Abstract

In order to bridge the gap between the expectations of theatre makers and the motivations of theatre goers, this study sheds light on the relationships between show level attributes, person level socio-economic differences of audiences and their theatre-going experience on their experience and thus satisfaction as members of audiences. On the show level, 25 theatre attributes were derived through a corpus linguistic approach. Based on 59 plays produced by a local mainstream theatre maker, expert ratings were collected to establish the four factors of theatre attributes. Ratings from regular theatre-goers were then compiled to measure the celebrity ratings of the shows. On the person level, the socio-economic demographic characteristics and theatre-going experience of audiences were taken into account. All these factors were analysed for exploring their predictions on audience experience and satisfaction. Comprehensible, relevant and sensational shows predicted audience experience and satisfaction positively, yet epic shows negatively. Age, education, experience in watching plays and being male also precipitated positive audience experience and satisfaction. Theatre-going experience moderates and interacts with show attributes in the contribution to the prediction of audience satisfaction. Theatre-going experience affects show enjoyment and judgements on acting. Hence, novice and experienced audiences have different preferences and needs for shows with different attributes and celebrity levels. An integrated model of audience satisfaction prediction was generated in the hope of informing both theatre making and marketing, thus ultimately fostering the well-being and satisfaction of the theatres and the audiences.