

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PATRON SATISFACTION AND
USHER'S SERVICE QUALITY IN THEATRE**

TOO MEI GHEE

Bachelors of Applied Arts with Honours
(Art Management)
2016

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PATRON SATISFACTION AND
USHER'S SERVICE QUALITY IN THEATRE**

TOO MEI GHEE

Projek ini merupakan salah satu keperluan untuk
Ijazah Sarjana Seni Gunaan dengan Kepujian
(Pengurusan Seni)

Fakulti Seni Gunaan dan Kreatif
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
2016

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

Grade: _____

Please tick (✓)

Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This declaration is made on the9.....day of.....June.....2016.

Student's Declaration:

I, TOO MEI GHEE, 44488, FACULTY OF APPLIED AND CREATIVE ARTS, hereby declare that the work entitled THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PATRON SATISFACTION AND USHER'S SERVICE QUALITY IN THEATRE is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.

24-6-2016

Date submitted



TOO MEI GHEE (44488)

Supervisor's Declaration:

I, MOHD FAHMI BIN YAHAYA hereby certifies that the work entitled THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PATRON SATISFACTION AND USHER'S SERVICE QUALITY IN THEATRE was prepared by the above named student, and was submitted to the "FACULTY" as a * partial/full fulfillment for the conferment of BACHELOR OF APPLIED ARTS WITH HONOURS (ARTS MANAGEMENT), and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is the said student's work.

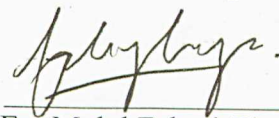
Received for examination by:


(MOHD FAHMI BIN YAHAYA)

Date: 24-6-2016

Projek bertajuk '**The Relationship between Patron Satisfaction and Usher's Service Quality in Theatre**' telah disediakan oleh **Too Mei Ghee** dan telah diserahkan kepada Fakulti Seni Gunaan dan Kreatif sebagai memenuhi syarat untuk Ijazah Sarjana Muda Seni Gunaan dengan Kepujian **Pengurusan Seni**.

Diterima untuk diperiksa oleh:



(En. Mohd Fahmi Bin Yahaya)

Tarikh:

24-6-2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I would like to thank to my supervisor En. Mohd Fahmi Bin Yahaya. He had guided me well on how to conducting my research. He gave me a lot of advices and supported me all the times when I faced obstacles while doing my research.

Next, I would like to thank to my friends who always encourage me to continue work on my research. They are friendly and enthusiast to help me to conduct my research. I am also grateful to all the staff at Istana Budaya who assisted me in conducting my survey for this study.

I want to thank to my family who gave me full support when I need their help on conducting my research. When I am frustrated and desperate, they always encourage me to continue go on with this research paper.

Lastly, I want to show my grateful here to all the people who have helped me and supported me.

Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
Acknowledgement	i
Table of Contents	ii-iv
List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
List of Abbreviations	vii
Abstract	viii
<i>Abstrak</i>	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of Study	1-3
1.3 Problem Statement	4-5
1.4 Research Objectives	6
1.5 Research Questions	6
1.6 Conceptual Framework	7-8
1.7 Hypothesis	9-10
1.8 Significance of Study	10-11
1.9 Limitations of Research	11-12
1.10 Conclusion	12
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Patron Satisfaction	13-16
2.3 Usher in Theatre	16-18
2.4 Duties and Responsibilities of Usher	18-22
2.5 Usher's Service Quality	22-25

2.6	SERVQUAL Model	25
2.7	Tangibility	26
2.8	Reliability	27
2.9	Responsiveness	27
2.10	Assurance	28
2.11	Empathy	28
2.12	Conclusion	29

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	30
3.2	Location of Study	30
3.3	Sampling Method	30-31
3.4	Data Collection	31-33
3.5	Data Analysis	33-34
3.6	Conclusion	34

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

4.1	Introduction	35
4.2	Demographic Profile	35-37
4.3	Patron Satisfaction towards Usher's Service Quality	38
4.4	Reliability Test	39
4.5	Correlation Analysis	40
4.6	Linear Regression Analysis	41-42
4.7	Conclusion	43

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1	Introduction	44
5.2	Discussion	44-47

5.3	Recommendations for Future Research	47
5.4	Conclusion	48
Reference		49-54
Appendix		55-68

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF TABLES		PAGE
4.1	Demographic Profile	35-36
4.2	Patron Satisfaction towards Usher's Service Quality	38
4.3	Reliability Test	39
4.4	Correlation Analysis	40
4.5	Linear Regression Analysis	41
5.1	Summary of Hypotheses	45-46

LIST OF FIGURES

	LIST OF FIGURES	PAGE
1.1	Conceptual Framework	8

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

- DSO : Deitroit Symphony Orchestra
PAC : Performing Arts Center
UNIMAS : Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

ABSTRACT

The study is aimed to determine whether usher's service quality based on the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model is relevant towards patron satisfaction. The dimensions of the model are including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Besides, the study examines the relationship between usher's service quality and patron satisfaction in theatre. 200 respondents were involved in quantitative method. A survey was conducted at Istana Budaya. A total of 167 set questionnaires were counted as valid. Descriptive statistics analysis, reliability test, correlation analysis and linear regression analysis were conducted in data analysis. As conclude, based on the five dimensions of SERVQUAL model which is relevant towards patron satisfaction, there is a relationship between patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in theatre.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti bahawa adakah kualiti perkhidmatan usher berkaitan dengan kepuasan penonton berdasarkan lima dimensi model SERVQUAL. Dimensi-dimensi model itu mengandungi sifat ketara, kebolehpercayaan, tindak balas, jaminan dan empati. Selain itu, kajian ini menyelidik hubungan antara kualiti perkhidmatan usher dengan kepuasan penonton di dalam teater. Sebanyak 200 responden telah terbabit dalam kaedah kuantitatif. Satu kaji selidik telah dijalankan di Istana Budaya. Sejumlah 167 set borang soal selidik dikira sebagai sah. Analisis statistik deskriptif, ujian kebolehpercayaan, analisis korelasi dan analisis regresi linear telah dijalankan dalam data analisis. Kesimpulannya, berdasarkan lima dimensi model SERVQUAL yang berkaitan dengan kepuasan penonton, terdapat hubungan antara kepuasan penonton dan kualiti perkhidmatan usher di dalam teater.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The topic of the research is “the relationship between usher’s service quality and patron satisfaction in theatre”. Firstly, the background of the study was discussed in this chapter. Next, problem statement of the research was explained. The research objectives and research questions were conducted. Hypotheses were formulated and a conceptual framework based on the research was constructed. The significance of the study was described in this chapter. Lastly, limitation of the study was explained.

1.2 Background of Study

Theatre, acts as a medium for the artists to share their enthusiasm and emotion to the patron by performing a show on the stage. Without a patron, a show performed on the stage could not be a performance (Grotowski, 1968). According to Leach (2008), theatre is a place where plays are performed by the performers and where the interactions occur between performers and patrons through the plays (Leach, 2008). The existence of a patron will determine whether a theatre can survive or not. Therefore, theatre organizations should learn arts marketing knowledge to identify the wants and needs of the patrons, and to satisfy them.

In fact, arts performing organizations always prioritize the arts performance because patron will not come to watch something other than the arts performance. Hume, Mort, Liesch and Winzar (2006) articulated that the show as the core service

of art performing is the most vital aspects in service delivery. Same to the theatre industry, the organizations mostly focus on their core service compared to supplementary services. Besides, supplementary services include the convenient of accessing to the venue and parking, the systematic of the venue and services, and high quality performance of the staff behaviour in offering ticket purchasing, cloakings, refreshments and seating services (Hume & Mort, 2006).

The quality of service performance gives impact to patron satisfaction. The study of Hume et al. (2006) indicated that improved service performance in the aspects of show experience would enhance patron satisfaction, followed by free supplements, ticketing, advanced seating and special treatment, whereas low service performance, such as service failure, expensive pricing and poor accessibility, would cause dissatisfaction. Special patronage treatment and speedy service delivery would influence the overall patron satisfaction and performance (Hume et al., 2006).

It is noticed that part of the service quality of performing arts organizations is depend on their frontline service employees. In theatre, the front of house service employees, include ushers, ticket takers, concessionaires and other staff, offer services to the patrons in either good or bad way (Schneider & Ford, 1999). Their service quality would influence the experience and the satisfaction level of a patron.

Patrons always gain experiences mainly from the core product of performing arts – artistic experience, and also from the service provided by the theatre staff (Berstein, 2007). Besides, usher is one of the theatre staffs who usually under the terms of the “front of house staffs” (Sharman, 2004), or “front-line employees” (Berstein, 2007). Some of the studies also mentioned that customer experience is

directly influence to customer satisfaction (Hume & Mort, 2008; Hume et al., 2006; Survature, 2014).

Usher, as one of the front-line employee in a theatre, has a lot of face-to-face communications occur with the patrons (Berstein, 2007). With professional dress code and a smile, usher always ready to accommodate patrons before, during and after a show in a theatre. In addition, ushers hold the responsibilities to welcome patrons with a smile; escort patrons to the seat; guide patron to other venue (lobby, bar or restroom); give patron programs or brochure; check ticket; answer question for patrons; and thank patron for coming (Schneider & Ford, 1999; Sharman, 2004).

The front-line service employees would give impact towards patron experience and might influence satisfaction. Therefore usher is the better choice among the front of house staffs in theatre, to be used to study whether there is a relationship between the usher's service quality and the patron satisfaction.

1.3 Problem Statement

The service quality of the front-line employees is always being emphasized in the service industries such as banks, hotels and restaurants (Liang, Tseng, & Lee, 2010; Liao & Chuang, 2004), in order to achieve customer satisfaction. The front-line employees in these service industries are required to receive training sessions to improve their service quality, so they will become capable to deliver high quality customer service to the customer, make customer satisfied and willing to repurchase the service again.

However, theatres, as one of the service industries, show less concern on the service quality of the front-line employees compared to the quality of the show, which is the core service of performing arts. This is because front-line employee's service quality is seems as a supplementary service that it is not important enough to take effort to work on it. In addition, there is no research has yet studied the relationship between usher's service quality and patron satisfaction in theatre industries in Malaysia.

Besides, some arts marketing literature (Lai, 2010; Rust, Zahorik and Keiningham, 1996; Survature, 2014) did not explain the importance of employee's service quality towards patron satisfaction in theatre, although it is a factor that influence patron satisfaction. There are marketing strategies being formulated to create more interactions between the show and the patron (Bouder-Pailler, 1999), but they do not address the whole service offering which include interaction with "all facilitating and supplementary services" (Cooper-Martin; Lovelock et al. as cited in

Hume et al., 2006, p. 306). It shows that arts marketers did not pay much attention to employee's service quality in theatre.

Nevertheless, Schneider and Ford (1999) mentioned that front-line service offering in theatre is the second important factor after box office, which will lead to either patron satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Ushers, as part of the front-line employees, who have a lot of interactions with the patrons in theatre (Berstein, 2007), their service quality may affect the patron satisfaction. Usher's service quality gives the patrons either positive or negative experience through service delivery and encounter when attending performance arts in theatre (Berstein, 2007; Schneider & Ford, 1999).

Although it can be said that high quality service of the ushers is only manage to bring good impression to a patron, but cannot make him or her satisfied enough to return to the theatre. However, lacking of concern on the improvement in usher's service quality in a theatre might cause the ushers provide low quality service to the patron, then lead to the patron dissatisfied, and would not want to return to that particular theatre ever again. If maintaining a good service quality can prevent any unpleasant situation from happening at first, it is a good beginning to retain new and regular patrons.

Therefore, by referring to the SERVQUAL model developed by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1990), researcher strived to find out whether the usher's service quality in each five dimensions of SERVQUAL model has a connection with patron satisfaction. And the relationships with patron satisfaction were studied in this research.

1.4 Research Objectives

- 1) To determine whether usher's service quality based on the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model is relevant towards patron satisfaction.
- 2) To examine the relationship between the patron satisfaction and service quality of the ushers in theatre.

1.5 Research Questions

- 1) Is usher's service quality based on the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model relevant towards patron satisfaction?
- 2) Is there a relationship between the patron satisfaction and service quality of the ushers in theatre?

1.6 Conceptual Framework

In this study, a conceptual framework is constructed for a better understanding of the connection between patron satisfaction and usher's service quality. In the accordance with Lai (2010), Rust et al., (1996), and Survature (2014), employee service quality is one of the factors that influence patron satisfaction.

Ushers have been mentioned as a factor that stimulates dissatisfaction among patrons (Hume et al., 2006), especially when they provide low service quality. Among the front-line employees in theatre, ushers is specifically chosen for this study, because they have the most interactions happen with the patrons (Berstein, 2007). Therefore, in the conceptual framework of this study, patron satisfaction acts as the dependent variable whereas usher's service quality acts as the independent variable.

To examine the relationship of usher's service quality with patron satisfaction, usher's service quality was measured in five dimensions of SERVQUAL model, which include reliability, empathy, tangibility, assurance and responsiveness. The usher's service quality in this study was referred to the SERVQUAL model developed by Zeithaml et al. (1990). This model was used for some literatures (Marković & Janković, 2013; Naidoo, Ramseook-Munhurrun, & Seegoolam, 2011; Rao & Sahu, 2013) to measure service quality in different service industries. Thus, these five dimensions act as independent variables of the study.

Figure 1.1 shows that reliability, tangibility, assurance, responsiveness and empathy as independent variables under usher's service quality, and each of them

have a connection with the patron satisfaction, which is the dependent variable of the study.

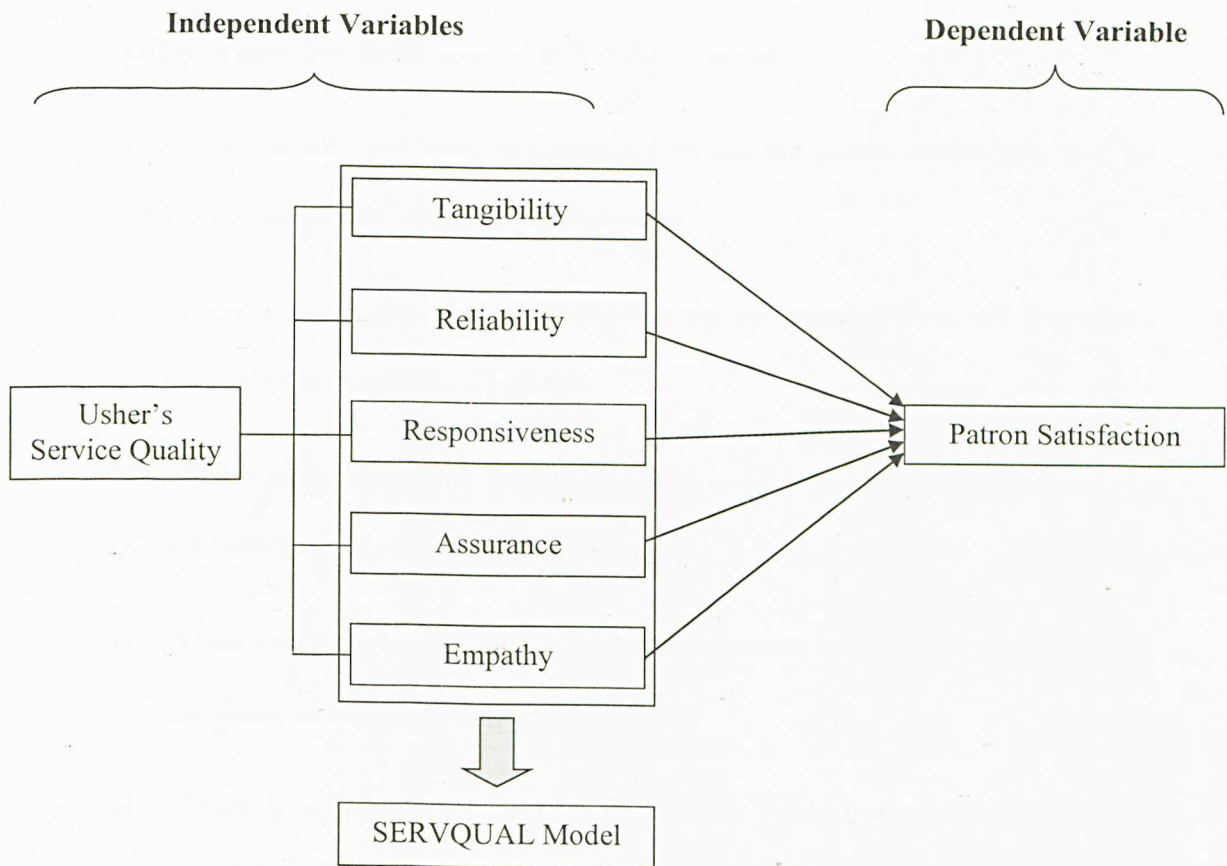


Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework (Source: Zeithaml V.A., Parasuraman, A., & Berry L.L. (1990). Delivering quality service: Balancing customer perceptions and expectations. New York, NY: The Free Press.)

1.7 Hypothesis

Six hypotheses were conducted and tested throughout this study. Both null and alternative hypotheses were formulated. Researcher assumed that there was significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in each five dimensions of SERVQUAL model.

H1₀: There is no significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in tangibility dimension.

H1_a: There is significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in tangibility dimension.

H2₀: There is no significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in reliability dimension.

H2_a: There is significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in reliability dimension.

H3₀: There is no significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in responsiveness dimension.

H3_a: There is significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in responsiveness dimension.

H4₀: There is no significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in assurance dimension.

H4_a: There is significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in assurance dimension.

H5₀: There is no significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in empathy dimension.

H5_a: There is significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in empathy dimension.

H6₀: There is no significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in theatre.

H6_a: There is significant relationship between the patron satisfaction and the usher's service quality in theatre.

1.8 Significance of Research

This research is expected to bring to a better comprehension on the importance of usher's service quality towards patron satisfaction in theatre. It might help for the future research on examining the factors of patron satisfaction in theatre. Besides, this research helps in the marketing development of theatre and arts performing industries in Malaysia to achieve patron satisfaction and to retain new and regular patrons.

Moreover, this research is expected to lead to a better understanding on the role of ushers in theatre, including the specific terms used for ushers. The duties and responsibilities of usher in theatre will be studied by referring resources from some performing arts organizations. This research will conclude about the main tasks of ushers for other researchers to understand on this specific area.