The influence of the importance of event factors on meeting planner satisfaction: A case study of a theme park event business

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This paper presents data from a research project aimed at identifying how important the different event factors are to the visiting meeting planners and how this might influence guest satisfaction. The focus for the researchers was to get an overall picture of the meeting planners' satisfaction and to identify the areas which needed more focus, in order to improve future business. This was done by sending an online survey to 25 regularly visiting meeting planners. This survey asked the meeting planners to rate event factors on their importance, and the satisfaction level regarding a certain planned event on service and physical factors. The event factors were derived from both the academic literature and the experience of the company. The survey was split into two parts. First, the factors needed to be rated in terms of importance, and second on satisfaction. Seven meeting planners filled out the survey. Nevertheless the findings showed that friendliness and politeness scored highest on importance of all factors. Also empathy, reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, and food quality scored high on importance. Improvement areas concerning satisfaction are "consultation" and "reachability" during the planning process, and "cleanliness of meeting rooms". Further investigation is needed for the factors of "lighting, climate and soundproofing of meeting rooms", "size and number of facilities", "presentation, variety and quantity of food". and why customers actually choose a theme park for their event.

Keywords: importance, satisfaction, meeting planner, theme park, MICE

Introduction

The MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions, events) business is continually growing and it is a crucial segment for many hotel businesses (Kotler et al., 2010). A typical event organised for larger business groups usually consists of meetings and conferences or workshops during the day, a special dinner in the evening and overnight stays in the hotels. Business guests differ from leisure guests in many ways. Business guests come with a different intention and value different factors during their stay. For example, the technical equipment of the meeting room might be more important than the bedroom's quality. This research explores what MICE guests find important during their stay and what is needed to satisfy them. Satisfied guests spread a good "word of mouth" and increase repeat business (Campbell & Shaw, 2000). There are several studies analysing the importance of factors leading to MICE guest satisfaction (Lee & Park, 2002; Hinkin & Tracey, 2003; Kang et al., 2004). Theme park event business is unlike other event locations and this study explores these differences.

The theme park featured in this study has its own business-event team in charge of the event business. For this research, inspiration came from the method of Tsai and Lin (2014), who developed a two-phased service quality strategy model for identifying unsatisfactory service factors by integrating the importance-performance gap analysis model. Their research was conducted in restaurant outlets of hotels in Taiwan. The importance-performance served as an example for finding defective or underperforming areas in the event business as well. It could enable a systematic approach to improve service

quality and show what business guests, in general, value at business events.

Business events and conferences
For a better understanding of the theoretical background, first the terms service quality, service value and guest satisfaction and how they relate to each other need to be clarified. Also, attention will be given to the specific service expectations of business guests.

Service quality is usually measured by how valuable the service is to the consumer, so value is placed between the costs of obtaining the service and its benefits (Kotler et al., 2010). Service quality leads to satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Kang et al., 2004). Service value mediates the relationship between service quality and guest satisfaction, so high service quality results in high perceived service value which in turn affects guest satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Lee et al., 2004; Hu et al., 2009). Parasuraman et al. (1988) observed five dimensions of service quality: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. Four of these dimensions are connected to the employee. Also, Lee et al. (2004) argued that service quality is mainly determined by the interaction between the employee and the guest. This is especially true when focused on hospitality organisations. They also revealed some nuances in terms of five- to three-star hotels. In five-star hotels, empathy had the strongest influence on the service value, in four-star hotels, reliability and empathy, and in three-star hotels, empathy, responsiveness and tangibles.

Service for MICE guests

There is limited research about this topic in the hospitality literature for MICE businesses. Physical aspects are often part of the site selection criteria of meeting planners. Fawzy and Samra (2008) suggest that accessibility, extra-conference opportunities, accommodation facilities and site environment were important criteria. Also, in Choi's research (2004), six out of the top ten elements were physical factors: proximity of hotel and meeting facilities; capacity of meeting rooms; hotel cleanliness; number of meeting rooms; availability of on-site parking facilities; and comfort of bedrooms. Other hospitality research in this area already treated the effect of physical atmospherics (facility aesthetics, ambience, spatial layout and view from the window) on guest satisfaction and underlined their importance (Heung & Gu, 2012). Food and beverage quality is another important factor (Wei & Huang, 2013), and is among the top ten important factors for MICE guests (Choi, 2004), and overall food quality strongly influences the guests' satisfaction (Namkung & Jang, 2007).

Chris Pentz, president of a group communications firm, concluded that after an event, the food is what will stay in the guests' minds, particularly factors such as variety, presentation, taste and timing (Kim et al., 2009; Namkung & Jang, 2007), and flexible planning of menus (Amer, 2004). Prior to an event, site selection criteria like local support and information is important (Fawzy & Samra, 2008). Among the top ten factors of Choi's research (2004) were friendliness of hotel personnel, problem-solving skills of hotel personnel, and efficiency of check-in/out. Other studies have found similar factors. To strengthen the service quality, training to improve staff attitudes, greetings, friendliness and competence were necessary (Lee et al., 2004; Prasad et al., 2014). Meeting planners also appreciated having primary contact with a responsible and knowledgeable member of staff, especially in terms of technology. The initial and final interaction shaped guests' perceptions of service quality. The most common problems meeting planners encountered arose from lack of staff competence (Hinkin & Tracey, 2003). Choi (2004) and Prasad et al. (2014) noticed that both quality of meeting and bedrooms, but also staff service quality, were important.

The impact of physical aspects was confirmed in research by Kang et al. (2004). Together with factors like the location of the accommodation, the accommodation, the meeting and the banquet facility were influential to consumer decision-making (Lee & Park, 2002). On the other hand, factors connected to the staff service such as creativeness, unexpected service, encounter performance (Kang et al., 2004), programme handling, responsiveness, language fluency and attitude (Lee & Park, 2002) were essential. Lee and Park (2002) also evaluated factors having the least importance to the guests and found that a smoking section, decoration and spouse and family programmes were of least importance to the guests. Hinkin and Tracey (2003) discovered that recreational amenities and public areas had only little importance to the guests. Nevertheless, these factors become of more interest. Service factors themselves are more important than physical factors (Lee & Park, 2002; Hinkin & Tracey, 2003).

Also the functioning of the facility is very important. Guests want convenient meeting rooms with comfortable chairs and tables. This does not mean that aspects like appearance and decoration are not important, but other aspects are more important for the total guest satisfaction (Hinkin & Tracey, 2003). Furthermore, Hinkin and Tracey (2003) analysed the differences in the importance of factors between the meeting planners and the guests of those meetings, because the meeting planner, for example, also considers the sales transaction in the evaluation. Lee and Park (2002) discovered that convention staff service is more relevant to the meeting planners than to the guests, whereas hotel and food and beverage service is more relevant to the guests. However, the eight most important factors were the same. Security, meeting rooms and bedrooms and competent staff were prioritised by both groups. Furthermore, there are factors that mainly concern the interaction between the venue and the meeting planner that are important to satisfy the meeting planner: communication, organisation, execution, developing relationships, initiative and crisis management and mitigation (Campbell & Shaw, 2000).

Luk and Layton (2002) revealed inconsistencies between guest expectations and servers' understanding of such and concluded that it was due to lack of training in that matter and a lack of communication of service standards. If the servers were more empowered to tailor the product according to the guest's needs, this could improve the service quality because the gap between the guest's expectation and the managers' perception of these is bigger than the gap between the servers' perception of the guest's expectation. The emphasis is usually on the service quality and not on service value (Lee et al., 2004).

This illustrates that different factors influence the service quality of MICE events. Service-related factors seem to have more influence on the service quality than physical aspects, like food and beverage quality. MICE guests find different factors of more importance compared to meeting planners. Except, for both groups, eventually the service value was what led to guest satisfaction.

Service and physical factors have a certain importance to the guests. The guest satisfaction is determined by both service and physical factors. This research aims to analyse how these factors influence the meeting planners' satisfaction (see Figure 1).

Research design

This research focuses on an overview for MICE management to develop key areas in the service value of crucial factors in order to improve guest satisfaction. Through a literature review, the following questions were identified:

- What was the relationship between importance and satisfaction of the service factors, before, during and after an event?
- What was the relationship between importance and satisfaction of the physical factors?
- Were there relationships between demographical factors and satisfaction?

Since the importance and the performance of different MICE factors needed to be rated and quantified, a method with a pre-coded structure was chosen (Fisher, 2010). The most common way to survey satisfaction, and the most convenient way to do this in the given situation, was an online survey. The contact details of the participants were already available, and by sending an email, they could choose when to answer the survey. Furthermore confidentiality was ensured in the
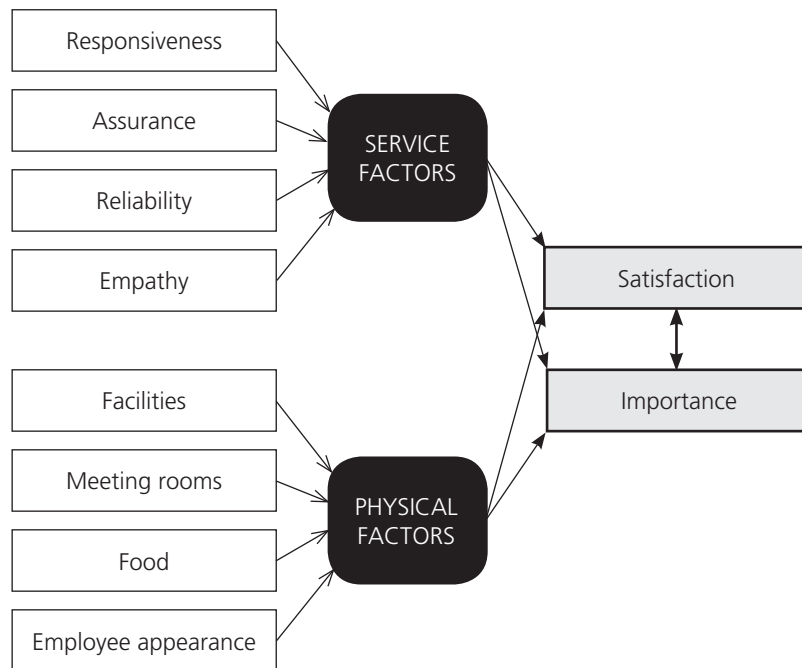
Figure 1: The relationship between importance and satisfaction ratings of service and physical factors of meeting planners

accompanying email in order to generate bias-free results and encourage respondents. The online survey was created based on literature (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Campbell & Shaw, 2000; Lee & Park, 2002; Hinkin & Tracey, 2003; Choi, 2004; Severt et al., 2007), however, extra areas of interest for the researchers were incorporated as well. A pilot study was done with employees of the event planning department to ensure quality and correct language of the survey. They were asked to fill out the survey as if they were a meeting planner. With the feedback of the pilot study, some layout and wording issues were corrected, and a separate part for the social programme was created because this seems to be a special reason to use a theme park for a meeting venue.

The structure of the survey was, firstly, a rating of the importance and, secondly, a rating of the performance in order to have all factors being measured on both aspects. The factors themselves covered service factors concerning the planning and execution phase of the event, and physical factors. The service quality prior to the event (the planning phase) was of special interest in this study to the company because it was the job of the concerned department to ensure good service in the planning phase of an event. All factors were chosen from literature according to the needs of the department and the aim of this research. This resulted in five items for the planning phase, which were chosen from Campbell and Shaw (2000) and connected to the tasks of the employee consulting and supporting the customer prior to the event, e.g. competence and negotiation skills.

The execution phase entailed thirteen items connected to the employee performance and service quality, e.g. friendliness and dependability (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Campbell & Shaw, 2000; Lee & Park, 2002; Hinkin & Tracey, 2003; Choi, 2004). The physical factor entailed twenty items connected to employee appearance, meeting rooms, facilities, food quality and social programme, e.g. meeting room equipment, guest

room quality, or food variety (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Lee & Park, 2002; Hinkin & Tracey, 2003; Choi, 2004; Severt et al., 2007). For the importance and the satisfaction a 7-point rating scale was used (1 = totally agree; 7 = totally disagree).

The third part of the survey was the rating of the overall performance of the event, and the fourth part consisted of demographical questions. These questions were also partly taken from previous literature and partly due to the aim of the research and from experience in dealing with the participants. The demographical questions directly taken from Campbell and Shaw (2000) were: "How many participants did attend?"; "What was the purpose of the event?"; "Were you required to consult anyone before making decisions?"; "How long have you been a meeting planner?"; and "On average how many participants are invited to your events?". The questions "Who were the participants?" and "Which is your industry branch?" were also created. The demographical questions were asked with closed checklists and yes-no questions.

Sample
The sampling frame was drawn up with the banqueting software of the company, where all the details needed were available in order to filter the participants and their contact details. All events within the last four months (January until May 2016) were filtered. The chosen 25 meeting planners who received an email with an introduction and a link to the survey were the ones who regularly held an event at the venue and had done this within the last four months. A convenience sample was made up of seven meeting planners. Since regular business users might give higher scores than customers who came for the first time, the results need to be treated carefully.

From the moment of sending out the questionnaires, the survey participants had two weeks to respond (Fisher, 2010). A reminder was sent after one week. From the 25 participants invited to the survey, seven completed it and one quit after

Table 1: Demographical results in order of no. of answers

	Number of answers
Purpose of the event	
Training	2
Meeting	2
Incentive	1
Farewell	1
Acknowledgement	1
Customer event	1
Kick-off	1
Celebration	1
Workshop	1
Exhibition	1
Participants	
Employees	6
Employees and spouses	1
Current customers	1
Business partner	1
Number of participants	
1–50	3
>100	3
50–100	1
Industry branch	
Automotive	2
Pharmaceutical	1
Insurance	1
Technology	1
Retail	1
System catering	1
Meeting planner experience	
5–10 years	3
<2 years	2
>14 years	3
Decision-making	
On my own	4
In consultation with superior	4
In consultation with colleagues	2

the importance rating. This respondent was excluded from the data, therefore the response rate was 28%.

The surveys were answered anonymously, so that respondents could give honest answers and they did not have to worry that this would influence their business relationship with the company.

Importance and satisfaction
To analyse the results all factors were clustered in thirteen groups (A to M) as can be seen in Table 2. The clusters were made in the predefined groups of service and physical factors and the phase or area. With these groups, clusters were made of factors that fit together.

To determine which factors need attention, Figure 2 was created by using the total mean of importance and satisfaction as the intercept of the two axes. The units were chosen according to the maximum and minimum results.

Results
The relationship between importance and satisfaction of service factors prior to the event
The service factors prior to the event were divided into two clusters. Cluster A (Figure 3) shows factors which were related to the support of the staff, and Cluster B to their personal

skills in the planning phase. In Cluster A, "information and consultation" resulted in the area of nightmare. This was emphasised by the comment of respondent D, who criticised the reachability during the planning phase. Also "suggestions" and "negotiations" were close in the area of caution.

In Cluster B (Figure 4), "flexibility" and "competence" both appeared as unique selling points (USP). This is in line with the comment of respondent F, who praised the competence of two employees of the B2P team.

The relationship between importance and satisfaction of service factors during the event
The service factors during the event were divided into three clusters. Cluster C (Figure 5) shows the factors connected to the personal characteristics of the staff, Cluster D the personal skills, and Cluster E shows factors that are connected to the procedures during the event. In Cluster C, the factors "have your best interests at heart", "friendliness and politeness", "caring, individualised attention" and "trustworthiness and dependability" are all unique selling points. This is supported by the comment of respondents A and B, who praised the friendliness of staff. Apart from that, "caring, individualised attention" was rated at only 4 for satisfaction by respondent B. Only with "willingness to make the extra step to make a meeting successful" one had to be careful, because it was close to the nightmare area.

Cluster D (Figure 6) contained "creative and flexible problem-solving", "precision and punctuality", "prompt and attentive service" and "competence", which all appeared to be unique selling points. Respondent F also praised the competence.

Cluster E (Figure 7) showed that "sufficient staffing" and "communication" were unique selling points. "Adequate support and empowerment of employees" and "efficiency of check-in/out" were in the caution area and close to the nightmare area. Apart from that, respondent B rated sufficient staffing with only 4 for satisfaction.

The relationship between importance and satisfaction of physical factors

Employee appearance
In the area of the physical factors, "employee appearance" was determined as one cluster (Figure 8). It was seen as a waste of money.

Meeting rooms
Factors of meeting rooms were divided into two clusters. Cluster G (Figure 9) entails consciously perceived factors, and Cluster H (Figure 10) unconsciously perceived factors. Cluster G showed that "cleanliness" of meeting rooms was a nightmare. Also "up-to-date equipment" and "comfortable seating" were in the caution area, close to nightmare.

Cluster H showed that "lighting, climate and soundproofing" of meeting rooms was a nightmare. "Design and décor" was in the area of caution, close to the nightmare area. Apart from that, respondent B rated the importance of "design and décor" only with a 3.

Facilities
The factors of facilities were split up into two clusters. Cluster I (Figure 11) involves factors that guests of an event could assess

Table 2: Clustered mean results for "importance" and "satisfaction"

|	Phase/ area	Cluster	No. of factor	Factor	Mean importance	Mean satisfaction
SERVICE-RELATED FACTORS	Planning/ negotiation phase	A	01.	Negotiations	5.33	5.33
			02.	Suggestions	5.86	6.14
			03.	Information and consultation	6.86	6.29
		B	04.	Flexibility	6.71	6.71
			05.	Competence	6.86	6.71
	During the event	C	07.	Have your best interests at heart	6.86	6.71
			10.	Trustworthiness and dependability	6.86	6.43
			11.	Caring, individualised attention	6.71	6.43
			13.	Willing to go the extra step to make a meeting successful	6.14	5.83
			06.	Friendliness and politeness	7.00	6.71
		D	08.	Precision and punctuality	6.71	6.86
			09.	Prompt and attentive service	6.43	6.71
			12.	Creative and flexible problem-solving	6.29	6.83
			14.	Competence	6.57	6.43
		E	15.	Adequate support/empowerment of employees	5.71	6.17
			16.	Sufficient staffing	6.43	6.57
			17.	Communication	6.43	6.50
			18.	Efficiency of check-in/out	6.00	6.00
PHYSICAL FACTORS	Employee	F	19.	Employee appearance	6.00	6.57
	Meeting room	G	20.	Up-to-date equipment and material	6.00	6.00
			22.	Comfortable seating	6.00	5.57
			23.	Cleanliness	6.71	6.00
		H	21.	Lighting, climate, and soundproofing	6.57	5.43
			24.	Design and décor meeting rooms	5.71	6.00
	Facilities	I	25.	Guest room quality	6.71	6.57
			26.	Cleanliness of rest rooms, lobby and public areas	7.00	6.71
			27.	Directional signs	6.14	6.29
			28.	Design and décor facility	6.00	6.86
		J	29.	Sufficient facilities (size and number)	6.57	6.67
	F&B	K	30.	Quality	6.86	6.86
			32.	Variety	5.86	6.43
			33.	Presentation	6.00	6.86
		L	31.	Quantity	6.00	6.71
			34.	Punctuality	6.71	6.83
	Social programme	M	35.	Swimming pool and sauna in the hotel	3.43	6.00
			36.	Restaurants and bars	6.29	5.71
			37.	Recreational activities	4.14	6.00
			38.	Entertainment programme	5.00	5.50
				TOTAL MEAN	6.20	6.34
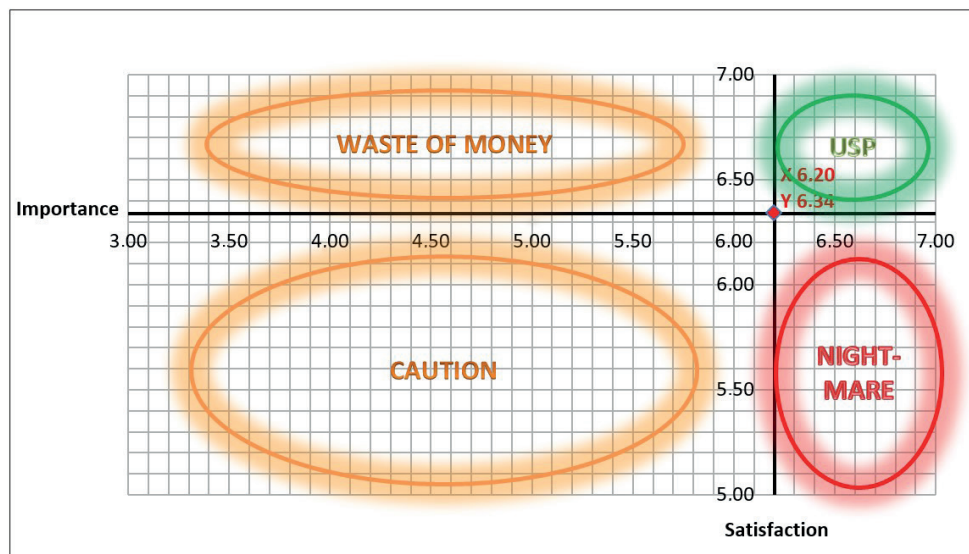
Figure 2: Areas of interest
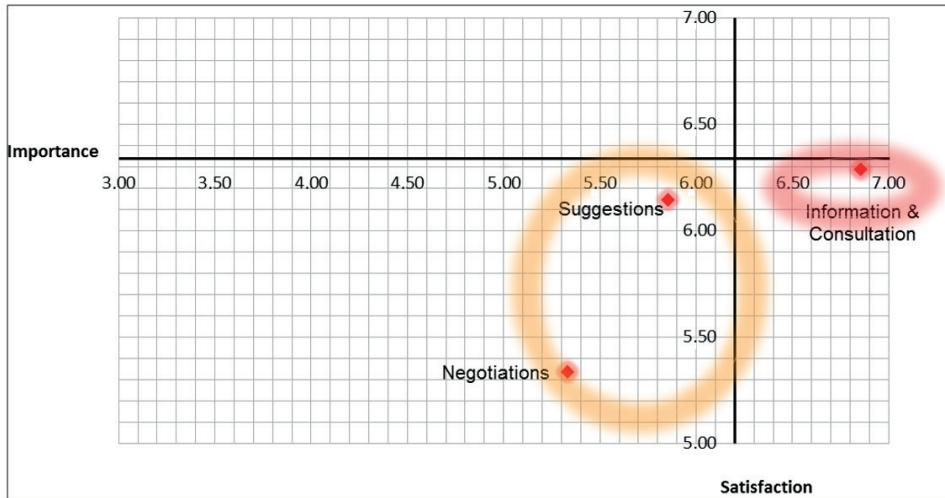
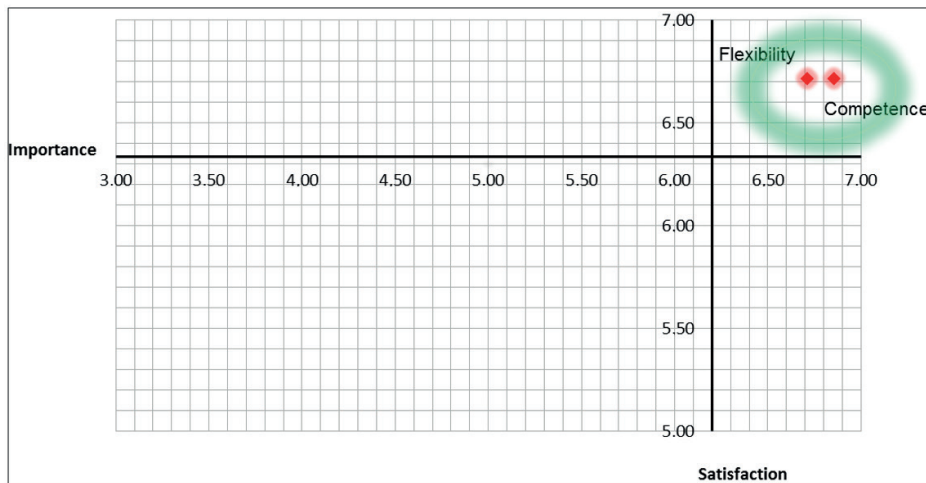**Figure 3:** Cluster A: Support of staff in planning phase

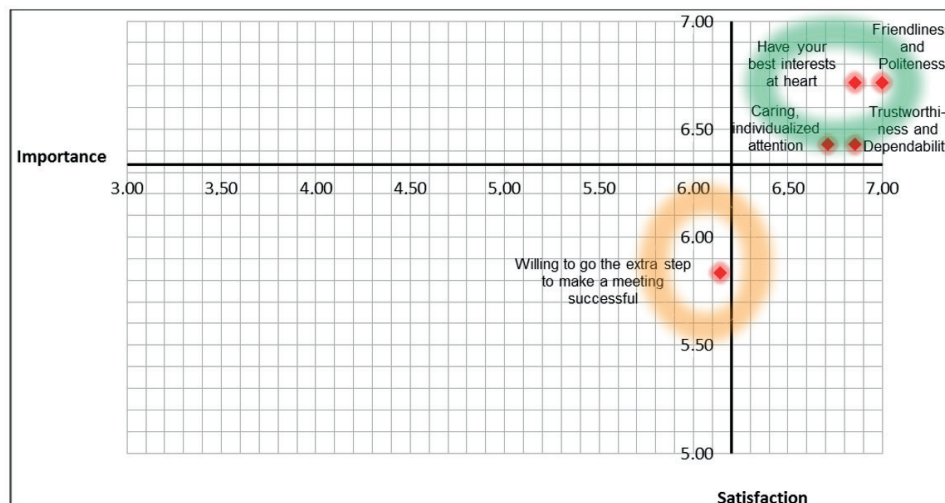**Figure 4:** Cluster B: Personal skills in planning phase

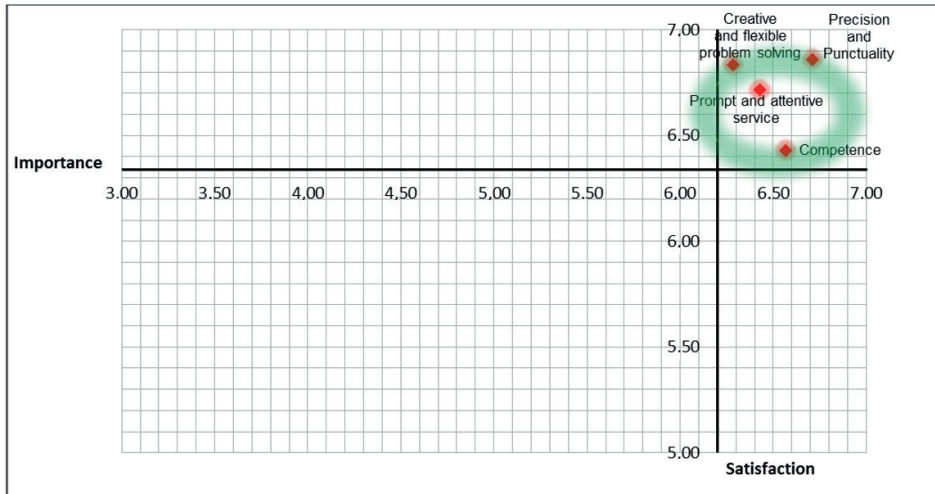
Figure 5: Cluster C: Personal characteristics during the event
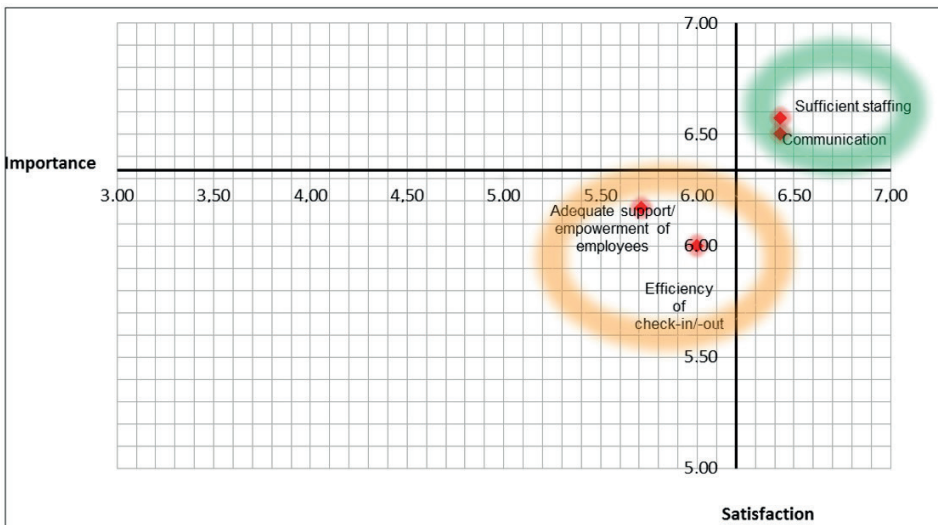
Figure 6: Cluster D: Personal skills during the event
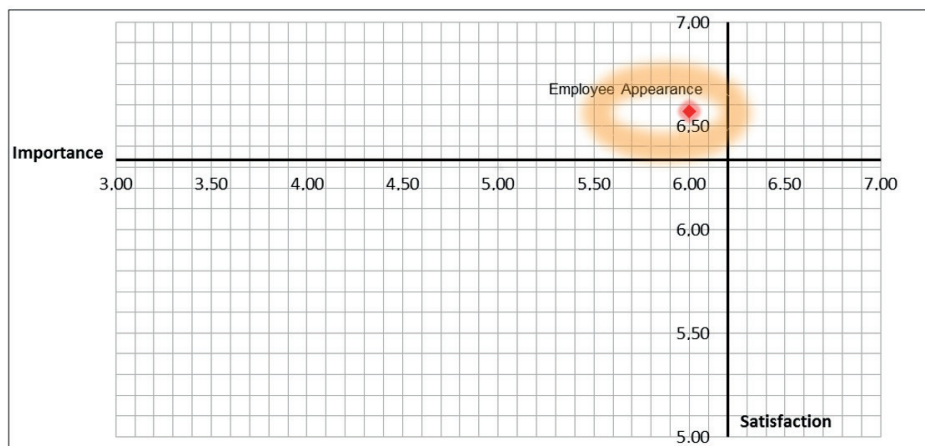

Figure 7: Cluster E: Procedures during the event

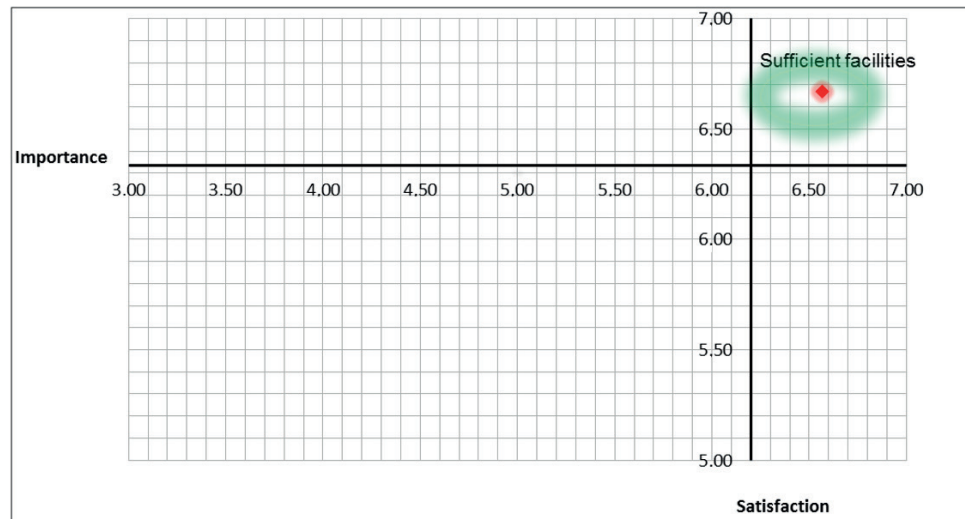**Figure 8:** Cluster F: Employee appearance

Figure 10: Cluster H: Unconscious perception of meeting rooms
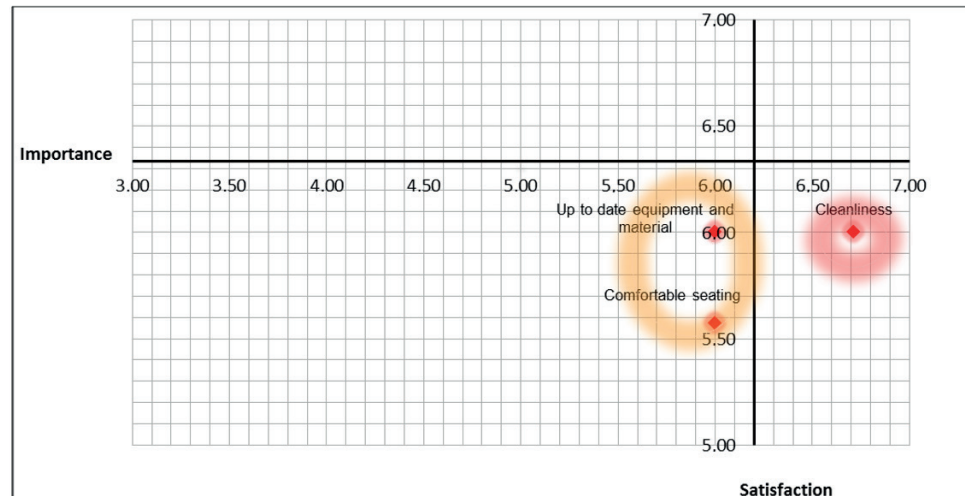

Figure 11: Cluster I: Guest-related factors of facilities

themselves. Cluster H is more important for the customer, so the meeting planner should consider the design and décor of meeting rooms and the lighting, climate and soundproofing. Cluster I showed that "cleanliness of rest rooms, lobby and public areas" and "guest room quality" were unique selling points. "Directional signs" appeared in the caution area, and "design and décor" of facilities turned out to be a waste of money.

Cluster J (Figure 12) showed that "sufficient facilities" was a unique selling point. The comment of respondent A supported this because he appreciated the optimal facilities for big and small groups with a nice atmosphere.

Food and beverages
The food and beverage (F&B) factors were split into two clusters, where Cluster K (Figure 13) features non-measurable factors, and Cluster L (Figure 14) the measurable factors of F&B. Cluster K revealed that F&B "quality" was a unique selling point, and "presentation" and "variety" were a waste of money. Respondent B, who was positive about the variety of

food in the African restaurant, however, rated the importance of the variety of food with only 4.

Cluster L exposed that "punctuality" was a unique selling point, and "quantity" of food was a waste of money.

Social programme
Cluster M (Figure 15) showed that "restaurants and bars" were a nightmare. "Swimming pool and sauna", "recreational activities" and "entertainment programme" were in the caution area, however, not too close to the nightmare area. "Swimming pool and sauna" and "recreational activities" importance had four out of seven ratings with 4 and lower. "Swimming pool" only had four ratings for satisfaction, which connotes that the swimming pool was not used by all respondents.

The relationship between demographical factors and satisfaction
Table 3 shows all the answers per demographical question. Most respondents said the purpose of the event was either training or a meeting. The participants were employees. The
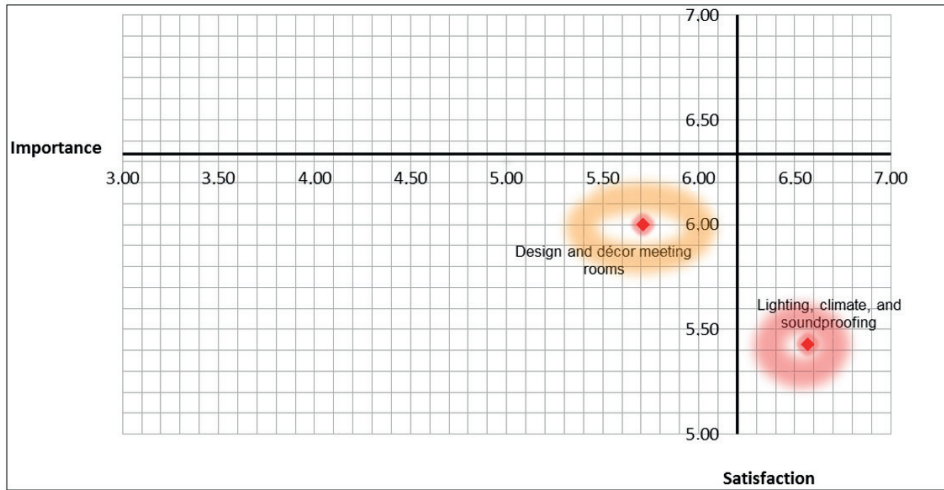
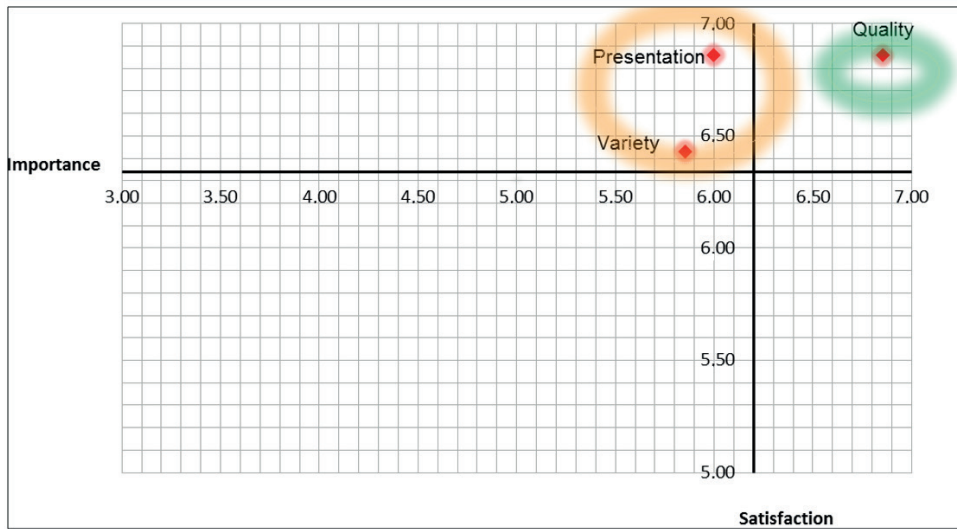**Figure 12:** Cluster J: Customer-related factors of facilities

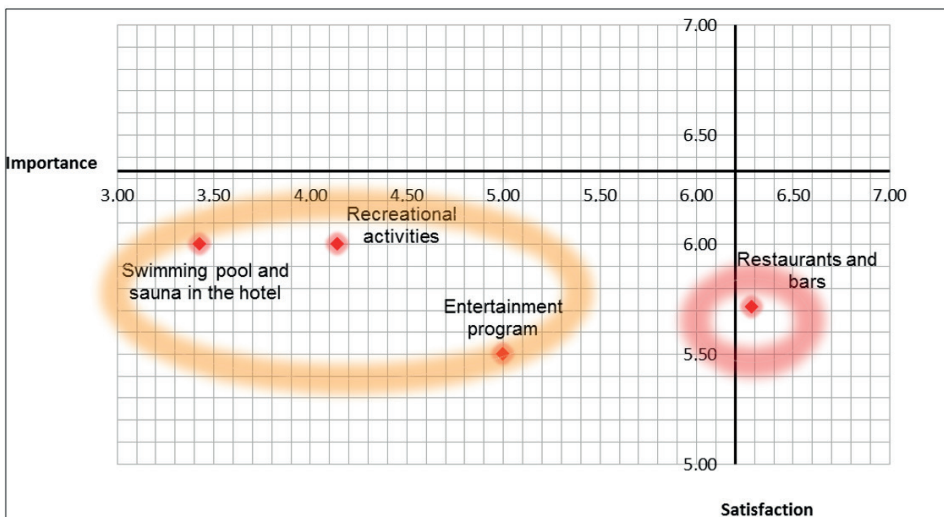**Figure 13:** Cluster K: Non-measurable food and beverage factors

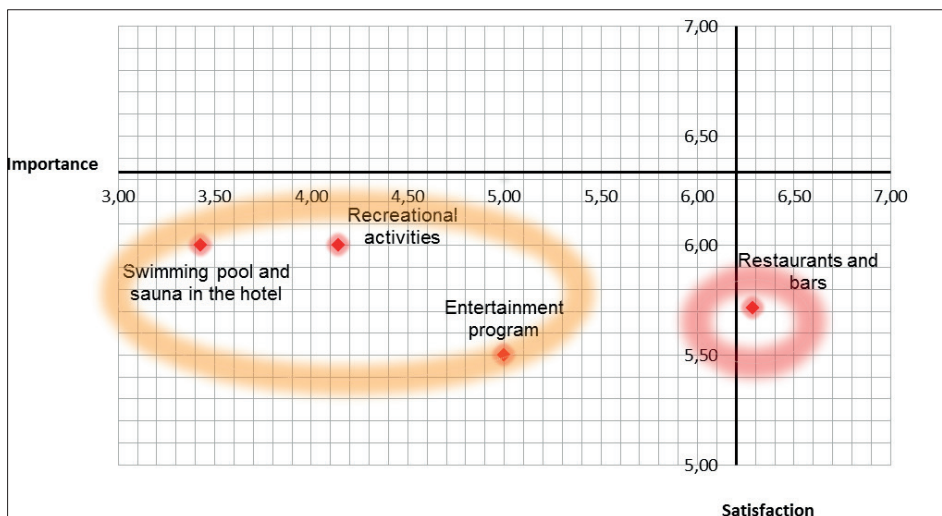**Figure 14:** Cluster L: Measurable F&B factors

Figure 15: Cluster M: Social programme

number of participants was between 1 and 50 or more than 100. The industry branch they came from was the automotive industry. Their meeting planner experience was between 5 and 10 years, and they make their decisions either on their own or in consultation with their superior. Nevertheless, the number of respondents was small. The answers for the demographical questions were very diverse (see e.g. purpose of the event), the number of answers not distinct enough (see e.g. industry branch) and the satisfaction ratings were overall positive (4 to 7). Therefore no pattern was found between satisfaction ratings and demographics.

The factors that would need most attention

Some factors in the different areas go in the same direction, which is why they were compared individually. Flexibility appeared to be a unique selling point, both in the planning phase, and flexible problem-solving during the event. Precision and punctuality during the event and punctuality of food were unique selling points. Likewise, competence prior to and during the event appeared as a unique selling point.

On the other hand, cleanliness of meeting rooms was a nightmare and cleanliness of rest rooms, public areas and lobby was a unique selling point. The design and décor of meeting rooms was in the caution area, whereas design and décor of facilities appeared to be a waste of money. Moreover, the size and number of facilities was rated as a unique selling point, whereas restaurants and bars appeared to be a nightmare.

Overall, the analysis of the four areas identified the areas which would need most attention. "Nightmares" would be the area which needs immediate attention. "Waste of money" would come after because one can also react immediately in this area, but it does not harm the company's image. The "caution" area should also be attended to, but does not necessarily require immediate acting. The last area was "unique selling point". It is good to know what these factors were, but they do not require immediate attention. All factors were put into different categories to identify areas of attention. These factors are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of factors in areas of attention

WASTE OF MONEY	USP
Employee appearance	Flexibility prior to the event
Design and décor of facilities	Competence prior to and during the event
Presentation of food	Have your best interest at heart
Variety of food	Caring, individualised attention
Quantity of food	Friendliness and politeness
	Trustworthiness and dependability
	Creative and flexible problem-solving
	Precision and punctuality
	Prompt and attentive service
	Sufficient staffing
	Communication
	Cleanliness of rest rooms, lobby and public areas
	Guest room quality
	Sufficient facilities
	Quality of food
	Punctuality of food

CAUTION	NIGHTMARE
Suggestions prior to the event	Information and consultation prior to the event
Negotiations prior to the event	Cleanliness of meeting rooms
Willingness to take the extra step	Lighting, climate and soundproofing of meeting rooms
Adequate empowerment of employees	Restaurants and bars
Efficiency of check-in/out	
Up-to-date equipment and material	
Comfortable seating in meeting rooms	
Design and décor of meeting rooms	
Directional signs	
Swimming pool and sauna	
Recreational activities	
Entertainment programme	

Conclusion and limitations

In general, the respondents were all satisfied. There were no factors which were rated lower than 4 (neutral) in terms of satisfaction. For importance, there were only seven ratings below 4 and those did not impact the satisfaction in that case. Most of the factors appeared to be a unique selling point. Competence was a unique selling point both before and after the event and was praised by respondent F. Friendliness was also one of the unique selling points and was praised by respondents A and B. Additionally flexibility in the planning phase and also flexible problem-solving during the event both appeared as unique selling points. Apart from that, punctuality also appeared as a service factor during the event and as an F&B factor, in both cases as a unique selling point.

Four factors appeared in the nightmare area. One was "information and consultation" and respondent D criticised the reachability issue in the planning phase. Additionally, "lighting, climate and soundproofing" of meeting rooms was a nightmare. This has to be researched further to determine how this can be improved. Furthermore, "cleanliness of meeting rooms" was a nightmare and "cleanliness of rest rooms, lobby and public places" was a unique selling point. This could be that meeting rooms can only be cleaned during the meeting breaks and coordination of cleaning times has to be arranged. The size and number of facilities was a unique selling point and respondent A appreciated optimal facilities. However, "restaurants and bars" appeared to be a nightmare. There is no clear reason why this is the case. One would need more information about the reasons.

Five factors appeared in the area of waste of money. For "employee appearance", "presentation", "variety" and "quantity" of food, one could think of reducing costs. Nevertheless, these were factors which many guests actually appreciated and showed the love for the details. Therefore one would need more research into how this can be dealt with without losing the atmosphere of the park. Respondent B mentioned in an individual comment that he was positive about the variety of the food in the African restaurant, but rated the importance of variety as only 4. One would wonder why he mentioned it especially, but did not see it as so important. "Design and décor" of facilities was also a waste of money. However, this is one of the factors that makes the venue special. On the other hand, "design and décor" of meeting rooms was in the area of caution, so perhaps the design and décor creates atmosphere which is only recognised subconsciously.

Apart from that, most factors of the social programme had low importance to most of the respondents. Satisfaction of "swimming pool and sauna" was only rated by four respondents, which suggests that most guests actually do not use these facilities. The area of the social programme would need more investigation, since three out of the four factors appeared in the caution area and one in the nightmare area. Caution could mean that they either become a nightmare or a waste of money. Therefore one needs to investigate how to target customers better, since one would think that factors of the social programme would be the reason why customers choose a theme park for their event. Especially because the literature showed that "decoration" and "family programmes" were factors with the least importance (Lee & Park, 2002).

Apart from decoration, Hinkin and Tracey (2003) mentioned that "recreational amenities" have little importance.

Lee et al. (2004) identified empathy, reliability, responsiveness and tangibles as factors with high importance to business guests. Choi (2004) also mentioned friendliness as one of the most important factors. This research also showed that "friendliness and politeness" had the highest importance (7.00). In addition, the other factors all showed high importance and therefore support the findings of Lee et al. (2004). The importance of food was also emphasised in the literature review (Wei & Huang, 2013). Choi (2004) also highlighted the strong influence of food quality on satisfaction. This research showed that food quality was a unique selling point and all customers rated it to be very important and were also very satisfied (both with a mean of 6.86).

Furthermore, the literature suggests that either service or physical factors were more important, for example the work of Fawzy and Samra (2008) and Choi (2004), who suggest that physical factors had a high influence on guest satisfaction. When comparing the mean importance of service (6.43) and physical factors (5.99), the findings in this study suggest that service factors would be slightly more important than physical factors.

As already mentioned, since a convenience sampling method was chosen, the generalisability of the results is very limited. The fact that there were only seven respondents from very different backgrounds makes the generalisability on demographical facts rather limited. To really find significant findings, one would need a bigger sample and especially respondents who actually had had a bad experience and were not satisfied with everything to make it more representative. The areas identified were very close to each other. The results can only suggest a direction, but do not represent the opinions of all customers. One would need more opinions to conclude that, for example, variety of food is a waste of money. Recommendations for future research would be to ensure a larger sample and a random sampling method, thus not only asking regular, repeat businesses, but in order to make it representative of the general population.

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