

Space Marketing and Customer Engagement in Event Venues: A Study on Sambhrama Celebrations and Private Theatre, Davangere

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Abstract—This study examines how space marketing and customer engagement influence the success of small, independently operated event venues, using Sambhrama Celebrations and Private Theatre, Davangere, as a case. Primary data were collected from 75 respondents in Davangere through a structured questionnaire, supplemented by secondary data from books, journals, and industry sources. Percentage analysis and the Chi-square test of independence were used to analyse the data. Findings show that social media, particularly Instagram and Facebook, is the dominant channel through which customers discover celebration venues and exerts a measurable influence on booking decisions. Price/affordability and ambience emerged as the two most important venue-selection factors, and statistically significant relationships were found between social media influence and customers' openness to trying new celebration formats, and between general market awareness and brand-specific awareness of the venue studied. The study concludes that small event venues can strengthen their competitive position by combining consistent digital engagement with bundled, customer-preferred add-on services, and offers specific recommendations to this effect.

Index Terms— customer engagement, event venues, social media influence, space marketing, tier-2 cities.

I. INTRODUCTION

The event management sector in India has become increasingly diverse, with growing demand for personalised celebration experiences and specialised event venues. Within this industry, two concepts assume particular relevance for small, independently owned venues: space marketing, which concerns how a physical venue is positioned, communicated, and made desirable to a target audience, and customer engagement, a relational construct concerned with the quality, frequency, and depth of interaction that follows a first booking. For venues with limited marketing budgets, the two are difficult to separate in practice; such venues depend on the strength of engagement - word of mouth, social media

interaction, and repeat patronage - to compensate for what they lack in scale.

This is the situation faced by Sambhrama Celebrations and Private Theatre, a small celebration venue operating from Boys Hostel Road, Davangere, Karnataka. The venue was established to serve customers wishing to celebrate smaller, more personal occasions - a segment that may be less suited to the city's larger convention halls and hotel banquet facilities. Its offerings include a private mini-theatre experience with access to OTT platforms, a celebration hall accommodating 15-20 guests, theme-based decoration, and add-on services such as catering, banners, and photography.

The objectives of this study are to examine the concept of space marketing and customer engagement and their relevance to event venues; to analyse the marketing strategies and engagement practices adopted by event venues in Davangere; to examine customer preferences and behaviour in venue selection for small celebrations; to identify the factors that influence customer engagement and brand awareness for small venues; and to suggest strategies that can help small venue operators attract more customers and strengthen engagement.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH GAP

Pine and Gilmore [10] argued that businesses compete most effectively on the memorability of the experience they stage rather than on product or price - a framing intuitively applicable to a venue offering staged, two-hour theatre experiences. Lovelock and Wirtz [7] introduced the notion of the servicescape, arguing that the physical environment of service delivery materially shapes customer perception, a view extended by Kotler and Keller [6] within the service marketing mix and grounded earlier in

Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry's [14] SERVQUAL model, which identified tangibles as one of five core service quality dimensions.

The customer engagement literature is less settled. Brodie et al. [1] propose a multidimensional definition spanning cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components, while Vivek, Beatty and Morgan [13] centre their definition on the intensity of participation. Hollebeek [5] decomposes engagement into cognitive processing, affection, and activation, reporting that highly engaged customers display reduced price sensitivity, and Pansari and Kumar [9] treat engagement as a driver of firm performance rather than merely a customer-level attitude. None of these studies, however, offers a measurement instrument validated specifically for small, single-location service businesses.

A second cluster of studies addresses social media specifically. Sashi [11] proposes an engagement cycle in which businesses that respond actively to online interaction build stronger relationships than those that merely broadcast content, a view consistent with Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick's [3] observation that platforms such as Instagram now function as two-way engagement tools rather than one-directional advertising channels. Buhalis and Law [2], writing from a tourism and hospitality perspective, found that online reviews and social content increasingly substitute for direct inspection in customers' booking decisions, with implications for conversion rates.

A further consideration concerns why customers seek out formats such as those studied here. Getz [4] discusses planned events across different scales and contexts, including private and social occasions. Middleton, Fyall and Morgan [8], writing on travel and tourism marketing, identify cleanliness, comfort, and décor as primary determinants of customer satisfaction, a conclusion consistent with the servicescape literature discussed above. Solomon [12] argues that purchase decisions are increasingly bound up with self-expression and social identity, suggesting that customers may select a venue partly for its capacity to be photographed and shared rather than for its functional attributes alone.

Taken together, the literature establishes reasonably strong theoretical grounds for expecting ambience, social media exposure, and engagement-related

behaviour to influence venue selection. Much of this literature, however, has been developed and validated with reference to large brands, e-commerce platforms, or general consumer contexts rather than small, single-location service venues, and empirical evidence specific to event-venue markets in Tier-2 Indian cities remains limited in the wider literature - the gap this study aims to address through a survey-based case study of Sambhrama Celebrations and Private Theatre, Davangere.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was adopted, appropriate to a study aimed at characterising existing customer attitudes and behaviours. Primary data were collected from 75 respondents in Davangere through a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms, covering demographic profile, celebration habits, venue-selection factors, social media and engagement-related behaviour, and awareness of Sambhrama Celebrations specifically. A convenience sampling technique was used given practical constraints on time and access. Secondary data were drawn from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and industry reports. Percentage analysis, mean scores, and the Chi-square test of independence ($\alpha = 0.05$) were used for analysis.

Two hypotheses were formulated for statistical testing:

H01: There is no significant relationship between social media influence and customer openness to trying new/unique celebration venues.

H02: There is no significant relationship between general awareness of celebration venues in Davangere and specific brand awareness of Sambhrama Celebrations.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Demographic and Behavioural Profile

Respondents aged 18-35 accounted for 90.7 percent of the sample, with gender distribution nearly even (52.0% male, 46.7% female). Working professionals formed the largest occupational group (41.3%), ahead of business owners (28.0%) and students (24.0%), indicating that demand for this venue format is not confined to a predominantly student clientele. Just over half the sample (53.3%) celebrates occasions at least once every two to three months,

suggesting realistic potential for repeat business. Among six venue categories presented, the private theatre/celebration hall format - the category Sambhrama Celebrations occupies - was the single most preferred, selected by 36.0 percent of respondents, ahead of restaurants/café (30.7%) and banquet halls (13.3%). A majority (69.3%) had booked a private theatre or small celebration hall before, and birthday parties (81.3%), friends' get-togethers (62.7%), and anniversaries (58.7%) were the dominant occasions reported.

B. Venue Selection Factors

Of five rated factors (scale 1-5), price/affordability received the highest mean score (4.11), narrowly ahead of ambience and décor (4.04), location/accessibility (3.89), customisation (3.87), and privacy/exclusivity (3.84). More than nine in ten respondents (92.0%) indicated a budget of ₹3,000 or above for a small celebration involving four to ten guests, suggesting headroom above the venue's current entry-level pricing without requiring customers to trade off ambience for affordability.

C. Awareness, Social Media, and Engagement

Instagram or Facebook was cited by 94.7 percent of respondents as a source of information about celebration venues, well ahead of word-of-mouth (76.0%) and conventional advertising (30.7%). Beyond simple reach, 84.0 percent of respondents reported that social media content influences their booking decisions to some degree (61.3% "a lot"), and 80.0 percent expressed a preference for booking via WhatsApp or direct call over an in-person visit. Brand-specific awareness of Sambhrama Celebrations stood at 92.0 percent, marginally higher than category-level awareness of celebration venues in general (89.3%). Among desired add-on services, food and catering (73.3%), live music or DJ (70.7%), and photography/videography (69.3%) were each selected by a majority of respondents.

D. Hypothesis Testing

For Hypothesis 2 (a 2×2 table), two of the four expected cell frequencies fell below 5 (5.36 and 0.64), violating the standard assumption for an uncorrected Pearson Chi-square test. Pearson's chi-square with Yates' continuity correction, the appropriate adjustment for 2×2 tables under this condition, was therefore applied and yielded $\chi^2 = 44.90$ (df = 1), exceeding the critical value of 3.841 at $\alpha = 0.05$ (the uncorrected Pearson value was

54.62). A Fisher's exact test, which does not rely on large-sample approximation, confirmed the result ($p < 0.001$). H02 was rejected: a significant association exists between general market awareness and brand-specific awareness of Sambhrama Celebrations.

For Hypothesis 1 (a 3×2 table), three of the six expected cell frequencies fell below 5. The calculated Pearson chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 16.42$, df = 2) exceeded the critical value (5.991) at $\alpha = 0.05$. Given the sparse cells, a Fisher-Freeman-Halton exact test was additionally computed directly from the observed margins and likewise indicated significance ($p = 0.002$). H01 was rejected: a significant association exists between social media influence and customer openness to trying new/unique celebration venues.

These tests establish statistical association rather than causation; the data are consistent with social media shaping engagement and awareness but do not rule out the reverse possibility that already-engaged customers pay closer attention to such content.

V. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, the following measures are suggested. First, strengthen Instagram and Facebook engagement through regular, high-quality content and active response to comments and messages, given that 94.7 percent of respondents discover venues through these platforms. Second, introduce bundled service packages combining catering, live music/DJ, and photography, the three most desired add-on services. Third, maintain competitive, transparent, tiered pricing, since affordability is the top-rated selection factor. Fourth, convert existing brand awareness (92%) into bookings through targeted promotions, limited-time offers, and referral incentives. Fifth, strengthen WhatsApp-based engagement through quicker response times and business automation for common queries, given an 80 percent stated preference for this channel. More generally, small event venue operators in Tier-2 cities are advised to invest in consistent social media presence, develop occasion-specific packages around the most common celebration types, and actively collect and showcase customer testimonials to reinforce word-of-mouth engagement.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study examined space marketing and customer engagement jointly within the context of one small celebration venue in Davangere. Based on a convenience sample of 75 respondents, the findings indicate a preference among the surveyed respondents for small, personalised celebration formats, suggesting an opportunity for such venues in the Davangere market, and indicate that this preference is discovered and reinforced primarily through social media rather than traditional marketing channels. Both hypotheses tested were rejected in favour of the alternative, indicating statistically significant associations - between social media influence and openness to new venue formats, and between general market awareness and brand-specific awareness of Sambhrama Celebrations - though the Chi-square and exact tests used establish association, not causation.

Several limitations qualify these findings. The sample of 75 respondents was drawn through convenience sampling and cannot be assumed to represent Davangere's population with statistical precision. The data are cross-sectional and reflect a single point in time. The findings are specific to Sambhrama Celebrations and may not generalise to other event-venue formats or cities. Within these limits, Sambhrama Celebrations appears to have built brand awareness within its local market relative to its scale, converting that awareness into structured, bundled engagement combining catering, entertainment, and photography with the core venue offering appears to be the venue's most immediate opportunity.

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