Adapting Herzberg: A Conceptualization of the Effects of Hygiene and Motivator Attributes on Perceptions of Event Quality

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Herzberg suggested that job satisfaction was a function of two types of conditions that he termed hygiene or dissatisfier and motivator or satisfier attributes. This article suggests that these same conditions may contribute to explaining levels of visitor satisfaction with an event. Hygiene attributes are the generic infrastructure elements that form the platform or foundation on which a meaningful event is developed. If their quality is below a given threshold, then dissatisfaction will result, but they have little potential for creating satisfaction with an event. They are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for visitor satisfaction. Satisfaction only results from visitor interaction with the motivator attributes that are the distinctive features of the event that attract people to it.

Keywords: festivals; motivators; satisfiers; hygiene attributes; dissatisfiers; Herzberg

During the past decade, there has been increasing awareness of the potential benefits of festivals to local tourism development (Getz 1997). A primary goal for staging such events is to create an attraction that offers visitors the potential for satisfying experiences. The purpose of this article is to offer a model that seeks to explain the differing role of specific facets or attributes of an event in contributing to visitor satisfaction with it. An empirical investigation, which was designed to test part of the model, is included to facilitate the exposition and understanding of its potential. The model draws on ideas first articulated by Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) and subsequently adapted to the leisure field by Howard and Crompton (1980).

Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) designed a series of experiments in work motivation in which participants were asked to describe conditions that had, in the past, made them feel especially good or especially bad about their job. From these data, Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) developed a theory postulating that two qualitatively different groups of factors motivated employees. The first group of factors, which were termed dissatisfiers or hygienes, related to the job context and lead to the condition of dissatisfaction. The second group of factors, termed satisfiers or motivators, relate to the job content and lead to the condition of satisfaction. These two categories were postulated by Herzberg to have different influences on employees.

Hygiene attributes were defined as the necessities of a job that must be satisfied before a worker becomes motivated. They include mainly tangible items such as company policies, interpersonal relationships with others, salary, job security, and working conditions. It was suggested that these attributes created dissatisfaction if they were absent but did not have the potential for enabling workers to feel deeply satisfied with their job if they were present. Their presence is expected because they are “normal” components of a job. They represent a minimal expected set of conditions. Thus, they were termed maintenance or hygiene factors by Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959), implying that they were essential to one’s ordinary hemostatic “health.” Others in the literature have referred to them as extrinsic needs, since they are elements outside an individual’s psyche (Oliver 1997).

In contrast, the motivational attributes of a job were the things that generated enthusiasm and commitment to it. The presence of motivators was perceived to be contingent on the job leading to psychological benefits such as achievement,

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DOI: 10.1177/0047287502239039
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recognition, personal growth, responsibility, and intellectual challenge. These benefit attributes were the vehicle that facilitated intrinsic sources of fulfillment associated with a job.

Howard and Crompton (1980) adapted these concepts to help explain key ingredients in visitors’ satisfaction with experiences in recreation facilities. They noted that the physical attributes of tourism and recreation facilities or special event sites are analogous to Herzberg’s extrinsic maintenance attributes in that they provide the tangible physical environment (superstructure and infrastructure) that is a necessary prerequisite for an event. But these attributes are merely a platform or foundation on which a meaningful event is developed. If there are weaknesses in the overall quality of the foundation, then the event is unlikely to be successful. However, the maintenance foundation is only a necessary, and not a sufficient, condition for visitors’ reporting a satisfying experience at an event. If the quality of these attributes is perceived to be below a given threshold level, then dissatisfaction will result. But even if these foundation attributes are all perceived to be of high quality, it is unlikely that interaction with them will result in the social-psychological benefits necessary for event visitors to report a highly satisfying experience.

The benefit attributes that Herzberg, Mausner, and Synderman (1959) termed motivational are the “satisfiers” that lead to a positive event experience. Howard and Crompton (1980) explained the relationship between the two items in the following terms:

Factors in the psychological environment are recreation “satisfiers,” but they are dependent upon the hygiene or “dissatisfier” factors, since any shortfall in the dissatisfier factors will undermine the recreational experience. For example, a psychological environment inducing relaxation could be totally undermined by the wrong kind of noise or wrong temperature. The physical and interior design of the facility provide a basis which the manager uses to devise a “total recreational environment.” This may involve music, imaginative uses of lighting, furnishings, staging a program of presentations, controlling number of users, catering, and other ingredients. (P. 372)

The managerial implications of distinguishing between these two dimensions are profound. For example, Howard and Crompton (1980) suggested that it is not the hygiene maintenance attributes that should be the focus of a manager’s job; rather, they are the kind of routine or bureaucratic tasks that can be delegated to technicians. The hygiene attributes cannot secure a positive recreational experience; they can only reduce the probability of a negative experience. The primary task of skilled managers is to focus on the satisfier attributes and use them to create environments that are most conducive to delivering sought social-psychological benefits so visitors have an emotionally satisfying experience.

Berry and Parasuraman (1991) in their discussion of the role of “tangibles” as they relate to the provision of services noted that although the physical environment or tangibles are part of the service experience, these attributes are often overemphasized by managers. Managers often perceive tangibles as the only element in the service cycle that they can actually manipulate. Berry and Parasuraman contended that “tangibles can underscore or undermine the overall services marketing strategy” (p. 104). The same seems to be true for festivals or special events, and this line of thinking underpins the model proposed here.

EXPOSITION OF THE MODEL

Figure 1 illustrates how the relationship between hygiene maintenance attributes and motivator attributes that facilitate delivery of social-psychological benefits might be conceptualized in the context of festivals. Maintenance attributes of a site’s physical environment such as ease and cost of parking, availability and cleanliness of rest rooms, and availability of information have to be perceived to meet a minimum threshold level of quality before the motivator attributes that are the distinctive, differentiating features of an event can emerge as satisfiers. If the maintenance attributes meet this threshold quality, then the satisfiers have an opportunity to facilitate the social-psychological benefits that visitors seek from the event. However, if the maintenance attributes are deficient, they undermine the perceived quality of the whole festival.

Figure 1 recognizes the distinctions drawn by Crompton and Love (1995) between the constructs of quality and satisfaction and is consistent with their position that quality precedes satisfaction. Quality refers to the quality of opportunity provided by the elements of a festival that are under the control of the promoting organization. Satisfaction refers to the quality of a visitor’s experience, which is defined as the realization of desired intrinsic outcomes derived largely from interaction with the event’s attributes. In short, the quality of experience depends on how visitors interact with, react to, an event’s attributes.

Thus, in Figure 1, if the maintenance attributes meet the minimum acceptable threshold quality, then there is potential for positive interaction with the motivator attributes and for high satisfaction that comes from realizing social-psychological benefits. If the maintenance attributes do not meet this minimum threshold, then dissatisfaction will result. If they are of relatively high quality, then dissatisfaction may still be the result if the motivator attributes are of low quality.

The social-psychological benefits that visitors seek at festivals are well documented. They include cultural exploration, novelty, regression, socialization with known groups, external socialization, prestige/status, and intellectual enrichment (Crompton and McKay 1997; Mohr et al. 1993). Figure 1 recognizes that these experiential, emotional benefits emerge from interaction with the tangible attributes of the on-site offering. But it posits that the attributes can be classified into two categories. The motivator attributes are viewed as the key program attractors that persuade visitors to go to a festival and facilitate their satisfaction, while the maintenance attributes are viewed as the generic, relatively uninteresting infrastructure features that are common to all festivals.

The model proposed in Figure 1 is noncompensatory. That is, it posits that either a single or a small number of domains can undermine perception of overall quality. This contrasts with compensatory models which posit that each domain is weighed and then summed to determine level of overall quality (Rosenberg 1956; Fisbein 1967). Compensatory models embrace trade-offs, whereby the effect of poor performance on one domain is moderated by good performance on another domain. Thus, for example, if the
ambiance of a festival was perceived to be of very high quality and the comfort amenities (cleanliness and availability of restrooms, and places to sit down and rest) were perceived to be of very low quality, the low quality of the comfort amenities may be disregarded. However, noncompensatory models, such as that proposed here, do not incorporate trade-offs. Rather, they suggest that relatively weak performance on a single or a small number of domains is sufficient to undermine the perception of overall quality of a festival, irrespective of what the perception of the quality of all the other attributes may be. Therefore, in the example used here, the very poor quality of the comfort amenities would result in a dissatisfying experience regardless of the high quality of the festival’s ambiance. For an experience to be satisfactory, a minimum quality threshold level on all domains is required (Bettman, Luce, and Payne 1998; Minch 1986).

A TEST OF THE MODEL

The part of the model dealing with maintenance and motivation attributes was tested with data collected at the
Dickens on the Strand festival, which is a street festival held annually in Galveston, Texas, on the first weekend in December. The Dickens theme is a logical extension of the historical waterfront’s 19th-century cotton-trading connections with England and its heritage of Victorian architecture. The Strand is a famous street in London and is also the name of the main thoroughfare in Galveston’s historic district. The festival takes place in a 17-block section of the Strand National Historic Landmark District. During the 2-day festival, the area is fenced in, and 10 gates are erected to control activities and permit the charging of admission. Typically, total attendance is between 70,000 and 80,000 for the 2 days.

Two research questions guided the analyses:

**Research Question 1:** Can event attributes be classified into two categories that exhibit the characteristics of maintenance and motivator attributes?

**Research Question 2:** Do maintenance and motivator attributes explain perception of overall service quality?

An initial list of attributes that describe the festival elements was developed from a review of the literature, previous surveys at the event, and interviews with the festival’s organizers. After pretesting, the final instrument comprised 24 attributes. The number of attributes was perceived to be reasonably balanced between maintenance and motivator items. Respondents rated the 24 items on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (very poor) to 7 (very good). They were also asked to rate overall quality of the festival on a similar 7-point scale.

A systematic sample was selected by contacting every nth person as they entered through selected gates. During the initial heavy visitation period on Saturday morning, every 60th new visitor who passed through the same gates was interviewed. The n declined to every 30th and 15th new visitor on Saturday and Sunday, respectively, to reflect the smaller numbers entering the site during those periods. The times at which contacts were made were randomized throughout the two days of the event, and gates were selected on the basis of historical flow patterns recorded in previous years. A total of 586 festival visitors agreed to participate in the surveys, and the refusal rate was less than 10%. Of these respondents, 80% (486) returned the mail-back questionnaire, encouraged by three follow-ups and an incentive. Generally, all adult-age cohorts were consistently represented in the sample. Female respondents (62%) outnumbered male respondents (38%). Visitors were relatively affluent, with almost 60% reporting household incomes in excess of $40,000 and more than half of those (31% of the total) reporting a household income of $60,000 or more. The festival was perceived to be an adult- rather than a child-oriented event, since only 29% of respondent groups included children.

Three analytic procedures were used. First, a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was undertaken to see if the attributes loaded into meaningful maintenance and motivator domains. Second, the sample was divided into three groups based on responses to the overall quality question. The logical breaking points for these three groups were 1-2 for low quality, 3-5 for middle quality, and 6-7 for high quality. However, if these categories were adopted, the sample proportion in each would have been 4%, 37%, and 59%, respectively. The skewedness of this distribution led to a decision to use a different breakdown. The major concern was the small number classified in the low-quality category. By operationalizing low quality as 1-4, the number of respondents was increased to 73 (15%). Those recording a 7, indicating that they considered the festival to be very good, constituted the high-quality group (n = 272), while those scoring it 5 and 6 were the medium-quality group (n = 132).

The mean scores of each group on each attribute were identified, with the expectation that scores on a small number of particular attributes would contribute to explaining the overall quality score. Finally, grand mean scores of each of the three groups were compared with their overall quality scores.

An exploratory factor analysis of the attributes yielded the six domains shown in Table 1. The first factor, which was termed Dickens Ambiance, consisted of attributes unique to Dickens on the Strand; the second factor, termed Christmas Ambiance, included elements of the festival that symbolized the Christmas season. These two domains appeared to embrace the motivator attributes that are essential to facilitate the type of social-psychological benefits described in the model (Figure 1). The remaining four factors—Sources of Information, Comfort Amenities, Vendor Interactions, and Parking—were classified as embracing primarily the maintenance attributes. That is, they were essential foundation ingredients of the festival, but they were not the essence of why visitors came to Dickens, and their contribution to facilitating visitors’ sought social-psychological benefits was small. Cronbach’s alphas were computed to assess the internal consistency of the factors (Table 1). They were not consistently high, but they did meet acceptable minimal standards (Nunnally 1978).

Mean scores of the three groups on each attribute are shown in Table 2. ANOVA procedures accompanied by Tukey’s tests confirmed that at the .05 level, there were significant differences between the three groups on every attribute. With the exception of the five attributes marked with a superscript letter a in Table 2, each of the three groups was significantly different from the other two. On those five attributes, which related to Comfort Amenities and Parking, there were no significant differences between mean scores of the low- and medium-quality groups, but the scores of these two groups were significantly lower than the mean score of the high-quality group.

**DISCUSSION**

The factor analysis suggested that the model could be meaningfully operationalized by clustering attributes into maintenance and motivator groups. However, the subsequent analyses were not sufficiently discriminating to offer more than very tentative support for the validity of the model. Visitors’ perceptions of the five attributes clustered under Comfort Amenities and Parking appeared to be influential in differentiating the high-quality group from the others, because the high-quality group perceived these attributes to be of significantly higher quality than the rest of the sample. However, these were maintenance rather than motivator attributes. Nevertheless, it may be hypothesized that if, like the medium-quality group, they had been unable to differentiate the quality of these attributes from the perceptions of them held by the low-quality group, then they would not have considered overall quality of the festival to be “very good.”
Comparison of overall and attribute group means may also be interpreted to offer some tentative support for the model. In both the high- and low-quality groups, attributes appeared to be noncompensatory. The high group’s mean score of 7 meant that they rated the overall event a whole unit higher than the summation of the attribute means indicated. This suggests there were particular attributes that scored high that determined the final score, and their influence on overall quality was sufficiently strong that they caused visitors to disregard or discount attributes that were perceived to be of relatively low quality. However, such an interpretation has to be tempered by the recognition that this finding could be a function of the way the groups were split. That is, it is not unreasonable to expect that a score of 7 (the maximum) on
the overall quality scale would be higher than the grand mean for the sets of attributes.

Similarly, the low-quality group’s overall quality measure of 3.3 was more than one unit lower than the summation of their mean ratings of the attributes. This suggests there were particular attributes that were perceived to be of such poor quality and such importance that visitors discounted or disregarded other attributes that they perceived to be of higher quality.

Although the results of this study were relatively inconclusive, it appears that the concepts in the model are worthy of further empirical testing because of their intuitive appeal and their potential to provide useful guidance to managers. Future research that seeks to validate the model is needed before more conclusive managerial implications can be provided. Clearly, a maintenance foundation must exist at festival events. That is, there must be investment in information sources, rest rooms, parking, and the like. But these features are generic and largely logistical in nature. Interactions with them appear to have little potential for facilitating the experiential, emotional social-psychological benefits that event visitors seek. This suggests that most investment of resources should be focused on creating and improving the distinctive motivator attributes (i.e., the attractions) that are the satisfiers that bring visitors to festivals and special events.

REFERENCES


