

ปัจจัยแรงจูงใจที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการเข้าร่วมชมพิธีเปิดและพิธีปิดการแข่งขันกีฬาซีเกมส์ ครั้งที่ 33 ประเทศไทย: การประยุกต์ใช้กรอบแนวคิด 4Es ของเศรษฐกิจประสบการณ์

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บทคัดย่อ

การแข่งขันกีฬาซีเกมส์ ครั้งที่ 33 ที่ประเทศไทยเป็นเจ้าภาพ นับว่าเป็นมหกรรมกีฬาระดับนานาชาติที่มีบทบาทสำคัญต่อการส่งเสริมภาพลักษณ์ของประเทศ และการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยว ด้วยบริบทดังกล่าว ไม่ได้เป็นเพียงการดำเนินพิธีการตามแบบแผน หากแต่เป็นพื้นที่เชิงประสบการณ์ที่ถูกออกแบบขึ้นเพื่อสร้างการมีส่วนร่วมและถ่ายทอดอัตลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมแก่ผู้ชม งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์อิทธิพลของมิติประสบการณ์ตามแนวคิดเศรษฐกิจประสบการณ์ (4Es) ได้แก่ ความบันเทิง ความสวยงาม การหลุดพ้นจากความเป็นจริง และการเรียนรู้ที่มีต่อแรงจูงใจในการเข้าร่วมชมพิธีเปิดและพิธีปิด โดยการวิจัยใช้ระเบียบวิธีเชิงปริมาณ โดยเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากกลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 400 คน ผ่านแบบสอบถามมาตราส่วนประมาณค่า 5 ระดับ ซึ่งเครื่องมือมีความเชื่อมั่นอยู่ในระดับสูง และนำข้อมูลวิเคราะห์ด้วยสถิติการถดถอยพหุคูณเพื่อทดสอบอิทธิพลของตัวแปรด้านประสบการณ์ที่มีต่อแรงจูงใจในการเข้าร่วมชม

ผลการวิจัยพบว่ามิติประสบการณ์ทั้ง 4 ด้าน มีอิทธิพลต่อแรงจูงใจในการเข้าร่วมชมอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ โดยมีความแตกต่างกันในระดับอิทธิพล กล่าวคือ ด้านความบันเทิงมีอิทธิพลสูงที่สุด สะท้อนถึงความสำเร็จของความสุขสนาน และเนื้อหาการแสดง รองลงมาคือด้านความสวยงาม ซึ่งเน้นบทบาทของการออกแบบและบรรยากาศของงาน ด้านการหลุดพ้นจากโลกแห่งความจริง ก็เป็นอีกปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อผู้เข้าร่วมงานอย่างมาก แสดงให้เห็นถึงความสำคัญของประสบการณ์ที่ทำให้ผู้ชมเกิดความตื่นตัว ขณะที่ด้านการเรียนรู้แม้จะมีอิทธิพลในระดับต่ำกว่า แต่มีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติสะท้อนถึงบทบาทของการถ่ายทอดวัฒนธรรมและสาระความรู้ที่ช่วยส่งเสริมแรงจูงใจของผู้ชม

งานวิจัยนี้มีส่วนช่วยขยายองค์ความรู้ด้านการจัดการอีเวนต์ โดยนำเสนอหลักฐานเชิงประจักษ์เกี่ยวกับบทบาทของประสบการณ์ในการสร้างแรงจูงใจในบริบทของมหกรรมกีฬา นอกจากนี้ยังเสนอแนะแนวทางเชิงปฏิบัติสำหรับผู้จัดงานในการออกแบบพิธีที่ผสมผสานความบันเทิง ความสวยงาม ความตื่นตัว และคุณค่าทางวัฒนธรรม เพื่อเพิ่มความน่าสนใจของงานและส่งเสริมสร้างภาพลักษณ์ของประเทศไทยในระดับนานาชาติ

คำสำคัญ: เศรษฐกิจประสบการณ์ แรงจูงใจ ซีเกมส์ ประสบการณ์อีเวนต์ พฤติกรรมผู้ชม

Motivational Factors Influencing Attendance at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand: Applying the 4Es Framework

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Abstract

Thailand, as the host of the 33rd Southeast Asian Games, represents a major international sporting event that plays a significant role in enhancing the country's image and promoting tourism development. In this context, the opening and closing ceremonies extend beyond traditional formalities and function as experience-oriented platforms designed to engage audiences and convey cultural identity. This study aims to examine the influence of experiential dimensions based on the Experience Economy framework, namely entertainment, esthetics, escapism, and education, on audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from 400 respondents using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. The data were analysed using multiple linear regression to examine the influence of experiential dimensions on audience motivation.

The findings indicate that all four experiential dimensions significantly influence audience motivation, although their levels of impact differ. Entertainment emerged as the strongest factor ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < .001$), followed by esthetics ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < .001$), escapism ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < .01$), and education ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < .05$). The regression model demonstrated strong explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.62$). These findings suggest that audiences are primarily motivated by enjoyable, visually engaging, and immersive experiences. This study contributes to the field of event management by providing empirical evidence on the role of experiential dimensions in shaping audience motivation within mega-sport event ceremonies in Southeast Asia. The findings also provide practical implications for event organisers, emphasising the importance of integrating entertainment programs, immersive audience engagement, and culturally meaningful performances to enhance audience attraction and strengthen Thailand's international event image.

Keywords: Experience Economy, Motivation, SEA Games, Event Experience, Spectator Behavior

Introduction

The 33rd Southeast Asian SEA Games, scheduled to take place from 9 to 20 December 2025, represents a major international sporting event that plays a significant role in enhancing Thailand's national image and promoting tourism development (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2024). The 33rd SEA Games is expected to welcome athletes and spectators from 11 Southeast Asian countries and generate significant economic and tourism-related benefits for Thailand through international media exposure, visitor spending, and destination promotion. In the Thai context Beyond its role as a competitive sporting platform, the event serves as a strategic mechanism for positioning the host country within the regional and global tourism landscape. Within the context of large scale sporting events, the opening and closing ceremonies extend far beyond their traditional ceremonial functions. They operate as carefully designed experiential platforms that integrate performance, storytelling, and advanced audiovisual elements (Lemus-Delgado, 2023). Through these components, the ceremonies communicate national identity while creating emotionally engaging and memorable experiences for audiences across the region.

However, audience decisions to attend such ceremonies are no longer driven solely by interest in sport. Contemporary spectators, particularly younger audiences, increasingly seek meaningful and immersive experiences. Prior research suggests that program content, event atmosphere, and emotional engagement play a crucial role in shaping satisfaction and behavioural intention (Jantori, 2023). This shift reflects a broader transformation in consumer behaviour within event and tourism contexts, where experiential value has become a central determinant of participation. The concept of the experience economy provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding this phenomenon. Pine & Gilmore (1998) propose that experiences can be understood across four key dimensions, namely entertainment, esthetics, escapism, and education. These dimensions capture different forms of audience engagement, ranging from passive enjoyment to active immersion. Recent empirical studies continue to support this framework, demonstrating that experiential factors significantly influence engagement, satisfaction, and behavioural intention in event settings (Sisson & Alcorn, 2022). In the Thai context, emerging research indicates that perceived experiential value exerts a stronger influence on audience impressions than purely physical attributes. Although ceremonial experiences have become increasingly important in mega-sport events, event organisers still face challenges in identifying which experiential dimensions most strongly influence audience motivation and attendance intention. Unlike general sport competitions, opening and closing ceremonies place greater emphasis on symbolic representation, cultural storytelling, and immersive audience experiences, making them a unique component of mega-sport events. Despite the scale and importance of opening and closing ceremonies, there remains limited research that examines motivational factors through the lens of the four experiential dimensions, particularly in the context of the SEA Games in Thailand. This gap highlights the need for further investigation. Therefore, this study aims to examine the motivational factors influencing

audience attendance at the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand. By applying the experience economy framework, the study seeks to provide practical insights for designing engaging event experiences that align with audience expectations and enhance Thailand's images as a competitive host nation. The study also extends the application of the Experience Economy framework to the ceremonial components of mega-sport events within the Southeast Asian context, an area that remains underexplored in existing event and sport tourism research.

Research Objectives

1. To examine audience perceptions of experiential dimensions based on the Experience Economy framework, including entertainment, esthetics, escapism, and education, in the context of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand.
2. To analyse the influence of experiential dimensions on audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Perceived entertainment experience positively influences audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Perceived esthetic experience positively influences audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Perceived escapism experience positively influences audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Perceived educational experience positively influences audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies.

Scope of Research

The study specifically investigates four dimensions of experience entertainment, esthetics, escapism, and education derived from the Experience Economy framework proposed by Pine & Gilmore (1998), as independent variables, while motivation to attend serves as the dependent variable. In this study, "potential spectators" refer to individuals who expressed interest in attending or following the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand. The respondents were recruited from different regions of Thailand through online survey distribution and were not limited to a specific geographic area. A total of 400 respondents were selected using convenience sampling. Data collection was conducted prior to the event as a pre-event perception study focusing on audience motivation and attendance intention toward the upcoming SEA Games ceremonies. This study is limited to the context of the opening and closing ceremonies and does not extend to other event components or different types of sports events. Therefore, the findings may not be generalisable to competition events, other cultural ceremonies, or international sporting contexts beyond the SEA Games.

Conceptual Framework

The study is grounded in the Experience Economy theory proposed by Pine & Gilmore (1998), which emphasizes the role of experiential value in shaping consumer behavior within event contexts. In this framework, four dimensions of experience are treated as independent variables, namely entertainment experience, esthetic experience, escapism experience, and educational experience. Each dimension represents a distinct form of audience engagement, ranging from passive enjoyment and visual appreciation to active immersion and meaningful learning. Each experiential dimension was operationalised through multiple questionnaire items adapted from prior studies related to event experience and audience behaviour.

Within the context of opening and closing ceremonies, entertainment experiences are expected to enhance enjoyment and emotional engagement, while aesthetic experiences contribute to visual appreciation and atmosphere. Escapism experiences encourage immersive participation and emotional involvement, whereas education experiences promote cultural understanding and meaningful learning. Collectively, these experiential dimensions are expected to positively influence audience motivation to attend the ceremonies.

The dependent variable in this study is audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd Southeast Asian Games in Thailand. The framework proposes that higher levels of perceived experiential value across these four dimensions positively influence audience motivation and decision making.

Thus, the conceptual model illustrates the direct relationships between the four experiential dimensions and audience motivation, where each dimension is hypothesized to have a positive effect on audience motivation to attend the ceremonies.

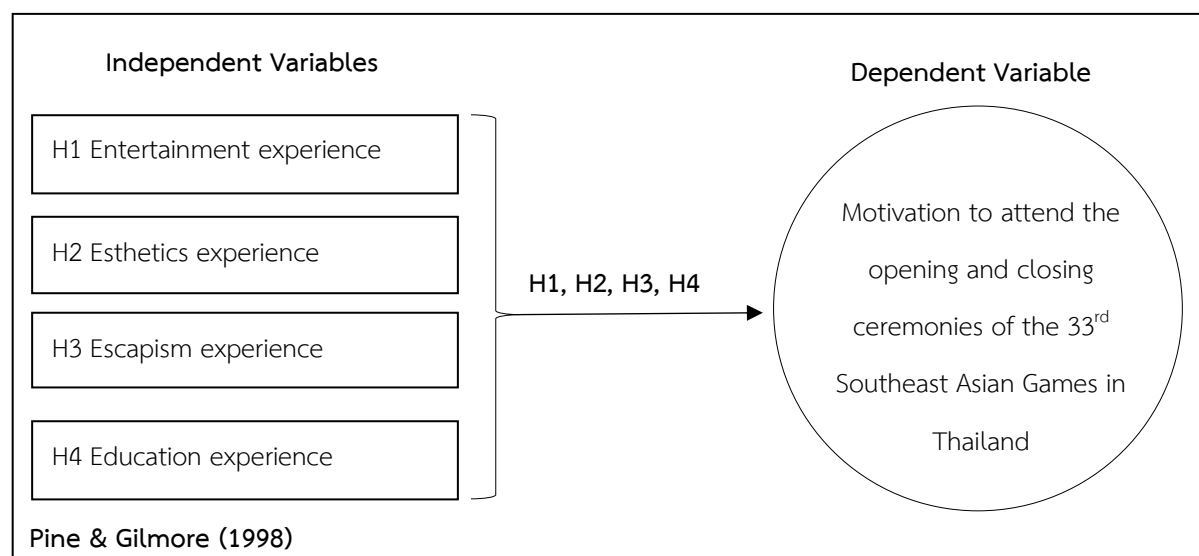


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of experiential dimension (4Es) influencing audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies

Literature Review

Experience Economy in Mega-Sport Events

Understanding the motivational factors influencing audience participation in the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd Southeast Asian Games requires a conceptual framework that clearly explains the experiential value perceived by participants. In the context of mega sporting events, these ceremonies are no longer limited to formal proceedings. Instead, they are intentionally designed performances that aim to create memorable impressions, emotional meaning, and lasting experiences for audiences.

The Experience Economy framework provides a suitable theoretical foundation for explaining this phenomenon (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). This perspective emphasizes that value is created not only through services, but through carefully staged experiences that engage individuals on multiple levels. In contemporary event settings, audiences increasingly seek meaningful participation rather than passive observation. Prior studies confirm that experiential elements play a crucial role in shaping satisfaction, loyalty, and behavioural intention (Maulida Widitya et al., 2025). The Experience Economy conceptualizes experience into four key dimensions. These include entertainment, esthetics, escapism, and education. Each dimension represents a distinct form of engagement, reflecting different ways in which individuals interact event environments. (Xie & Yu, 2025).

Entertainment refers to experiences that are absorbed through sensory enjoyment, where participants engage passively with performances such as concerts, visual shows, or ceremonial displays. Research indicates that program content is one of the most influential factors in attracting audiences, particularly among younger participants (Xu et al., 2023).

Esthetics focuses on the appreciation of the environment and atmosphere. It reflects how individuals immerse themselves in the visual and spatial qualities of an event without actively altering it. Studies in event design highlight that thematic presentation and environmental aesthetics significantly shape audience perception and experience (Rani et al., 2024).

Escapism represents a deeper level of engagement, where participants actively immerse themselves in the experience and temporarily detach from everyday life. This dimension has been identified as a key driver of behavioural intention, particularly in tourism and event contexts where emotional involvement plays a central role (Zhou and Wang, 2024).

Education involves active participation in learning, where individuals gain knowledge, cultural understanding, or new perspectives through the experience. Research suggests that integrating cultural content into events enhances memorability and creates meaningful engagement among participants (Yen, 2022).

Overall, the Experience Economy framework highlights the importance of experiential value as a central factor influencing audience motivation and behavior. Despite the recognized importance of these dimensions, limited research has specifically examined how they influence motivation to attend

opening and closing ceremonies in the context of the SEA Games in Thailand. This gap underscores the need for further investigation.

Hypotheses Development

Entertainment experiences enhance enjoyment and emotional engagement, which may positively influence audience motivation to participate in event activities. Previous studies indicate that entertainment-related program content is a major factor attracting audiences to mega-sport events (Xu et al., 2023). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed: H1: Entertainment experience positively influences audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand.

Esthetic experiences are associated with visual appreciation and atmospheric design, which significantly influence audience perceptions and event experiences (Rani et al., 2024). Based on this perspective, the following hypothesis is proposed: H2: Esthetic experience positively influences audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand.

Escapism experiences encourage immersive participation and emotional involvement, which have been identified as significant predictors of behavioural intention in tourism and event settings (Zhou & Wang, 2024). The following hypothesis is therefore proposed: H3: Escapism experience positively influences audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand.

Educational experiences promote cultural understanding and meaningful learning through participation. Previous research suggests that cultural and educational content enhances memorable audience experiences (Yen, 2022). Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed: H4: Education experience positively influences audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand.

Summary of Literature Review

The reviewed literature demonstrates that experiential value plays a significant role in shaping audience motivation and behavioural responses within tourism, event, and mega-sport contexts. The Experience Economy framework proposed by Pine & Gilmore (1998) provides a comprehensive theoretical perspective for understanding how entertainment, esthetics, escapism, and education contribute to audience engagement and participation.

Previous studies consistently indicate that experiential dimensions influence satisfaction, emotional involvement, behavioural intention, and event participation, although the relative influence of each dimension may vary across cultural contexts and event types. Existing studies have extensively examined experiential value in tourism, festivals, and general sport events. However, limited research has specifically focused on opening and closing ceremonies as distinct experiential components of mega-sport events, particularly within the Southeast Asian context.

In addition, there remains limited empirical evidence regarding how experiential dimensions

influence audience motivation to attend ceremonial components of the SEA Games in Thailand. Therefore, this study seeks to extend the application of the Experience Economy framework by examining the influence of experiential dimensions on audience motivation within the context of the 33rd SEA Games opening and closing ceremonies.

Research Method

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the motivational factors influencing audience participation in the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd Southeast Asian Games in Thailand. It aims to assess the level of audience motivation and to analyze the influence of experiential dimensions based on the Experience Economy framework on attendance intention. The target population includes Thai individual and potential spectators who express interest in attending the ceremonies. Since the exact population size is unknown, the study determines the sample size based on widely accepted statistical guidelines for social science research. A total of 400 respondents were selected to ensure sufficient statistical power and to reduce potential data error. (Jantori, 2023). The study applies convenience sampling by recruiting participants through online platforms and public channels where individuals interested in sports and events are likely to be reached. A total of 650 questionnaire invitations were distributed through online platforms, of which 400 completed responses were returned, resulting in a response rate of 61.5%. Data were collected through online questionnaire distribution via social media platforms and public online communities related to sports, tourism, and event participation. Respondents voluntarily completed the questionnaire during the data collection period. Convenience sampling was used due to the absence of a complete sampling frame of potential spectators. Although this approach was appropriate for exploratory online event research, it may limit the generalisability of the findings. The research instrument is a structured questionnaire divided into three sections. The first section collects demographic information such as gender, age, education level, and occupation. The second section measures perceived experiential value across four dimensions, including entertainment, esthetics, escapism, and education, using 20 items. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items measuring the four experiential dimensions, including five items for entertainment, five items for esthetics, five items for escapism, and five items for education, together with eight items measuring audience motivation to attend the ceremonies. The questionnaire items were adapted from previous studies related to event experience, audience engagement, and the Experience Economy framework, with modifications to suit the context of the SEA Games ceremonies.

The third section assesses audience motivation and intention to attend through 8 items. All items are measured using a five point Likert scale ranging from the highest to the lowest level of agreement. (Zhan et al., 2023). A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents to assess the clarity and reliability of the questionnaire prior to the main data collection. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The reliability values for all constructs ranged from

0.86 to 0.93, indicating high internal consistency. Content validity was evaluated by three experts using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC), and all items achieved acceptable validity values.

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts. The study evaluates item consistency using the Index of Item Objective Congruence and retains only items that meet acceptable criteria. This validation approach is commonly applied in event and consumer behavior research (Liu et al., 2024). Data collection was conducted through an online survey using Google Forms. The researcher clearly explained the research objectives and ensured confidentiality in accordance with ethical research standards. This approach allows efficient data distribution and access to a broader group of potential respondents.

The study analyses the data using statistical software. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize demographic characteristics and levels of motivation, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. These techniques are widely used in event and behavioural research. (Meeprom and Dansiri, 2021). Inferential analysis is then conducted using multiple liner regression to examine the relationships between experiential dimensions and audience motivation. The sample size of 400 respondents was considered statistically sufficient based on the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019), who suggest that multiple regression analysis requires an adequate sample size to ensure statistical reliability and predictive accuracy. The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Before the regression analysis, assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were assessed. The results indicated no significant violations of regression assumptions, and variance inflation factor (VIF) values were below the recommended threshold. Given that all data were self-reported, Harman's single-factor test was conducted to assess common method bias. The first factor accounted for 28% of the total variance, which is below the recommended threshold of 50%, suggesting that common method bias was not a major concern in this study. This analytical approach aligns with recent studies in experience based behavior and event research (Pongwat and Talawanich, 2024).

Research Results

This section presents the results of the data analysis, including descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and multiple linear regression. The analysis aims to examine the influence of experiential dimensions, namely entertainment, esthetics, escapism, and education, on audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of respondents (n=400)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	168	42.0%
	Female	232	58.0%
Age	20-25	150	37.5%

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	26-35	170	42.5%
	35-45	50	12.5%
	46 years and above	30	7.5%
Educational Level	Bachelor's degree	240	60.0%
	Master's degree	120	30.0%
	Doctoral degree	40	10.0%
Occupation	Student	140	35.0%
	Private employee	120	30.0%
	Government officer	90	22.5%
	Business owner	50	12.5%

As shown in Table 1, the demographic characteristics of the respondents indicate that the majority of participants were female, accounting for 58.0% of the sample. In terms of age, most respondents were between 26 and 35 years old, followed by those aged 20 to 25 years, while a smaller proportion were above 35 years old. Regarding educational background, the majority of respondents held a bachelor's degree. In terms of occupation, students represented the largest group of respondents, followed by private employees and government officers.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of study variables.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Entertainment	4.32	0.65
Esthetics	4.21	0.70
Escapism	4.10	0.72
Education	3.95	0.75
Motivation	4.28	0.68

Table 2, shows that all variables were rated at a high level. Entertainment received the highest mean score, followed by esthetics and escapism, while education had the lowest mean. These results indicate that audiences were primarily motivated by enjoyment and event atmosphere. The results presented in Table 2 indicate that all experiential dimensions received relatively high mean scores, ranging from 3.95 to 4.32 on a five-point scale. This suggests that respondents generally perceived high levels of experiential value associated with the opening and closing ceremonies of the SEA Games.

Table 3 Reliability analysis of variables

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Entertainment	0.91
Esthetics	0.89
Escapism	0.88
Education	0.86
Motivation	0.93

Table 3, indicates that all constructs demonstrate high reliability, which Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.86 to 0.93. All values exceed the acceptable threshold, confirming the internal consistency of the measurement instrument. Prior to the regression analysis, assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were assessed. All regression assumptions were met, and VIF values for all predictors were below the recommended threshold.

Table 4 Results of multiple linear regression analysis

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t	Significance
Constant	0.845		6.214	.000
Entertainment	0.412	0.36	8.945	.000
Esthetics	0.368	0.31	7.832	.000
Escapism	0.295	0.24	5.214	.002
Education	0.158	0.12	2.174	.031

Model Summary: $R = 0.787$, $R^2 = 0.62$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.616$

ANOVA: $F = 261.784$, $p < .001$

Note: VIF values for all predictors were below 5, indicating no multicollinearity issues. Inspection of residual plots confirmed linearity and homoscedasticity of the regression model. The regression equation for predicting audience motivation can be expressed as follows: $Y = 0.845 + 0.412(\text{Entertainment}) + 0.368(\text{Esthetics}) + 0.295(\text{Escapism}) + 0.158(\text{Education})$

Table 4, presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis. The reported Beta values represent standardised regression coefficients, indicating the relative influence of each experiential dimension on audience motivation. The model demonstrates strong explanatory power, with an R square value of 0.62, indicating that the independent variables explain 62% of the variance in audience motivation. The ANOVA results show that the model is statistically significant ($F = 261.784$, $p < .001$), confirming the overall fit of the regression model. Among the predictors, entertainment has the strongest influence on motivation (Beta = 0.36, $p < .001$), followed by esthetics (Beta = 0.31, $p < .001$) and escapism (Beta = 0.24, $p < .01$). Education also has a statistically significant effect (Beta = 0.12, $p < .05$), although its influence is comparatively weaker. The questionnaire items were adapted from

previous studies related to event experience, audience engagement, and the Experience Economy framework, with modifications to suit the context of the SEA Games ceremonies.

Table X: Example questionnaire items used in the study

Construct	Example Item
Entertainment	“The ceremony performances are enjoyable.”
Esthetics	“The visual atmosphere of the ceremonies is attractive.”
Escapism	“Attending the ceremonies allows me to escape from daily routines.”
Education	“The ceremonies provide meaningful cultural learning experiences.”
Motivation	“I am motivated to attend the opening and closing ceremonies.”

All items are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from the highest to the lowest level of agreement (Zhan et al., 2023).

Conclusion and Discussion

This study examined the influence of experiential dimensions on audience motivation to attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the 33rd Southeast Asian Games in Thailand. The findings demonstrated that all four experiential dimensions—entertainment, esthetics, escapism, and education—significantly influenced audience motivation, supporting the Experience Economy framework proposed by Pine & Gilmore (1998). Among the four dimensions, entertainment emerged as the strongest predictor of audience motivation. This finding is consistent with Xu et al. (2023), who identified entertainment-related experiences as a major factor influencing audience participation in mega-event settings. The result suggests that contemporary audiences increasingly seek emotionally engaging and memorable experiences rather than passive observation alone.

Esthetics was identified as the second strongest factor, indicating that visual atmosphere, stage design, and environmental aesthetics significantly shape audience engagement. This finding aligns with previous studies highlighting the importance of sensory appeal and well-designed event environments in enhancing audience satisfaction (Rani et al., 2024). Escapism also demonstrated a significant influence on audience motivation. Audiences were attracted to immersive experiences that allowed them to temporarily escape from daily routines and become emotionally involved in the ceremonies. This finding is consistent with Zhou & Wang (2024), who identified escapism as an important predictor of behavioural intention in event settings. Although education showed the weakest influence, it remained statistically significant, suggesting that cultural storytelling and symbolic representation still contribute to the overall event experience.

Overall, the findings indicate that experiential dimensions collectively explain a substantial proportion of audience motivation within the context of mega-sport event ceremonies. From a practical perspective, event organisers should prioritise immersive performances, visually appealing environments, emotional engagement, and cultural integration to enhance audience participation and experience quality. Despite its contributions, this study is limited to the context of the SEA Games ceremonies in Thailand and employed convenience sampling through online questionnaire distribution, which may limit the generalisability of the findings. Future research may extend this framework to different event contexts or audience groups to further examine experiential influences on audience behaviour.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that experiential dimensions play a significant role in shaping audience motivation in mega-sport event ceremonies. Entertainment and esthetics emerged as the strongest predictors, highlighting the importance of immersive and visually engaging experiences in attracting audiences. The findings contribute to the application of the Experience Economy framework within the Southeast Asian mega-sport event context and provide practical insights for event organisers seeking to create meaningful audience experiences.

Recommendations

1. Implementation

Event organisers should prioritise immersive performances, visually appealing environments, and emotional audience engagement when designing opening and closing ceremonies for mega-sport events. Particular attention should be given to entertainment and esthetic dimensions, as these factors demonstrated the strongest influence on audience motivation. Sufficient budget allocation for stage production, lighting, visual effects, and audience-centred experience design is therefore essential to enhance overall event quality and audience satisfaction.

Interactive and immersive activities should also be incorporated into ceremony design to strengthen emotional involvement and create more memorable audience experiences. Event organisers may further consider audience segmentation strategies by designing different experiential activities for various audience groups, such as younger spectators, families, and international visitors. In addition, post-event evaluation and audience feedback collection should be conducted to assess audience satisfaction and improve future event experience design.

2. Further Study

Future research may examine additional variables such as audience satisfaction, emotional engagement, destination image, revisit intention, and social media influence in relation to mega-sport event experiences. Future studies may also employ qualitative or mixed-method approaches to gain a deeper understanding of audience perceptions and experiential meanings across different event contexts.

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