 2005: p. 668). In this study, peripheral aspect means the service in the performing arts setting aside from its core aspect, which is the show itself. The side service includes the customer service and facility.

Quality

Quality is the standard of how good something is as measured against other similar things (Oxford Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 2005: p. 736). The measure of quality is not the same for everyone. According to the American Society for Quality, it is a subjective term for which each person has his or her definition. For some people, the core aspect of the performing arts show, which is the performance itself, determines the quality of their whole experience. However, for some, it is the way that they are being treated throughout the show entire show (customer service).

Value

Value can be defined as; (1) importance or usefulness of something and (2) the amount of money that something is worth (Oxford Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 2005: p. 1020). Consumers always seek something that is of value. For instance, in a performing arts setting, they are looking into getting something that is worth the money that they had paid which is the experience. It could be something that is tangible like a gift coupon or even something intangible like the way they are being treated throughout the show; good customer care service, wonderful facilities and so on.

Service

Service is a system supplying a public need such as transport or utilities such as water (Oxford Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 2005: p. 828). In the performing arts setting, the service is the way the audience is being treated which is the customer care service. It is also about the facilities that are being provided to the audience.

1.2 RESEARCH SCOPE

Place

This study will be focusing on the performing arts shows or events around Sarawak. One show or event will be chosen to carry out this study. Any types of show or event that is under the performing arts be it music, dance etc.

Informant

The organizer and staff who work behind the scene of the show will be interviewed to gain insights from the organizer's side of perspective.

Respondents

Some of the audience attending the performing arts event will be chosen to answer a set of questionnaires the is prepared.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

1. The lacking of quality in the peripheral aspects of the performing arts setting could affect the quality of the entire setting in a negative way. Management in the performing arts has tended to accentuate on the aspect of emotional stimulation and experiential attributes, curtailing the aspect of service and venue quality and focusing more on the artistic value and content (Hume, 2008: p. 52).

2. Insufficient added values on audience experience would definitely demotivates the audience to attend the performing arts show in the future. Anderson and Narus (1995) in the International Journal of Arts Management (2008) posit that it is the extras or peripheral services that lead to value (p. 44).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What is the relationship between the peripheral aspect of a performing arts show and the audience attendance?

2. What can be done to maintain or improve the peripheral aspect in the performing arts setting?

3. How added values on audience experience can affect their attendance?