



Presenting the Theatrical Metaphors of the Hospitality Industry in a practical context.

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Abstract

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This topic was chosen as the theatre metaphor/ dramaturgical experience is being practised within the industry on a daily basis. However, from first hand experience while working in different food and beverage levels, this topic does not have the awareness it deserves. The aim for this research is to answer two research questions which emerged from the topic. These includes if the guests are an interactive audience or actors within the same level as servers and if the ambience is more important than the servers' skills. The latter originated from the thought process of the common practice of investing more in the materialistic items rather than employee training. The findings showed that many individuals are aware that the theory's practical elements are present in the restaurant and that they happen naturally however, the actual term and definition was not known. Furthermore, it was found that in the Maltese food and beverage industry there is a thirst for knowledge on this phenomenon as an educational, training and managerial guide. It was duely noted that more research is to be made on this topic in order to increase awareness.	
Keywords Theatre, Performance, Ambience, Communication, Interaction	

Declaration of Authenticity



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Research Title : Presenting the Theatrical Metaphors of the Hospitality Industry in a practical context.

Declaration:

I hereby declare that this research study is based on the outcome of my own research. I, as the author, declare that this research study is my own composition which has not been previously produced for any other qualification.

The research study was conducted under the supervision of Ms. H. Micallef.

30/05/22

Date

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angie', is written over a horizontal line.

Student's Signature

Acknowledgements.

First and foremost I would like to thank my tutor for guiding me throughout this dissertation and assisting with all my queries.

Secondly, I would like to dedicate and thank all interviewees that took the time to answer my questions and supported my findings. Whilst also thanking the participating restaurants which I observed as well as the front of house members of the respective establishments.

Lastly, a special thanks goes to all the supportive family, friends and girlfriend who believed in me and supported me throughout the three years of the respective degree which led to this dissertation.

Ethics Consideration Form



From: (Name, Address for correspondence) Angie Saliba	Title of Research Project: Presenting the Theatrical Metaphors of the Hospitality Industry in a practical context.
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Year: 2022	
Proposed Data Collection Start Date: 10/05/22	
Proposed Project End Date: 31/05/22	

Please give a brief summary of the purpose of the research, in non-technical language.

Interviews will be used to discover hospitality industry workers' points of view regarding the theatrical metaphor/dramaturgical experience. Moreover, observations at several restaurants will take place to observe the employees' behaviour and aesthetic details of the establishment.

Research Ethics and Data Protection Self-Assessment

- Please consider your research proposal very carefully and check which sections are relevant in your case.
- Answer all questions within each section that is relevant to your research (Tick with an X).

Section A	To be completed by those collecting primary data from human participants
Section B	To be completed by those collecting secondary data
Section C	To be completed by all researchers
NOTE: Primary data collection: Gathering information/data directly for your research, example through measurement, observation and asking questions. Secondary data collection: Using data already published or collected by somebody else.	

Section A

		Yes/Unsure	No
A1	Will your participants be harmed in any way?	☐	☒
A2	Are any of your research participants children, persons in institutions, persons with disability, victims of crime or abuse, substance abusers, or economically or educationally disadvantaged persons?	☐	☒
A3	Are the participants in your research identifiable in some way? Choosing "No" means that all the data from your research are anonymous or have been anonymised and that there is little risk that the data can be de-anonymised and linked with identifiable individuals.	☐	☒

A4	Do you plan to collect personal data which reveals race or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, membership of a trade union, health, sex life, sexual orientation, genetic data, or biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person?	☐	☒
A5	Do you plan to employ deliberate deception (actively providing false or misleading information or passively withholding information with the intention of misleading subjects about the research)? Note: Incomplete disclosure (providing general but accurate information to participants in order to avoid the potential for biased results) DOES NOT constitute deliberate deception in terms of this question.	☐	☒
A6	Do you need permission from a cooperating institution(s), school, hospital, organization, prison, or other relevant organization or another ethics committee?	☐	☒

Section B

		Yes/Unsure	No
B1	Have the secondary data you are going to use been published?	☐	☐
B2	Do you have the written permission of the owner of the data that you may use the data for your research?	☐	☐
B3	Have the data you are going to use been collected from human participants?	☐	☐

B4	Have you obtained a copy of the consent form signed by the participants where secondary use, communication and subsequent sharing of data collected is expressly provided for?	☐	☐
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Section C

		Yes/Unsure	No
C1	Is there significant foreseeable risk that your research can cause physical or psychological harm to people or harm to the environment or be misused by terrorists or military organisations?	☐	☒
C2	Is there any conflict of interest - financial or non-financial - that could benefit you or a relative or friend or business associate?	☐	☒
C3	Is there significant foreseeable risk to you as the principal investigator?	☐	☒
C4	Is there any aspect of the proposed research which might bring the ITS into disrepute?	☐	☒

Note

Before starting data collection, copies of relevant research materials, including research proposal, consent forms (if used), questionnaires, discussion guides, stimuli, and other related documents are required to be submitted.

Principal Investigator

Supervisor



Signature

Name Angie Saliba

Date: 30/05/22

Signature

Name

Date:

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The following thesis will aim to tackle the phenomenon surrounding the service sectors of the hospitality industry. The phenomena are based around the belief that restaurants are theatres, putting on an improvised show during each service for a different audience each time. With close reference to Goffman's theory titled 'The presentation of self and impression management' where he expresses that all individuals are acting during their daily lives. Acting not in a faking who they are. On the contrary it is more about adapting to the situation accordingly so to fit into the environment and group present. In the same manner servers as well as their patrons put on a show in a restaurant. Such a show is what makes dining out an experience to remember. An event people look forward to, not simply to eat and drink but also to be entertained and catered to by professional servers alongside the other patrons of the restaurant who together make up a dining experience. Whilst enjoying the well-structured ambience and gastronomy.

As described by Lashley, 2000, the Hospitality Industry is a social phenomenon which expresses the relationship between the host and guest which includes the hospitality industry as an experience industry. In relation to the host and guest relationship, Telfer, 2000 believes that it is grounded with the perspective that they acknowledge the needing of one another whilst pleasing hospitableness (Hemmington, 2007). The above descriptions therefore state that the Hospitality Industry is constructed around the people. Delivering to guest by hosts who hence need one another. Similarly, a theatre is also dependant on people; actors, servers, directors, managers, audience and guests are who make up the performing arts and hospitality industries, respectively. Both industries are part of the entertainment and leisure sector as experience industries.

Moreover, the similarities between the two industries are far greater than one may come to assume. This is mainly evident within the food and beverage department. This department has the highest level of interaction between guests and servers. Unlike its title may suggest, it offers far more than just a meal to overcome one's hunger.

Dining out, nowadays has become quite versatile. Restaurants, Buffets and Fast-Food chains are a few of the many ways one can dine. Whether one is a tourist in a foreign country or even in one's hometown, very often if not dinning at home/hotel one prefers to visit a restaurant of some sort. A venue in which one is not only served their chosen meal but are also entertained and assisted to their every need and want and given a memorable experience by its servers, whether the guest is dinning alone, with friend or family or even a business meeting, "food has always been an important ingredient of every society and tradition, throughout the ages, and everywhere" (Sasson, 2019).

As (Mintel 2007; 2008) mentioned, statistics showed that the interaction between the customer and staff is the main reason for customers to dine at a specific place. Therefore, showing the importance of the service style and the server's skills. The short relationship built between server and guest can influence greatly the full dining experience.

"Dining is and always was a great artistic opportunity." (Lloyd-Wright 1992)

As in the above quotation by Lloyd states, dining is viewed as artistic event and such art can relate to both the guests and servers alike, playing a role in the same manner as in a performance taking place in a theatre with the venue and décor as the stage. In fact, back in the renaissance period (1590-1640) in Europe, banqueting was not simply a meal to be held at a friend's home to fill one's stomach, but on the contrary, it was a well scripted (staff, host and guests) and thought-out event, during which a venue or two were chosen well in advance and in which specific courses were served by the well-trained staff members. The venues and food served, very often ensured the displaying of the hosts tastes, wealth and kindness towards their guests, making sure they were comfortable and pleased with the experience.

"All the world's a stage and all men and women merely players. They have their exits and all their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts". (Shakespeare 1992)

The above quotation by Shakespeare (1992) expresses eloquently how all people, be they guests or servers, audience or actors or anyone in between, at some point in time during their daily life take on a role for a specific event such as a small event for a family dinner after a long and stressful day. Such a role simply adapts to the situation in order to maintain the mutual feelings shared by the other members. By this quotation it can be understood that acting is not a means of faking it or hiding one true self, it is actually simply about acting accordingly to a scenario by means of mannerisms, gestures, attire, language used and many other features

Similarly, Erving Goffman (1990) in his theory, 'The presentation of self and impression management' expresses how he believes that all society is a stage on which everyone performance many roles, projects specific impressions of themselves in order to sell their part. At work, at home or with friends each scenario is a different role one plays and does if acted out well enough, convince society, in other words convince the audience that the impression put forward is one's true self. For instance, the founder and CEO of Blue Orbit Restaurants Consulting uses a five-second likability test during recruiting so to ensure that guests will experience sincerity and positivity whilst enjoying their meal. This test may seem too short, but it is essentially how long it takes guest to decide whether their server is enjoying serving them whilst being truthful and friendly (Rankin, 2021). By using such a test employers could instantly improve their level of service as communication in all its forms is one of the main skills in hospitality.

Since the banqueting era till this very day, the process of a meal enjoyed at a restaurant entails many roles, skills and scripting. The server (actor) during service takes on a role which is mainly built around the restaurants concept and class. Such a role may be partially scripted but is tangible to and around the individual guest's (audience) wants and needs, therefore, entails a skilful use of improvisation with knowledgeable background which can vary, from gastronomy to geographical. The role of a server is to carry out one's literal duties of serving food and drinks to their guest; whilst also connecting with their guests on a mutual level so to understand how to better their experience. Even though servers are very often the first ones to be praised or critiqued regarding the dining experience. One must not overlook the involvement of many other individuals namely;

chefs, dishwashers, management, industry lecturers and industry owners. All individuals play a part, whether front of house (on stage) or back of house (off stage), each role plays an integral part in the execution of a show. Even though some of the people playing these roles may not be seen though their work is being presented to the guests. For instance, the buildings interiors and exteriors, the quality of produce used, the type of crockery, the perfectly polished silver and glassware and the plating of the food are a few examples of what makes a dining experience.

Booms and Bitner (1981) described the above within their service marketing mix as “all human actors who play a part in service delivery”. Furthermore, Bitner (1992) also tackles the theatrical metaphor from another angle, the Servicescape. Servicescape like the word landscape, is the physical environment which in this case, the environment in which service is being delivered. The venue of the dining experience and the metaphorical stage. The venue consists of many factors which influence the guest's experience such as décor and ambience which are made up of lighting, music, layout, colour tones, crockery and many more are what the guests see first. As part of the restaurant servicescape s also influential to guest.

As described in an article on a webpage titled (Waiter or Waitress, 2022) “The specific duties of servers vary with the establishment in which they work.” Mentioning the quickest dining establishments ‘casual restaurant’ in comparison to ‘fine dining’ a waiter/waitress in fine dining delivers a more detailed, personalised and leisurely treatment towards the guests, to ensure a relaxed, satisfactory, pleasurable, and memorable experience. Treating guests in such a manner may be easy as the guest communicate their wants verbally and direct whilst many a time may be non-verbal and complicated. Either way a skilled server should notice either communication, and be able to deliver in accordance with the previously understood desired pace of the respective guest. Moreover, communication goes both ways, whilst a guest may be expressing their thoughts and feelings (verbally or non-verbally) to the server so does the server towards the guest. Hence, the emphasis and importance of ‘putting on a show’, like actors when stepping onto the stage, servers walking into the dining room they take on the role leaving their

personal life behind and are readily prepared to deliver the best possible experience in the purest manner.

1.2 Research Aim, Objectives and Hypothesis or Question

The aim of this thesis is to reach an understanding of the Theatrical Metaphor/Dramaturgical experience of the service industry by focusing on the following research questions. The first research question is 'Are the guests an interactive audience or actors on an equal level to the servers' whilst the second is 'Why is it that more importance is given to the design of the product rather than to the actual service.' The equivalent of design of the product in theatre would be the props used onstage and the ambience while the equivalent of the service quality that happens during a dinner would be the show itself with servers as actors and guests as audience members.

1.3 Research Methods, Material and Structure

In order to conduct this research, data and literature was closely analysed. This was done through extensive text analysis all through the research conducted. Moreover, interviews were conducted with professionals in both the hospitality industry and the theatrical industry. Furthermore, observations at several establishments and events were carried out to observe at first hand the service style, ambience and professionalism without any pressure exerted on the staff and patrons during the dinner service to not effect in any way and observe a true ordinary service. Moreover, Harvard referencing will be used in order to reference the existing literature.

The below thesis will consist of the following chapters. In chapter one the researcher will present the aims of the research whilst introducing the literature. Secondly, the next chapter will follow with in depth reviewing of an extensive amount of available research. Moreover, in the third chapter of Methodology the researcher explains the process of selecting the respective methodes used. The forth chapter shows the results of the research conducted with in depth explanations. And Lastly, the fifth chapter consists of the final arguments and analysis with regards to the research questions and the addition of recommendations.

2. Literature Review

The second chapter consists of previously published literature relating to the topic. The researcher has put themselves in perspective and listed themes that make up this phenomenon. While an intensive period of literature reviewing, it became evident which themes emerged the most. These were subdivided into three main headings which are communication, ambience and history.

The first heading relates to the several different categories of communication. These are discursive, non-discursive and a less thought of category, listening skills. The focus on the latter category is being able to understand the guest. The second heading is ambience. This relates to the the aesthetic of the establishment from the décor to the servers' presentation and the crockery used. The ambience of a restaurant consists of more than just the physical items the guests can see. They go beyond to the extent of the temperature of the restaurant, the image the employees portray, the choice of music and sound level, as well as light settings. This means that all the guests' sense are being stimulated both directly and indirectly which leads to a harmonious connection between them and the restaurant's environment. The last and third heading is history. This tackles the origin of hospitality and dining as an experience through banqueting. In continuation, this style of entertaining was based around the necessity of food and beverage with the broader picture of putting on a show by both servers and guests. The literature mentioned below allowed the researcher to further understand the topic at hand while also helping them to structure the methodology. The formulation of the interview questions was brought out from the literature presented below.

2.1 Communication

When wondering 'what is communication'. One can find many different scholarly definitions of communication as it can be viewed from many different perspectives. The Online Business Dictionary defines the term 'communication' as a two-way interaction between two or more individuals with the aim of exchanging information by breaking down the message to understand feelings/news and ideas. This process can take place between a sender and a receiver in any social context. The former is the initiator of the process while the latter is the individual who receives, absorbs, and utilises the respective message (Fatimayin,2018).

Such an exchange can occur in many ways, which includes verbal and non-verbal. Both ways can be equally successful with passing on the respective information in order to create the needed communication channel (Husin et al., 2017).

2.1.1 Communication during service

In relation to the hospitality industry as (Powers and Riegel, 1993) stated it as a 'people business', as it is by the people and for the people. Therefore, the customer experience is greatly dependant on the hosts and staff themselves. Communication by staff members within the hospitality industry are both of an external and internal manner, such communication results in, as (Stephen Michaelides, 1991) explained "everyone . . . knows what's going on . . . [through] lines of communication that are clear, not garbled; candid, not dishonest or evasive; open, not shut; clean, not polluted."

The above quotation expresses how effective communication enables information to be passed around as intended without creating any chaos and stress. In hospitality establishments this is a necessity as employees cannot in the back areas and wonder how to tackle and issue. The industry challenges its works on a daily basis, with guests shooting requests with no hesitation. Therefore, with dedication the improvement of communication heightens competitiveness and productivity whilst pleasing guests. As like in many other markets the hospitality industry nowadays has become increasingly demanding and competitive with the vast number of establishments readily available to users (Wolvin, 1994).

Communication skills within the hospitality industry more specifically the food and beverage department are very often divided into three types of interpersonal skills. As explained in the blog (Education, 2021) the three types are verbal, non-verbal and listening skills. Verbal communication is very often politely and clearly spoken between sender and receiver (server and guest), such as a greeting, assisting with any menu knowledge and order taking. Whereas non-verbal communication is unspoken and communicated through eye contact, gestures, body language and behaviour as for instance, a smile to indicate the enjoyment of a dish

As (Mary K, 2018) mentioned that to avoid interruptions, communication within the dining room is very often about 90% non-verbal. Such non-verbal gestures may include the correct placing of cutlery on a plate to indicate whether one is done eating, covering the top of one's glass whilst being observed by a server to express that one would not like a top up and the more obvious of

non-verbal communication is a smile or nod to indicate understanding the server or happiness. Such non-verbal communication is more than just communication, it is the slightest way guests can assist servers with their duties, with the aim of receiving attentive service and being fulfilled with the overall outcome of the dining experience.

On the other hand, servers must be able to efficiently communicate non-verbally with their colleagues as well as their guests so to provide the best possible service. As explained in an online article by (BC Campus, 2019) servers should master the non-verbal communication of voice quality and tone, posture, and spatial awareness, movement and signalling each other to for instance, serve at the same time.

Similarly, as (Sudol, 2016) stated, in theatres as acting is also a means of communication, it is important that actors master their non-verbal communication. In both industries non-verbal language is primarily used to express and understand one's emotions and feelings to therefore adapt the service or show accordingly. Hence, the ability to improvise. The above two ways of communication examples are focused on the sender. Moreover, as one shifts the attention onto the receiver the main attribute is listening carefully and respectfully.

As new-borns we all instantly experience the first type of communication from our parents. Such communication includes being verbally called by our name. What people will refer to us by or as Mead describes it as, the name by which the respective child will view themselves as. More specifically the mirroring of what society sees them as. One may also explain it as a given 'role' in society, which comes with expectations such as ways of communication, verbiage used, behaviour and many others. A study published by Brain Research stated that, when a guest is addressed by their name three separate brain areas are triggered which are associated with; long-term auditory and memory processing, social behaviour, and lastly visual processing (Rankin, 2021). Therefore, a clear example of the effectiveness of verbal communication. Similarly, many sociological scholars including Goffman 1959; Burke 1945 and R. S. Perinbanayagan 1974 have discussed the metaphorical depiction of dramaturgical behaviour as a basis of human interaction by means of symbol use, to communicate the meaning of the present behavioural setting (Grove and Fisk, 1992). Furthermore, Grove and Fisk mention that dramaturgy as explained by Brissett and Edgley 1990 tackles communication from both a discursive and a nondiscursive way as well as the two put together to create the most common way of communication in society.

“Service as the stage, and goods as props” by (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) expresses the parallelism between the theatre and the hospitality industry by focusing on the term ‘Stagecraft’. The term stagecraft in drama as stated by Angelie Mae Frondoso “the stage creates its effects in spite of, and in part because of, definite physical limitations” (Frondoso, 2012). Therefore, relates to how both industries use costumes, sound, light, design and acting in coherence with the servers/actors to successfully deliver the respective performance/service. Moreover, (Wilson, 2001; and Grove & Fisk 199) focus on the servers’ costume, appearance, and mannerisms how in the hospitality industry the uniform of the servers and the required dress code for guests compliment the aesthetic of the venue and provides the needed information with respect to the given roles. The appearance and mannerisms of actors and servers are a means of expression. How as in a performance the costumes differ with characters and scenes. Hence, in the hospitality industry uniforms do also differ. Most often a uniform shows one's loyalty and dedication to performing their respective roles to their best ability therefore, making it believable to the guests. (Goffman, 1959) further supports this by explaining how everyone in society is constantly adjusting their role as to ‘give off’ the best possible impression of themselves in the specific scenario ‘the front region/ front of house/ on stage’. Such improvisation is only possible with rehearsal and practice in the ‘back regions/back of house/ backstage’. Which in turn results in as stated by (Berry, 1980) “A character’s skill is reflected in their knowledge, expertise and communication abilities, which creates unique identity of the characters and their roles and to the establishment.” With the above quotation Berry implies that when a server is professional in all aspects they are seen and given an identity whilst also giving the establishment its identity.

2.2 Ambience

In recent years several authors have argued that the service and hospitality sectors have shifted focus onto experience rather than transactional. Food and drink consumption has now become more than just meeting of necessary nutritional needs, it has become a pleasurable experience (Macht, Meininger & Roth, 2005). Or as the following authors view it as the industry based on (Jensen, 1999) the dream society, (Pine & Gilmore, 1998/9; and Schmitt, 1999) an experience economy, (Davenport and Beck, 2002) the attention economy and (Wolf, 1999) the entertainment economy. All on the basis that by time many like (Gifford, 2002) an environmental psychologist stated that an individual’s mood, behaviour and experience are influenced by the environment or setting they are in. Therefore, a focus on ambience which influences the guests experience has proven to be advantages in such a competitive industry.

In a journal titled 'Effects of Restaurant Interior Elements on Social Dining Behaviour' written by Wardono, Hibino and Koyama, 2017 they mention that Pine and Gilmore, 1998 came up with the following five design principles which if taken into consideration would create an atmosphere to be part of a memorable experience; 1) Give a theme to the experience, 2) Incorporate memorabilia, 3) Eliminating of negative cues, 4) Harmonize together impressions and positive cues and 5) Make sure to engage all the 5 senses. The above authors focus in a more in-depth manner about the restaurant's environmental conditions; such conditions include lighting, sound, and temperature which together with other guests dining at the same table (family and friends) create the appropriate atmosphere for a memorable dining experience of an individual (Wardono, Hibino and Koyama, 2017). The five above mentioned principles already suggest the theatrical elements of the environmental features of a restaurant. Furthermore, in relation to a theatre setting and its performance, as discussed by Stuart and Tax, 2004, the way a theatre engages with their audience as does the hospitality industry. They comment on features that may disturb the audience at a theatre; disruptive behaviour, awkward lighting and sound and dead air (Stuart and Tax, 2004). Therefore, showing a parallelism between the two industries as both having similar atmospheric effects on their guest/audience.

Many sociologists including (Bitner 1986; Booms & Bitner, 1982; Kotler, 1973; Kubacki, Skinner, Parfitt, & Moss, 2007; Shostack, 1977; Upah & Fulton, 1985; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985) have also spoken about such environmental influences on individuals. And associated them with the hospitality industry. For instance, (Kotler, 1973) came up with the term "Atmospherics" to explain the environmental cues which are being controlled and manipulated by the hospitality industry with the aim of influencing their guest's behaviour and experience positively. For example, a restaurant's playlist is very often on the levels of soft jazz or acoustic and at a low enough volume that it would not disturb the guests but enough to break the silence.

Other terms including "Servicescape" by (Bitner, 1992) and Stagecraft have also been a means of explaining exactly the elements and ways of how the hospitality industry's ambience is also a part of Goffman's Dramaturgical experience. "Servicescape" is as (Bitner, 1992) expresses, the connection between the tangible physical evidence of the environment (setting where the service is performed) and the guests experience (service provided).

A study conducted by (Ellen and Zhang, 2014) at a Dutch governmental company restaurant, had 149 participating guests. The aim of this study was to understand how the restaurants

servicescape influenced the guests emotionally and in turn their behaviour. By using the principal component analysis and the confirmatory factor analysis as research methods, the independent variables of the restaurant were reduced to twenty-five from thirty-three. Therefore, the findings of pleasurable and arousing experiences which influenced behavioural intentions with the influence and effects of all ambient conditions were a concrete find of this study. Moreover, had further theatrical implication discussions. Furthermore, (Grove & Fisk 1992) focus on how Stagecraft, more specifically the lights, design and layout, music, scent, and exterior and interior appearance of a respective hospitality venue enhances the audiences' perception and emotions related to the experience or as (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) explains it as; "service as the stage, and goods as props."

In terms of lighting, hospitality lighting poses multiple challenges since it is responsible for establishing the mood, tone or atmosphere for your space (Devenish, 2020). Furthermore (Devenish, 2020), mentions the following ways of how hospitality lighting effects the guests. The Universite de liege in Belgium conducted research and concluded that the colour of light influences brain processes of emotional stimuli. For instance, warmer lights create a calmer and inviting environment whereas cooler lights create alertness and productivity. Therefore, in a hospitality environment it's better to have a warmer light because, "Warmer tones are associated with dusk and dawn, as these are times when the body is usually more relaxed" (Devenish, 2020). As very often, when a performance at a theatre "when the show is about to begin, the lights will dim, signalling it is time for the audience to put aside concerns and conversations, settle into their seats, and prepare for the performance" (The Little Theatre On The Square, n.d.) Lastly with regards to lighting, one should also consider the position and style of lighting not just the colour and warmth. A this could be a result of positive feelings and encourages customer loyalty.

2.3 History

Early hospitality dates back to around 40 BC when religious and social gathering were able to use or get served hospitality services (Alaaeldin, 2021). Ancient Greece (13th -18th BC) was the time that Inns came about, guests were recognised as clients and thermal baths were included as a means of relaxation. It was then in The Roman era (8th BC -5th AD) when governmental accommodation became accessible as the Romans were the first to travel for pleasure (Jobs, 2021). Skipping to the year 1829 America, when the American architect Isaiah Rogers designed the 'Tremont Hotel' which was the first ever luxury hotel in comparison to the Inn's and taverns of the time. The Tremont Hotel was the pioneer to many firsts in hotels such as free soap, indoor

plumbing, and the reception as we know it today (Olga, 2017). Soon after hotels started opening dining rooms and bars, improving their level of service in order to accommodate their guests better and compete with the other hotels. This later, led to the well-known multistorey hotels with beautiful architecture, interior designs, and huge chandeliers (RDAEP, 2020). Before hotels came to be, travellers who managed to get to other lands by means of scarce road networks had to depend on and hope for kind locals to take them in or possibly camp. Therefore, sometimes it meant that locals had to take in strangers. Which surprisingly is associated with how the word 'hospitality' came to be. The word 'hospitality' which comes from the Latin word 'hospes' means both visitor and stranger. Hence, showing a connection with its history (Wich, 2019).

When one looks into the history of the food and beverage sector it dates back to similar times as to that of the hospitality industry. Around the 4th century BC in China, Ancient Egypt, The Roman Empire and Greece when food was catered for soldiers during their travels as well as for Christian Pilgrimages. It was then around the Middle Ages when catering spread into Europe, then it became more than just satisfying hunger but also as a means of entertainment and leisure (Scribd, 2019).

"The combination of words and food in a convivial scene gives rise to a special moment when thought and the senses enhance rather than tolerate each other" (Jeanneret, 1991)

Michel Jeanneret with the above text expresses the meaning of Banqueting in a way that depicts the senses and emotions in harmony as a result of great food, service, décor and atmosphere. When referring to theatre, theatre banquets were events which were viewed as being multi-media 'synaesthesia' spectacles. This was because all the five senses were being manipulated and correlated with artistic principles in order to create a work of art 'gesamtkunstwerk' (Berghaus, 2018). An element of the 'gesamtkunstwerk' that through time has been diminished are the odours, In Greek times all sorts of odours such as wine, fruit, honey, burning of animal flesh, grain and many others was embraced as a main of daily life including in religious rituals and theatrical banquets (Clasen et al, 1994)

Furthermore, keeping on the artistic manner of banqueting in Daniel Spoerri's artistic work in the 1960s food was used as a perishable form of art whilst eating was a participatory performance. Similarly, Emmanuel Giraud in his performances explores the possibilities of table sociability. In her article titled 'Banquet Performance Now and Then: Commensal Experiments and Eating as Mise en Scène' (Stourna, 2018) expresses that the two above mentioned artists both

experimented with the canteen like (commensality) manner of eating in their performances. The spectators had a seat at same table as the actors thus having an influence on the overall outcome of the dining experience/performance. “Eating becomes an artistic act and food an organic, ephemeral work of art” by this quotation (Stourna, 2018), explains how for only a short period of time, eating and the food itself becomes an artistic prop for the performance. She also explains how in the Greek Grimod de La Reyniere staged feasts, the participants were also artistic agents. Whilst in ‘Il pranzo di Sempronio’ by Settimelli and Corra food was also an important part in the act. It was a performance expressing a man’s 5 life stages in the form of a five-course dinner served in five separate venues (Berghaus, 2018).

All above examples of banqueting performances included the spectators either taking part in the act itself or observing it. It was normality that people from a lower class of society enjoyed watching such rituals. They also hoped to get the opportunity to play the prestigious role of for instance a ‘cup-bearer’ (Black, 1993), a role which nowadays is considered as a ‘runner’ the lowest position one could have as a server (Ritchie, 2010).

The above sub chapters closely show evaluation of the existing literatures relating to the theatrical metaphor that originally came about from Goffman’s theory called the dramaturgical experience. Which prior, as well as post Goffman, has been said and proven practiced in many different aspects of life in general as well as in the hospitality industry itself. Therefore, with close attention to the research questions, the author evaluated the literature accordingly. To understand the position of the guest and the server within the broad spectrum of the service industry and its running.

3. Methodology

3.1 Outline

When commencing research for the thesis titled ‘*Presenting the Theatrical Metaphors of the Hospitality Industry in a practical context.*’ The first step was to evaluate all research methods possibilities, both qualitative and quantitative. Upon comparing the thesis to similar existing literatures, it was found that both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used in various ways. Though with great reflections of what the researcher would like this thesis to prove, it was decided that the best approach would be qualitative research method as the aim of the thesis is to prove a phenomenon that has been in discussion and indirect practice for years. Through the

number of research methods options available the researcher believed that the best options would be Observation and Interview questions. When making the choice the advantages and disadvantages of each were taken into consideration and the main reasoning behind it all was the fact that the topic at hand was not as straight forward, and simply tackling it numerically would never prove it as valid in such an ever growing and changing industry. One needs to understand the idea behind the study in order to answer truthfully. As well as the fact that, in most cases the metaphor is unknowingly present and in practice.

3.2 Quantitative methods chosen

Observation. When observing hospitality establishments, the choice was taken to aim towards the sector with most employee to client encounters in which high levels of communication take place, therefore, the food and beverage sector. As a sector, food and beverage can be quite vast in terms of pricing, quality, execution, cuisine, style, ranking and many more. Which is why the decision to observe a number of restaurants/cafes of different levels in terms of reputation, criteria, location and size was taken. In the decision to observe these places the researcher also took the decision to not mention to the managers what element of the service will be observed as well as made sure the servers themselves did not know they are being observed. All with the aim to experience/observe the average and true level of service of the respective restaurant/cafe without any extra pressure put on the service team and hence, reducing the chances of false results. The research process took one month in order to observe all the restaurants chosen. Moreover, the process started with compiling the list of restaurants that would provide valuable data and to the research. The chosen restaurants were also distinct from one another so that the researcher is able to compare and contrast and gather as much information as possible. The next step consisted of contacting the respective restaurant managers in order to obtain permission to conduct the observation. During this process certain limitations, presented themselves. The first one was that not all the managers were able to respond in a timely manner and some did not respond at all. This meant that contacting the restaurants required some extra time. After the researcher obtained permission to observe, the managers were told

The following advantages and disadvantages were taken into consideration. The first advantage that was noted was that as a method, observation is one of the simplest forms of research as it simply depends on dedicated time to sit, observe and experience by the researcher. Secondly, Observation in no way influences the environment, the individuals being observed, or other guests present negatively or alter the experience in any way. Thirdly, being that the researcher is experiencing or observing everything at first hand, this guarantees accuracy and eliminates

falsified results. Fourthly, As phenomena cannot be measured or simply deemed true or false, observation is the ideal tool to use in such cases. Lastly, In terms of gathering research very often the cooperation of many individuals is needed. Though, in this case no cooperation is required as observation can be freely done by anyone.

The first disadvantage the researcher thought about was that not everything can be perfectly observed, the researcher has one pair of eyes and can only observe so much especially when accompanied by other guests at the table. Or possibly if given a secluded table away from the heart of the restaurant. Secondly, observation is based in a single time or possibly a set number of times, whilst neglecting the past. A verdict would be taken as a result of one service, being good or bad what happened in the past times would not be considered. Thirdly, it is time consuming for the researcher to visit a number of establishment's and dedicate enough time to observe for an average amount of time not to mention the time spent afterwards reflecting on every single detail observed to reach a conclusion. Fourthly, observation may result in being a very costly research method as for instance in this case most venues had to be visited for a meal in order to get the full experience, not to mention transportation and possibly needing nights off from work to go and dine on a Saturday night. Lastly, as observation is the researcher's soul experience, the chance of bias is higher as a result of many factors. Such as having enjoyed dining there before, having worked in the industry, knowing someone who worked there or simply a single individual's opinion which differs to someone else's.

Interview Questions. As a second research method following observation the researcher decided that to further strengthen and clarify the observations, interviewing the managers would be a solid conclusion. 10 open ended questions were constructed, allowing the interviewees to explore the topic in their own way whilst also relating to their restaurant's service and their personal opinion. When decided on the questions to present to them, it was made sure that when being asked the respective questions the manager would keep a non-biased approach and not try to accommodate the researchers' beliefs. In doing so a pilot set of questions was created and presented to a couple of my friends/family and acquaintances who did not know the title of the thesis or its aims.

Upon conducting the above research during a period of a few weeks an event came about it was put up by two Maltese companies, Teatru Malta and Moveo Dance company. The event titled 'Etikett' was "an improvised dance-theatre banquet served with a three-course dinner and flowing wine." set at a restaurant venue. It was evidently related to the respective thesis and therefore, the researcher attended and observed the event. Afterwards the decision to get in contact with

the organiser was taken. It was with the aim to get their perspective of the topic especially after having put up 'Etikett' yet have nothing to do with the hospitality industry. To do so, the questions of the existing Interview were adapted according to the event and interviewee.

Similarly, to the above interviewee, a well-known individual within the hospitality industry of Malta was considered to being a great addition to this research. This respective individual has previously owned restaurants, was also a chef for multiple years, lectured hospitality subjects and most recently decided to focus on menu development, front of house training, consulting and much more. Once again, the questions were greatly altered in relation to this interviewee

As the last interviewee an individual who is well-known and successful within the front of house region of fine-dining restaurants was picked, considering the respective individual has lately stepped away from the restaurant and is growing within the hotel as a Hotel Manager. For this interviewee the questions were only slightly altered to open the focus onto the whole hotel rather than just a restaurant.

Upon choosing interview questions as the second research method the following advantage and disadvantages were considered.

The first advantage that was considered for this research method was that open ended interview questions allow respondents to answer as openly as they wish to. allowing the interviewees to showcase their whole thought process with regards to the questions asked. Secondly, an interview is flexible in terms of how it is conducted; face- to-face interviews, call or even through a communication platform. Such as in this case that emails were used it gave the respondents plenty of time to answer the questions well. Thirdly, information collected through interview question can be rectified by the interviewee by means of self-expression and allowing them to answer in their own time and manner. Therefore, avoiding miscommunication. Fourthly, it is not at all time consuming for either parties as if done in an appropriate amount of time one can answer in a timely manner even giving time for follow-up questions or queries. Lastly, with just an average amount of questions, an interview can result in an in-depth evaluation of the respective topic at hand whilst also the possibility of thinking outside the box

On the other hand, disadvantages were also taken note of. Firstly, dedication is probably the biggest disadvantage. As even if an interviewee agrees to being interviewed, they might not care as much as they should and try to simply get it done in the quickest way possible. Secondly, another element which can influence an interview is shyness, an interviewee may not feel as

comfortable sharing certain information even if it's not about them but about the venue and others. Thirdly, certain times one can simply not show up to an interview leaving the researcher in the dark. Fourthly, judgement plays a big role in interviewing, from both the interviewee and the interviewer side as they may not understand one another fully or express themselves well. Lastly, would be the selection of interviewees, nothing and no one can guarantee that the interviewees are reliable. Therefore, causing certain unavoidable uncertainty.

In conclusion, the methodology chapter explains in detail the methods and processes used to conduct the needed research with close reference to the research questions. Moreover, the advantages and disadvantages were noted so that the researcher uses the appropriate methods in order to efficiently conduct and analysis the findings. Respective time and effort were put into making sure the methods chosen were appropriate and would lead to the desired results.

3.3 Ethical considerations

This dissertation has been inline with the ethical considerations and guidelines for a bachelor's dissertation instructed by the institute of tourism studies. To do so, the literature was properly cited with in-text referencing and a bibliography was listed with Harvard references. The literature review also showcased respect to the primary authors from whom the research was cited from.

Moreover, an ethics consideration form was presented and highlighted in the beginning of the dissertation document. Upon collecting the respective data for the thesis at hand, all ethical considerations were taken into consideration. In order to keep the participants completely anonymous, neither personal information, nor venue names or specific ranking were mentioned in the findings. Furthermore, the information obtained will be solely used for research purposes which was communicated to all interviewees beforehand. This ensures that no harm can be caused to the participants or to their respective venues. The interviewees were aware of the research aim at hand and no information was held from them, as well as no personal information was recorded. Therefore, to clarify the following results have been obtained ethically and with full permission from all participants.

4. Results, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Observation Results

As already mentioned above when choosing the restaurants/cafes to observe; the researcher made sure that the chosen places represented a versatile selection. In terms of size, cuisine, reputation, target audience, atmosphere, location and criteria. The ten venues participating were randomly picked whether to be visited as a guest or to be visited as an observer by the researcher. When visiting the respective venue, the following characteristics were closely observed.

1. The welcoming of guests
2. The friendliness and politeness of servers
3. The environment of the restaurant including atmosphere
4. The uniform and presentability
5. The verbiage used
6. The menu knowledge of different staff members
7. The table set up and restaurant skeleton
8. The attentiveness of staff
9. The adaptability of servers with different guests
10. The overall experience

Venue 1: Out of all the criteria observed. It was concluded that the highest points of the experience were the attentiveness of staff, menu knowledge, friendliness and politeness of staff, verbiage used, and table set up. These together created a very relaxing and memorable experience. Though it is to be mentioned, that there is room for improvement with the welcoming of guests, coordination of uniforms and adapting to different guests. This was because the three negatively viewed criteria created a bit of confusion to the guests and flow of service. Therefore, the element of theatricality although present the execution was not as successful by all servers or even in all areas of the restaurant as a result of large tables with loud guests.

Venue 2: As one of the smaller cafes chosen, this venue wraps up most of the criteria into one. It was a one server venue with great knowledge of menu and specials and being greatly attentive to all guests' requests. The café lacked table set up as one can simply visit for a coffee though what is worth mentioning is that the table skeleton was static, and the café could accommodate several different tables (being 2, 4, 6 or more). As a casual café, a full uniform was not present

just a simple apron would identify the server. It is believed that being that only one server was present it unintentionally created some confusion yet still a very aesthetically pleasing and friendly environment to be in. More than anything theatricality was in the aesthetic of the food and the environment itself as even the exterior suggests a good coffee or lunch spot to enjoy with friends.

Venue 3: This venue is a relatively new restaurant mainly run by Italians. Welcoming, friendliness, uniform and presentably, and the atmosphere were surely the best criteria. Some chaos was present both in terms of staff who were using a radio to communicate with each other as well as the type of guests who visited. Menu knowledge was present, yet attentiveness was lacking. It was concluded that the theatricality of service was present only during the welcoming and through the uniforms. It was more focused on a simple quick service to cater for more rather than give a full memorable experience to a respective number of guests.

Venue 4: As one of the two most highly ranked local venues for observation, this venue was observed away from guests' attention as to not disturb the experience. Many great criteria were noted including attentiveness and adaptability to guests, menu knowledge and verbiage used as well as the exclusive and themed environment and the atmosphere created. The set up and skeleton merged perfectly with the whole experience. Though important to mention is the slight confusion of the staff whilst welcoming the guests. It was done in a cluttered manner as there were four staff members as well as the open kitchen in the passageway, which might seem more intimidating to some guests rather than welcoming. Similarly, multiple times the staff joined together at the centre of the restaurant to overlook guests which simply clashed immensely with the level of refined dining. The dramaturgical experience was surely presented with an interactive order taking method and the addition of plating dishes at the table, as well as presenting scents of respective dishes.

Venue 5: The smallest venue chosen was a café at the heart of a town. When visited as a guest the atmosphere, skeleton and overall look of the place automatically pleased the researcher. Having a diverse menu with great coffee and extensive product knowledge by the server/barista seemed surprising for such a small place. Although being small it did not lack attentiveness or adaptability. Moreover, the friendliness was at utmost levels with a comforting and relaxing environment. The guests' choice of coffee beans and the serving of speciality coffee at the table created a very theatrical service with the addition of professional and friendly verbiage. Once again, a single member of staff lacking uniform in this case did not affect negatively at all.

Venue 6: A family run restaurant was chosen as it is well known with Maltese yet not as highly ranked with foreigners. Upon observing this venue, a wholesome setting and atmosphere was initially noticed with very friendly, yet not as professional servers, uniform and presentability merged well with the whole design of the restaurant. Menu knowledge was simple yet still informative especially to foreigners being that the menu is based on traditional Maltese cuisine. Moreover, the overall experience given to guests was a memorable one in terms of pleasurable food and the servers adaptability to guests' expectations. It is believed that to a certain point theatricality of service was present, but not extensively as it lacked the professionalism but still an enjoyable experience was delivered to all guests.

Venue 7: The only foreign and highest-ranking venue chosen was visited by the researcher as a guest. The ranking of the restaurant set the expectations high, confidently it is safe to say that most if not all criteria was successfully met. Situated very discretely at a hotel the venue welcomes the guests into a romantic, modern and sensible environment. The servers with friendliness and politeness greet the guests and communicate well the menu knowledge which is necessary to be understood. Theatricality, attentiveness and adaptability to guests was present start to finish from the assisting with guests' coats and knowing exactly which coat belongs to who, to instantly being served water. The show plate, centre piece of the table and set up together gave an artistic introduction to the experience whilst merging perfectly with the atmosphere. As it was in a foreign country verbiage was a greater obstacle yet tackled very well by the servers with perfect menu knowledge in English. Overall, the experience was exquisite and left the researcher pleased and entertained.

Venue 8: A second family run restaurant found in an urban location might be off putting from its exterior. Though, once the researcher stepped inside the first reaction was surely that it's an extensively decorated environment with reasonably loud music and general atmosphere. A large venue with multiple different dining areas which could accommodate the guests respective liking. The chaotic yet humble and friendly servers made the guests feel welcome and comfortable. Verbiage and theatricality used at table was surely at an entertaining level to guests with interactive opportunities for guests. Uniform was absent and at times hard to identify server from guest, yet again attentiveness was present so eliminating the issue of uniform.

Venue 9: As a reasonably new restaurant which was very quickly ranked highly, this venue has a very modern look. Its location at a marina might suggest yacht club venue, though it is actually a very versatile restaurant. Serving Mediterranean - Asian cuisine with aesthetically pleasing food

and drinks it might be assumed that not much attention is given to service. Though on the contrary however large the waiting list is the servers gave importance to each and every table, delivering informative knowledge and a polite and friendly experience. The environment and atmosphere is a lively yet still pleasant one, allowing guests to mould what kind of dining experience they would like to have. Theatrically was present in terms of uniforms and presentability, verbiage and atmosphere, though, not much interaction and extra communication opportunities were given.

Venue 10: Lastly as one of the two highest ranking local restaurants. The researcher visited this restaurant as a guest. Situated at the bastions of an old city, overlooking rural views this venue expresses simplicity and peace. The pastel tones of the décor and the white and clean table set up further compliment the view. Servers presentability and verbiage suggest friendliness and politeness yet giving the guests utmost service and importance with not much bother. Being both its dining areas (inside and outside seasonally changing) are quite uniquely set in terms of skeleton, at times servers may unintentionally bother guests as having to approach closely to their table without addressing it. Moreover, the theatricality in all aspects suggest the importance of the guests to this venue.

4.2 Interview Results

For the respective thesis nine interviews were conducted including six restaurant/cafe establishments, one event and two individuals that partake in the industry from a different perspective. Four different sets of interview question were distributed to the respective individuals according to their input in the industry.

The three individually structured interviews have given light on the subject from a different perspective to those of the restaurant managers. When reviewing the answers, the following was concluded. All the three interviewees agreed on the same answer when they were asked to decide whether the hospitality industry is a commercial or an experience industry. They stated that the hospitality industry is based on a commercial framework. However, they justified it differently. Interviewee one, stated that if the experience idea was not the case, servers would not have employment due to the lack of customers as a result of bad experience. Furthermore, this means that if a bad experience is endured, the customer will be reluctant to visiting the establishment once again resulting in commercial failure. Similarly, interviewee two stated that is it to be driven by experience yet to the limitation that it makes commercial sense. And lastly in difference to above two interviewees, interviewee three stated that the hospitality industry is marketed as an experience industry.

The following aim of the questions was to find out whether or not the interviewees have ever heard of the theatrical metaphor/ the dramaturgical experience and what they assume it is. Interviewee one and two, both stated that they had heard of the phrase/theory before and explained it clearly and successfully in comparison to its scholarly definition. On the other-hand interviewee three which is the theatre-based individual had no idea of the phenomenon and then continued to state that certain restaurants constructed their service similarly to a performance, though surely not all restaurants do so.

Servers' importance and their professional skills as well as their inter-personal skills were the basis of the following question. The interviewees were asked to express their opinion regarding their view of how influential servers are in a restaurant and its image. In their answers all three interviewees agrees that the servers' skills of all sorts can make or break the image of a restaurant as well as the guests experience. Moreover, when asked whether a restaurants ambience is more important than the service and food quality. They once again all agreed that even though ambience has a great influence on the restaurants image and investment should be put into it. The front liners (servers) are of greater importance as they are the ones constructed each guest's experience on roughly the same level of importance as the food quality.

The guests were the next tackled topic. Are the guests also putting on a show or are they simply interacting with the servers in order to create a memorable experience. When asked about the guests' input, the interviewees all expressed that yes, the guests do have an impact on their overall experience. Though, the servers still have the main roles which they adapt to each table/guest accordingly. It is then depending on the guest's interaction and friendliness that will influence the end experience, because as interviewee 3 mentioned, as in a performance without interaction the actors (servers) have an uphill battle in delivering a memorable experience.

The last set of questions related to whether there is room for improvement, in terms of the knowledge and practice of the theatrical metaphor/dramaturgical experience and the way professional servers are treated and paid in the industry. In relation to the awareness and practice of the phenomenon all interviewees agreed that it would surely improve and strengthen the industry further. Though in relation to the way servers are paid and treated t interviewee one expressed that even though wages could be improved one should also take into consideration the financial change including food cost and finally pricing. Whereas interviewee two stated that there is room for improvement. Lastly interviewee three was given he question whether they would consider offering an audition to a skilled server and with no hesitation at all answered yes, showing the true belief in skilled severs.

4.3 Restaurant Managers interviews

When conducting the interviews with the restaurants managers, the aim was to give the interviewees optimum freedom to agree/disagree with the concept and interpret it in their own way according to their restaurant and opinion.

Understanding whether to hospitality industry is viewed as being a commercial or an experience industry seemed to be a good start. Four of the six interviewees agreed it is a mix, focusing on experience whilst having a commercial and business framework. Though it was interviewee one that believes that Malta's hospitality industry is still very commercial and moving slowly towards experience, also important to mention that interviewee two totally disregards the commercial and stated it is fully an experience economy.

The following questions were related to the servers. Firstly, the researcher asked the interviewees about the importance of their servers' skills on their restaurant's image. All interviewee agreed that it has great importance, one of which also expressed that, servers should view themselves as the professionals that they are, rather than just a waiter and carrying the stigma surrounding that. Moreover, the server's skills were then classified alongside the restaurant's ambience/decor, there were a couple different opinions. Interviewee one stated that the server's skills or in other words the human touch is surely of greater importance than the décor, in fact the décor is simply a bonus to the experience created by the attentive and professional servers. Opposing this view, interviewee three expressed the great importance of ambience and décor over everything as it is the first impression on guests. And lastly, on a more middle ground, interviewee one believes that certain décor elements should be invested in at the beginning as it accommodates the guest; example, the comfort of the chair. Though with that in mind the servers' skills are the next in line having the longest running importance.

Whilst having just discussed the servers' overall input in the interviewee's respective restaurants. The researcher now asked the managers directly whether they know of the Theatrical metaphor/Dramaturgical experience phenomenon and if not to assume what it stands for. Surprisingly interviewee two who had previously stated that the hospitality industry is an experience economy, was not aware of the phenomenon along with three other interviewees. They were only two interviewees who had heard of it before this interview. Though, with the above considered all interviewees were able to assume perfectly what it is and also mentioned how it is quite self-explanatory. Furthermore, all the interviewees then, with no hesitation stated that they believe the phenomenon is present and practiced in their respective restaurants.

The Theatrical metaphor/Dramaturgical experience is not just dependent on the servers and the ambience. On the contrary the guests themselves play a huge role in the success of the

performance. Hence their experience in the respective restaurant. Therefore, the researcher included two questions to understand how the guests are viewed within the phenomenon's context. The interviewees unanimously agreed that the guests have a huge impact on their own experience as well as of the other patrons at the restaurant. It was by the second question that the interviewees were further presented with the opportunity to understand their guests place in their restaurant. In the phenomenon the guests are either viewed as an 'interactive audience' or 'actors' at equal standing as the servers. This has very often created certain confusion with regards to who has the ropes of the performance. Interviewees one and two were once again the two to differ from the rest of the six, by believing that it could go both ways as it depends on the type of guest and their intentions. The other four interviewees stated that the guests are an interactive audience whose input is very well needed as without it the servers have a challenge to entertain and please the guests accordingly.

Switching the focus back onto the servers, the interviewees were asked regarding recruitment; what they look for at interview level and whether they take into consideration interpersonal skills such as the ability to empathise, verbal and non-verbal expressions both with guests and other servers. Out of all questions asked this was the most differently answered one. With the two most highly ranked restaurant expressing how they prefer to mould the servers themselves. Therefore, tend to opt for lower skilled ones yet, still indirectly take interpersonal skills into consideration as they make sure an applicant wants to learn and is possible to be taught. Interviewee five strongly believes in face-to-face interviews and fitting in with the rest of the team and the restaurant. They also mentioned the current problem faced by many managers in the Maltese hospitality industry, which is finding applicants with a good grasp of the English language. The remaining three strongly supported that, interpersonal skills should be considered at interview level.

Lastly, as closure to the interviews, the researcher asked the following two questions to summarize and understand each interviewee's opinions and beliefs surrounding their servers and the phenomenon. Once again, the Theatrical metaphor was tackled on the basis of whether the interviewees believe it should be given more importance or not in Malta. All interviewees believed so, and supported their answers by stating that it would surely be beneficial to the industry and would help with training and prior to job exposure it should also be present at educational levels. The next question asked the interviewees if they think the professionals of the industry are fairly paid and treated for the work they do. All the interviewees stated that there is much room for improvement in wages as well as treatment especially when one keeps in mind that industry's

unorthodox hours, type of labour, lengths of a shift and the extent they go to accommodate guests.

As a conclusion, the researcher believes that through the observations and interviews conducted. A lot of first-hand information from the Maltese Hospitality industry was gathered, regarding the Theatrical metaphor/Dramaturgical experience both for and against has been gathered. In order to support, the overall motif of the respective thesis at hand.

4.4 Analysis

The aim for this research was to understand how the Theatrical Metaphor/Dramaturgical experience of service is put in practice and understood. Furthermore, the main focus was on the following two research questions, 'Are the guests an interactive audience or actors on an equal level to the servers?' and 'Why is it that more importance is given to the design of the product (props and ambience) rather than to the actual service (show)?'

Explain the metaphor (compare servers and actors, etc)

With regards to the first research question which tackles the guest's role in the restaurant, whether they are interactively assisting their servers with the performance or are also actors at equal level to the servers. By relating two interview questions to be about guests as well as through the conducted observations. The interviewees were firstly asked whether they believe the guests have an impact on the overall dramaturgical experience and the responses all stated they have a great impact. It is understood that the majority with four out of six stated that they view the guests as interactive whilst the other two stated that there are both types of guests. Hence, this gives a clearer understanding that certain guests might have different intentions which can impact the whole restaurant experience. Though, it is still the servers who have the overall control of the service outcome which is equivalent to the performance. As mentioned in the literature review communication within a restaurant environment tends to be mostly non-verbal. Therefore, this communication happens through means of gestures, eye contact, and the respective positioning of cutlery. The guests are interacting with the servers to efficiently cater for their needs and deliver a smooth and memorable service. Moreover, in a performance such as a Christmas panto, the actors depend greatly on their audience's interaction in order to deliver a comedic and memorable show. This happens because the actors demolish the fourth wall and encourage audience participation.

Through observation the researcher understood better that the venue itself effects the guest's interaction as well. A quiet restaurant with numerous tables of two, overlooking a beautiful landscape tended to influence the guest's mood into being relax and calm, whilst another restaurant which possibly cater for larger groups seated inside, created a louder environment. In both scenarios the servers are aiming to deliver the same memorable experience, though with opposing circumstances, it depends on the guest to assist the servers accordingly. As no single server can get the attention of a large table to explain a dish whilst all are chattering between themselves.

Switching focus onto the ambience of restaurants. The second research question aims to understand why in most restaurants and catering establishments all round the world, the décor and ambience are the highest investment for the owners. Whilst when it comes to recruitment of servers only the bare minimum time is dedicated just before opening. It is understandable that restaurateurs have to put thought and money into decorating their restaurants, though through experience and the research conducted above it is evident that excessive money is dedicated to décor and ambience whilst comparing the wages offered to truly professional servers. The researcher asked the interviewees to state whether ambience in their restaurants is more important than their servers' skills. The overall responses were that even though certain investment should be put into ambience, it should surely not be given higher priority than that of having well trained and skilled servers. Such investments may include the lighting of the restaurant. Some might not realise how influential lights are in a restaurant. Though, as mentioned by Devenish, 2020 warmer tones of lighting in restaurants create the feelings of calmness and relaxation as it symbolises dusk and dawn. Whilst colder lights are more associated with alertness and productivity. Secondly when asked about their view on the wages and treatment of servers, all interviewees expressed that they would like to see an improvement in wages and treatment across the board of hospitality. This is because the majority of the industry workers are simply not treated well enough for all the labour, overtime, working feast and much more.

5. Final Arguments

The theatrical metaphor is about the hospitality industry, more specifically the service sector. This creates a focus on the food and beverage department in close relation to the relationship between guests and servers. Dining at face value has become an experience rather than a necessity as a means of entertainment and pleasure. Other features that complement the experience include the ambience and the theme of the restaurant. The motivation behind this research is that this phenomenon is being practised day-to-day however, it is not identified. This phenomenon has the potential to be trained and made aware so that the overall quality of the food and beverage industry, both for the guest and the servers, in the Maltese Islands can improve.

The research aimed to uncover the correlation between restaurant service and theatre performance which is summarized in the theatrical metaphor /dramaturgical experience. Moreover, the two research questions that were answered were whether the guests are an interactive audience or actors at equal levels to servers and if the ambience is more important to the restaurant's image in comparison to servers' skills.

5.1 Conclusions

In conclusion of the above research, one main theme arises, and that is the lack of awareness there is around the theatrical metaphor/dramaturgical theory. One of the obstacles that presented itself was the lack of scholarly literature that one can access. Furthermore, when discussing the phenomenon with the interviewees, at first, they were not aware that it exists as a phenomenon, yet they assumed what it is perfectly and simply regarded it as a common practice of the food and beverage industry. Although it is common practice as it happens naturally at the workplace, when dissecting the phenomenon further, one can note that knowledge about it can be very helpful. Furthermore, as mentioned above the interviewees assumed what the phenomenon entails correctly, and they also stated that it is self-explanatory.

From the interview answers, it was expressed that professionals as well as new comers in the industry would find it beneficial to gain knowledge on the phenomenon and also use it as a framework for training and management. This shows that there is a thirst for new understandings

and it to be introduced into the workplace. This would be possible if the Theatrical metaphor/dramaturgical theory is introduced at educational level and even at a managerial level. Managers would be able to train their employees while following the principles of the theory in order to make their employees aware of the efficient way to perform their duties at the workplace. Moreover, introducing this metaphor would shift the dynamic of how servers are looked at. This is because there is a stigma attached to servers as being simply servants or teenagers with a summer job. They are very often not treated as the professionals they are, on the contrary barely respected as humans equal to the ones paying for the services. Therefore, by introducing and instilling a certain standard it will challenge the norms and mentality of this perspective to diminish it.

At the beginning of the research, aims were created. Due to the research conducted and existing literature that was analysed, data was collected that allowed both research questions to be answered. The first one the researcher asked whether the guests dining at a restaurant are considered as an interactive audience or actors equal to servers. It was concluded that the guests are an interactive audience. The interviewees also agreed with this and those who did not fully agree stated that both kinds of guests exist as certain guests may have the intention to test the server's knowledge and skills rather than focusing on having a good experience. The second research question aimed to understand why the ambience is invested in and given more importance than a server. The answer for this question is that certain decorations for the restaurant should be of a certain calibre such as the chairs need to be comfortable, and sturdy and the guests want to sit in an aesthetically pleasing environment. However, at the end of the day, all interviewees agreed that the servers are more important to their restaurants image than the decorations. This is because they are the first interaction they have and are in constant face-to-face interaction with the guests, and they are representing the company. They need to be able to answer all the questions that are asked about the menu while also understanding the guest's demeanour to fully tend to their expectations.

5.2 Recommendations

As a recommendation to further understand this phenomenon more research should surely be done. As mentioned above, the main implication that was met with during the research was the lack of scholarly literature such as journals, dissertations and articles. However, there were certain articles that tackled this metaphor in one way or another, and they mentioned its importance, yet it was not the main topic of the article. Moreover, introducing the metaphor at educational level

and in the workplace would allow restaurants to become fully aware of what the metaphor entails. This would allow servers to be more confident in their work and would possibly interest more individual who don't try the industry because of the stigma around it. This is because it can be the introduction of proper training at the workplace where servers are carefully monitored and shown the correct ways with accordance to the restaurant, with the aim of improving the level of service across the board in the hospitality industry and further strengthening guests' experiences. Lastly, introducing this metaphor to the tourism industry would also allow Malta's restaurants' overall quality level to reach an even higher standard. In continuation, this topic allows Malta to further open up to a different tourism niche which is made up of food and beverage enthusiasts and professionals. This could also possibly aid Malta to increase overseas exposure while attracting a unique client segment and providing an advantage to Malta's hospitality professionals.

5.3 Evaluation, Reliability and Validity

For all the above research to be conducted and finalized, peer-reviewed articles and journals were closely analysed. Moreover, the credible articles and journals were given priority while the researcher was putting forward their views in order to tackle the respective research questions in a proper manner. Furthermore, the research done was mainly focused on Malta's food and beverage establishments, especially when seeking perspectives and understanding of other professionals of the hospitality industry. This was also done when data was collected from the theatre professional's point of view with the aim on getting an outsiders view so to avoid biases. This research was based on qualitative methods which were shown through mainly observation methods. This further allowed this research to increase its validity and reliability while efficiently fulfilling its aims which were originally mentioned in the first chapter and continued to be presented throughout the chapters found above.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 : Restaurant Managers Interview Questions

Q1. Do you believe the hospitality industry is a commercial or an experience industry?

Q2. What impact do you think your servers (skills) have on your restaurants image?

Q3. Have you ever heard of the theatrical metaphor / dramaturgical experience, if so could you explain it and if not what would you assume it is?

Q4. Do you believe that the dramaturgical experience is present in your restaurant in any way?

Q5. Do you believe that the decor (ambience) of the restaurant impacts your guests more than the servers and service quality?

Q6. When recruiting new members of staff do you take into consideration their interpersonal skills such as communication skills etc...

Q7. In relation to the dramaturgical experience how much of an impact do you think the guests have on the experience?

Q8. Do you think the guests are an interactive audience or actors (equal to the staff)?

Q9. Do you think that more importance should be given to the dramaturgical experience in Malta?

Q10. Do you believe that the professional servers in the industry in general are fairly paid and treated for the work they do?

Appendix 2 : Hospitality industry professional Interview Questions

Q1. Do you believe the hospitality industry is a commercial or an experience industry?

Q2. What impact do you think servers (skills) have on a restaurants image?

Q3. Have you ever heard of the theatrical metaphor / dramaturgical experience, if so could you explain it and if not what would you assume it is?

Q4. Do you believe that the dramaturgical experience is present in Maltese restaurant in any way?

Q5. Do you believe that the decor (ambience) of the restaurant impacts guests more than the server's skills and service quality

Q6. During recruitment of new members of staff do you believe that interpersonal skills such as communication skills should be taken into consideration?

Q7. In relation to the dramaturgical experience how much of an impact do you think the guests have on the experience?

Q8. Do you think the guests are an interactive audience or actors (equal to the staff)?

Q9. Do you believe that more importance should be given to the dramaturgical experience in Malta?

Q10. Do you believe that the professional servers in the industry in general are fairly paid and treated for the work they do?

Appendix 3 : General Manager Interview Questions

Q1. Do you believe the hospitality industry is a commercial or an experience industry?

Q2. What impact do you think your employees (skills) have on your hotel and restaurants image?

Q3. Have you ever heard of the theatrical metaphor / dramaturgical experience, if so, could you explain it and if not what would you assume it is?

Q4. Do you believe that the dramaturgical experience is present in your hotel and restaurants in any way?

Q5. Do you believe that the decor (ambience) of the hotel and restaurant impacts your guests more than the employees and service quality?

Q6. When recruiting new members of staff do you take into consideration their interpersonal skills such as communication skills, empathy etc...

Q7. In relation to the dramaturgical experience how much of an impact do you think the guests have on their overall experience?

Q8. Do you think the guests are an interactive audience or actors (equal to the staff)?

Q9. Do you think that more importance should be given to the dramaturgical experience in the Maltese hospitality industry?

Q10. Do you believe that the professional servers/ employees in the food and beverage sector as well as the hospitality industry in general are fairly paid and treated for the work they do?

Appendix 4 : Etikett Interview Questions

Q1. From your perspective do you believe that the Hospitality industry is a commercial or an experience industry?

Q2. Have you ever heard of the theatrical metaphor/ dramaturgical experience?

Q3. In your opinion are a theatre and a restaurant alike in ways?

Q4. Do you believe that servers should be skilled on an interpersonal level like performers?

Q5. When visiting a restaurant do you appreciate the ambience, and would you say that it is more important than the service quality and servers' skills?

Q6. As an individual who has nothing to do with the hospitality industry would you say that at recruitment level, communication skills should be taken into consideration?

Q7. With the theatrical metaphor/dramaturgical experience in mind how much of an impact do you think the guests have on the full experience.

Q8. Would you say guests are an interactive audience or actors (at an equal level with the servers)?

Q9. As an individual with a theatrical background would you appreciate seeing more importance given to the dramaturgical experience from the hospitality side? Possibly more events like 'Etikett' being put up?

Q10. If you had to be dining out and your respective server showcases good communication skills as well as interpersonal ones. Whilst making your experience a memorable one with all adaptations and improvisations put forwards with regards to giving you the best possible experience. Would you consider offering them an audition?

