

# THE IMPORTANCE OF NON-MUSICAL ELEMENTS AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION IN A LIVE MUSICAL SHOW

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examines the importance of non-musical elements in a live musical performance focusing primarily on musical environment, musician, physical setting and audience interaction. It also analyses audience levels of satisfaction on each one of the variables involve. The construct was developed based on present literature and was put to the test on Malaysian grounds. A set of 200 self-administered questionnaires were randomly distributed to audiences at several musical performance venues. The data was analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics. Due to the experiential nature of performing arts, it is to the best interest of production crew as well as the artists involved to know what is it that audiences look for in a live musical performance and serve them. The evidence from this study suggested that audience response to musical as well as non-musical elements. In order to ensure delightful experience, arts event managers are advice to give if not equal, considerable attention to the factors involved.

**Keywords:** Arts marketing; audience satisfaction; non-musical elements

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Live musical performances were consumed mainly through events and activities where audiences spend a significant amount of their time, effort and money. They are regarded as a unique musical occasion which offers real experience where audiences have the privilege to interact directly with the musicians, come into contact with the artist and share their fruit of creativity as well as to enjoy the music.

Every performance is unique in light of the fact that the audience’s reaction influences its quality [20] Their enjoyment of the performance covers the total experience they go through [18] It is derived from what they had experienced from the actual performance as compared to what was perceived [11] Having engaged in both visual and aural experience [7] audiences reacts to what they hear as much as what they see.

With advancement in the distribution of digital products, the demand for live musical performance as well as others suffers a huge impact [15] which have led to dramatic changes in audience’s behavior [1]. While live musical performance offers audience joy and excitement, artist and organizer are at a great risk [6] as audiences do not hesitate to leave an on-going show [3] should it fail to satisfy them. They evaluate their level of satisfaction based on what benefits they received and the cost they pay individually. Hence, the success of a performing art should not be solely measured by attendance or number of tickets sold. Often, the audience left the performance unsatisfied. In an attempt to increase their value for money this paper reveals the non-musical elements that audiences took into consideration as they judge the performance. It also attempts to analyse their level of satisfaction on the respective elements.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concert organizers not only have to consider the issues on how listeners consume the live performance, they also need to know what their audience’s perception on the quality of the show. Minor, M.S., Wagner, T., Brewerton, F.J., and Hausman, A., [14] investigated the elements affecting audience satisfaction towards a live musical performance. It was suggested that the consumer judge overall performance, including both musical and non-musical elements such as the musical setting. Following the study, Hausman [10] modified

the framework (figure 1) associated with performance and found that music environment, musician, setting, and audience interaction had an impact on satisfaction.

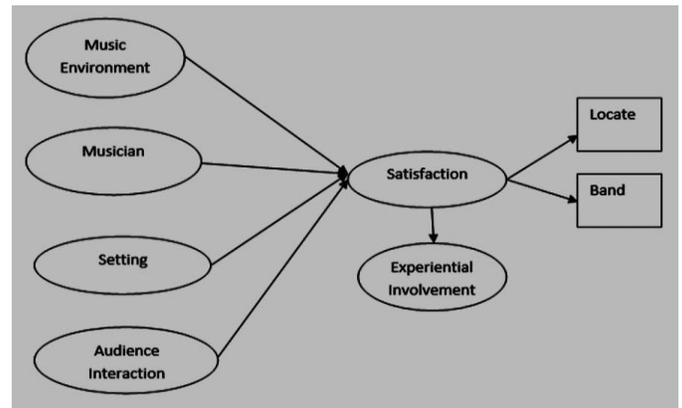


Figure (1) Conceptual model of satisfaction in live musical performance adapted from Hausman (2011)

The first factor refers to the musical function of the concert which can directly affect audience mood. Oakes [17] introduced “musicscape” which provides a detailed focus on the musical variable like musical tempo and perceived duration. Throsby [19] called these standards of design such as scenery, props, costume, and lighting.

The second factor exhibits a fusion of the perceived capability and creativity of the musician(s), for instance the individual performer’s instrumental ability and the creative input of the particular performer. Their appearance on the other hand, is visually limited to their dress, physical appearance [5] behavior on the stage, their movements, and their facial expression [12]. Sound quality is depending on the technical aspect of the instruments and sound system employed by performers.

The third factor (physical settings) was found to be a vital antecedent of customer satisfaction [2] as to spark pleasurable feelings in a leisure setting. Distinctive elements of physical settings such as temperature, seating, signage and car parking facilities are variables that can be controlled and facilitated by the organizations to further enhance audience experience.

While the rest of the factors rest entirely on the hands of service providers, the fourth may be empowered by audiences as they too have the power to enhance the experience of another audience [4,13]. It is no secret as to why audiences actively participate in dancing and involve themselves physically in live music. These interactions may happen before, in the midst of and after the musical performance takes place. Song familiarity [9,16], audience density and enthusiasm [8] were all found to be a form of audience interaction. Evidently, one of the reason for audiences to attend an art event is to socialize [21]. If an event is known to have an interactive and pleasant crowd it is more likely to attract crowd entry.

This present study will look into the importance of non-musical elements which consist of music environment, musician, setting and audience interaction and level of satisfaction based on the established conceptual framework. Under the notion to test the framework on Malaysian audience, the relationship between variables and experiential involvement were excluded.

**3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A set of 230 self-administered questionnaires were distributed at selected venues. 30 incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the analysis. The respondents were limited to those who have attended a musical performance in Malaysia. Prior to data collection, a pilot test was conducted to ensure any weakness in the procedures of administration. Corrective action were taken based on feedbacks received to ensure smooth data collection process and to maintain data quality. The data was collected within a month in March 2015.

A simple frequency analysis was employed to tabulate audiences' demographic profiles as well as their level of satisfaction and importance placed upon the non-musical elements. The percentage of both satisfaction and importance were then computed and comparatively presented.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

It was found that 61% of the respondents are female and 39% male. The majority (84.5%) of the 169 respondents were between the ages of 21 to 30 years old. About 14 respondents (7.0%) are from the age group of 20 and below. Another 10 (5.0%) of the respondents are in the age range of 31-40 years old. Both groups of age 51 to 60 and 61 and above consist of 0.5% of the total sample while the remaining ranged between 41 to 50 years old. A majority of 92.0% respondents were single and the remaining 8% were married.

Out of 200 respondents, more than half of the respondents (74.0%) are Chinese; 17.0% Malays, 2.5% Indians, and others 6.5%. About 8.5% of the respondents had only SPM or below qualification, 19% with STPM, 19% are diploma/higher diploma holder, 53% holding bachelor's degree and only 0.5% of them had post graduate and higher. As for monthly income, 82.0% of the respondents earned 2000 MYR and below per month. 9.0% of the respondents earned between 2001 MYR to 4000 MYR. Less than 5% (4.5%) of the respondents earn their monthly income between 4001 MYR to 6000 MYR, 3.0% of them earned between 6001

MYR to 8000 MYR monthly and the remaining 1.5% of respondents were earning 8000 MYR and above.

**Table (1) Respondents profile**

Demographics		N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	78	39.0
	Female	122	61.0
Age	20 and below	14	7.0
	21-30	169	84.5
	31-40	10	5.0
	41-50	5	2.5
	51-60	1	0.5
	61 and above	1	0.5
Marital status	Single	184	92.0
	Married	16	8.0
Ethnicity	Chinese	148	74.0
	Malay	34	17.0
	Indian	5	2.5
	Others	13	6.5
Education Level	SPM and below	17	8.5
	STPM	38	19.0
	Diploma/higher diploma	38	19.0
	Undergraduate degree	106	53.0
	Post Graduate and higher	1	0.5
	Monthly income	2000 MYR and below	164
2001 MYR to 4000 MYR		18	9.0
4001 MYR to 6000 MYR		9	4.5
6001 MYR to 8000 MYR		6	3.0
8000 MYR and above		3	1.5

78% of the respondents went to musical performance seeking pleasure. Only 6.0% of them were there strictly for business, and 16% of them went for both pleasure as well as business. As for frequency of attendance, 32.5% of the respondents attended musical performance more than three times while 34% were first timer. Those who had their second and third experience were 24.5% and 9.0% respectively.

**Table (2) Attending experience**

Experience		N	Percentage (%)
Purpose of attending	Business	12	6.0
	Pleasure	156	78.0
	Both	32	16.0
Frequency of attending	First time	68	34.0
	Second time	49	24.5
	Third time	18	9.0
	More than three	65	32.5

Table 3 shows that most of the respondents preferred Rock & Pop music (20.9%), followed by R&B/ hip-hop (17.5%) and Classical music (17.0%). While 15.1% of them opted for Jazz. 10.5% of them chosen Gospel music, 10.0% were a fan

of Country music while Techno, Alternative and Tejano/Latino were 4.4%, 3.6% and 1% respectively.

**Table (3) Genre**

Genre	N	Percentage (%)
Rock & pop	86	20.9
Jazz	62	15.1
R&B /Hip-hop	72	17.5
Country	41	10.0
Classical	70	17.0
Alternative	15	3.6
Tejano /Latino	4	1.0
Techno	18	4.4
Christian /gospel	43	10.5

As a short summary, most of the respondents were single Chinese female of the age between 21 to 30 years old with or are still pursuing their bachelor's degree. They earn less than MYR 2000 a month and have attended live musical performance more than 3 times in a year (preferably rock & pop) for the purpose of pleasure. Interestingly, another research conducted in Malaysia on reason for audiences to attend arts festivals also found that majority of the respondents were single Chinese female age between 21-25 years old with a bachelor degree and income range between MYR 2000 to MYR 4000 [21].

Looking at musical environment, the highest percentage of satisfaction and importance is on sound volume with 73.5% and 92.5% respectively. Notably it is the highest rank of importance as compared to the other items. Although creativity scored the highest percentage (87.5%) of importance in musician, it has the lowest point of satisfaction (75.5%). With 1 % difference over car park, temperature (66%) has the highest percentage of importance in setting. Similar to the case of creativity, song familiarity (83%) is the most important in interaction and also the lowest (73%) in terms of satisfaction.

**Table (4) Satisfaction and importance of live musical elements**

Item	Satisfied (%)	Importance (%)
<b>Musical Environment</b>		
Stage Lighting	70	88
Stage Decoration	69	81.5
Sound Volume	73.5	92.5
<b>Musician</b>		
Appearance	80.5	86
Creativity	75.5	87.5
Sound Quality	82.5	86
<b>Setting</b>		
Temperature	66	85
Seating	70	74.5
Car Park	65	68.5
<b>Interaction</b>		
Enthusiasm	75	74.5
Song Familiarity	73	83
Density	74	77.5

**5. CONCLUSION**

If we compare the results of importance and satisfaction placed by these live musical performance audiences,

conclusively the non-musical elements are indeed important. However, seating and car park were found to be not as equally important as the rest of the items measured in this study. This is not much of a concern to the event organizers since seating and car park is known by audiences to be the responsibility of venue provider and a lot of times in Malaysia, these were public buildings such as Stadium Bukit Jalil or Sepang Helipad. The concern here is on items such as sound volume, stage lighting and decoration, musician's appearance, creativity and sound quality, song familiarity, density as well as enthusiasm which rest solely on the service provider or in this case, the event organizers. Although a high importance was placed on these items, the percentage of satisfied respondents or audiences were relatively low. This led us to suggest that the non-musical elements potentially effect audience's overall satisfaction of a show. A study that computes how strongly these items effects audiences overall satisfaction will be able to support this claim. Still, it is advisable that arts event managers consider all aspects of the performance be it musical or non-musical.

As Malaysian progresses towards the digital era, their demand for presentation increases. Not only do they demand for the artist to be presentable, they also look forward to visual aids and creativity of performance. This seems to be the source of pleasure that they seek in a live musical performance. Audiences expect to come to a concert and see or potentially hear something different than what they could get on a commercial recordings or a YouTube video. They want to see the artist sing, roll, and dance and engage with audience. They would also like to hear the musical sound that are much better than their own home theater system.

Event organizers, especially those that holds concerts as a supplementary program in an effort to pull the crowd in should work together with the artists to devise a strategy that could satisfy audiences' demand. Artist popularity alone must not be the selection factor but rather their willingness to work collaboratively as a team because a show is what was promised thus it should be delivered.

Keeping audiences alive throughout the performance requires considerable planning and strategy. Audiences do not come to a live performance just to see the artist. They want to interact and socialize with the rest of the crowd as they all share the same interest. Since there are only a handful of venue to conduct live performances in Malaysia, some of the audiences have seen each other before at a different performance.

Finally, it is important to note that this study did not cover all the elements in great detail. For example, there are more to musical environment than just stage lighting, decoration and sound volume. Items such as visual aid, location and many more were not included in their respective categories. The study also did not consider whether the performance was held at and indoor or outdoor settings.

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