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EPQ: Exploring the dimensions and outputs of experiential purchase quality

By

Mark Jay Pelletier

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Marketing
in the Department of Marketing, Quantitative Analysis, and Business Law

Mississippi State, Mississippi

May 2015

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2015

EPQ: Exploring the dimensions and outputs of experiential purchase quality

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Experiential purchases represent a unique, and exceedingly popular, type of marketing behavior. The current research looks to explore and empirically uncover the dimensions that form, and outputs the stem from, high quality experiential purchases through inductive, qualitative analysis ultimately leading to quantitative testing of an original empirical model. Three studies are presented. In Study 1, depth interviews are conducted and emerging themes are coded using an established grounded theory design. In Study 2, a critical incident survey, constructed from the insight uncovered in Study 1, is administered, analyzed and coded. Finally, in Study 3, an empirical model of experiential purchase quality (EPQ), driven by Study 1 and 2, is assembled and hypotheses, guided by self-enhancement theory are constructed. The model is then tested across three different experiential time horizons. In addition, a multi-group analysis is performed in order to examine differences in structural relationships across the time horizons.

This research offers insight into the value sources of experiential purchase quality and the outcomes that stem from these unique types of purchases. Dimensions of

experiential purchase quality are identified and empirically examined. It is also determined that while social congruence with others adds to experiential quality in longer experiences, it is not a significant dimension of experiential quality in shorter experiences. The impact of servicescape quality on experiential purchase quality is at its highest in two-to-three day experiences, suggesting that high quality servicescape management may have limited returns for longer experiences. In terms of experiential outputs, self-attachment in high-quality experiential purchases drives the behavior stemming from these purchases. One of the most enlightening findings revealed through this research is the strong relationship between experiential purchase quality and nostalgic memories of the experience, and how that nostalgia drives behaviors beneficial to the experiential firm. Finally, fantasizing about the experience in the future is seen as a complex construct that drives positive outcomes for the firm, but is itself negatively impacted by experiential purchase quality. Managers of experiential firms may be able to operationalize this self-attachment through promotional efforts directed at customer engagement and by focusing on the customer's nostalgia toward the experience.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Meg, the most wonderful person in the world, the sunshine in my life, and the reason that I smile everyday.

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My committee was instrumental in the construction of this dissertation. Joel Collier has been a wonderful chair and mentor. No matter how often I burst into his office or sent him a panicked email, he always treated me with a respectful and honest demeanor and required me to demand more from myself than I thought possible. I would also like to thank Nicole Lueg, Jason Lueg, Colleen Sinclair, and Kevin Shanahan for their assistance and guidance throughout this entire process. I am very proud of how all the committee members are represented in the final work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

An experiential purchase is made for the primary intention of living through a personal, memorable, and sensational event, or series of events, that will live on only in the memory of the consumer (Carter & Gilovich, 2010; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). Examples of experiential purchases include movies, theme parks, concerts, cruises, and vacations. These experiences are presented to the customer as events that last for a predetermined amount of time. For instance, a movie promises a certain intensity of experience generally lasting for about two hours, whereas a Caribbean cruise offers a differing level of intensity and could last for weeks. According to a 2013 Forbes industry report, experiential purchases are increasing in popularity worldwide. Although global experiential purchase behavior is nearly impossible to measure in its entirety, the Forbes 2013 and a PriceWatershouse 2014 industry report estimate worldwide revenue generated by consumable entertainment media, tourism and theme park markets alone exceeded well over \$3 trillion.

As the experience exists solely in the mind and memories of the consumer after consumption takes place, the overall quality of an experience is contingent on the experience being memorable to the consumer (Carter & Gilovich, 2012; Tynan & McKechnie 2009). Given this, experiential purchase quality is defined as the consumer's

evaluation of the components of the experience being superior in their ability to create lasting memories (Zeithaml, 1988). The experience provider's ability to maximize the returns of their experiential offerings wholly depend on the ability of the provider to produce, offer, and deliver an experience of high quality. High quality experiential purchases have been shown to not only financially benefit the firms providing the experience, but also to benefit consumers purchasing the experience in many different ways. In terms of experience providers, experiences of high quality have been shown to lead to benefits such as increased positive word-of-mouth (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Schouten, McAlexander & Koenig, 2007), increased levels of brand attachment (Orth, Stöckl, Veale, Brouard, Cavicchi, Faraoni, Larreina, Olsen, Rodriguez-Santos, & Santini, 2011), and increased levels of repurchase intention (Bigne, Andreu, and Gnoth, 2004; Bigne Mattila & Andreu, 2008). For consumers, high quality experiential purchases have been shown to lead to increased levels of happiness, (Dunn, Gilbert & Wilson, 2011; Van Boven, 2005), increased perception of one's own social value (Caprariello & Reis, 2013; Pieters, 2013) and increased sense of self-identification (Carter & Gilovich, 2012).

Given all of the benefits that managers could conceivably extract from the study of the factors leading to quality experiential purchases, it is curious that the majority of recent empirical scholarship regarding experiential consumption has come from the area of social psychology. However, much of the early work regarding experience and its role in consumption stems from the marketing literature stream. This fact is noteworthy as experience has been an often discussed and frequently debated aspect of marketing since Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) identified the pursuit of fantasies, feelings, and fun as a primary motivation for consumption activities. Over time, however, the term

“experience” has become somewhat fractured in the marketing literature and the definition of experience in a marketing context “lacks clarity”(Tynan & McKechnie, 2009 p.502). Marketing scholars such as Holbrook (2006) have also expressed disappointment with the ability of modern measurement techniques to effectively measure the highly abstract concepts present in experience. Many highly cited and influential experiential marketing conceptualizations, such as Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), Pine and Gilmore (1998), and Schmitt (1999) are exclusively conceptual in nature. Other works, such as Schmitt (2008) and Novak, Hoffman, and Yung (2000) have looked not at purchased experiences themselves, but rather the experience of a customer in differing retail environments. Despite, or perhaps because of, this muddled picture of marketing, the role of experience in marketing is seen as the top research priority for marketing researchers in the 2014-2016 Marketing Science Institute report.

The current research aims to clarify experiential consumption in the marketing literature by utilizing concepts and theories stemming from social psychology. Recent empirical work from social psychology explores fundamental differences between consumption of material purchases, defined as tangible objects which are kept in the consumer’s possession, and consumption of experiential purchases, defined as events that live on in the consumer’s memory (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). Studies involving this dynamic have explored the differing levels of buyer’s remorse stemming from these two types of purchases (Rosenzweig & Gilovich, 2010), and the differing levels of happiness produced by these two types of purchases (Carter & Gilovich, 2010; Van Boven, 2005). One the most impactful findings from this stream of research is the discovery that purchased experiences of high quality, become strongly attached to the purchaser’s sense

of self. This self-attachment motivates consumer behavior after the purchase is made (Carter & Gilovich, 2010, 2012; Van Boven, 2005; Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). The factors that make up these highly memorably experiential purchases leading to self-attachment, however, have not been explored from either the social psychology or marketing research streams.

Significance of Study

From a theoretical perspective, understanding the factors that comprise experiential purchase quality will provide insight into a unique and understudied category of marketing. Experiential purchases are different in many ways than purchases of commodities, products, and services (Caprariello & Reis, 2013; Holbrook, 2006; Holbrook & Hirshamn, 1982; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Van Boven, 2005). An empirical examination of experiential purchase quality will add to the current extant knowledge for these types of purchases and help to further define and delineate this popular, but understudied, category of purchase.

In addition, the empirical research being performed in social psychology can be used to illuminate a marketing-based study examining the managerial benefits to be gained through the understanding of what factors go into an experiential purchase of high quality. Cross-disciplinary knowledge is an indispensable and important ingredient in all research disciplines and any interdisciplinary arguments over ownership of a domain is not beneficial to the scientific growth of knowledge (Bagozzi, 1984; Deshpandé, 1999). However, the fact that marketing research needs to address not only academic, but also managerial knowledge creation (Hunt, 2010), suggests that managers of experience-dependent firms would greatly benefit from a marketing-based study that explores factors

of experiential purchase quality and includes useful and actionable managerial implications as a part of its core.

The social psychology stream of research has shown that high quality experiences become attached to the purchaser's sense of self (Carter & Gilovich, 2012). This finding is of particular importance for marketers, as this type of attachment has been shown to drive several behaviors beneficial to the firm. For example, concepts such as self-attachment and memory, identified as outcomes of experiential purchases in the social psychology stream, have been identified as functions of nostalgia (Havlena & Holak, 1991; Holak & Havlena, 1998; Sierra & McQuitty, 2007, Stern, 1992). However, a great majority of current nostalgia literature looks at distant memories and the emotional melancholy these memories produce. Marketing nostalgia studies have primarily explored how nostalgia motivates attitudes and behaviors towards material products and brands (Akhtar, 1996; Bassin, 1993; Braun-LaTour, LaTour & Zinkhan, 2007). Nostalgia in an experience context could conceivably be a stronger driver in experiential purchases than in material purchases due to the increased levels of emotion (Hoffman & Novak, 2009; Kwortnik & Ross 2007) and the memorable nature of the experience (Carter & Gilovich, 2012). These types of outcomes for experience, however, remain unexplored.

The current research explores this concept and empirically uncover the dimensions that form high quality experiential purchases by utilizing a proven grounded theory design, as identified by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Corbin and Strauss (2008). This process allows for theory development grounded in inductive data analysis. First, depth interviews are conducted and then analyzed. Emerging themes from these depth interviews are then coded and recorded. Second, a critical incident survey, grounded in

the data uncovered in the depth interviews, is administered and analyzed using the same open, axial and selective coding technique. Next, an empirical model of experiential purchase quality (EPQ), conceptualized as a second-order construct, is assembled.

Relationships in the empirical model are presented and hypothesized. Hypotheses concerning outcomes stemming from experiential purchase quality are developed through utilization of self-enhancement theory (Baumeister, 1998). Self-enhancement theory has been used extensively in social psychology and marketing research in order to understand attitudes and behaviors stemming from the need to strengthen one's view of the self and heighten one's own self-esteem. As high quality experiential purchases are closely attached to one's identity (Carter & Gilovich, 2010, 2012), self-enhancement theory allows for hypotheses to be developed concerning post-experience outcomes.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is to better understand the inputs that form, and the outputs that stem from high quality experiential purchases. While there have been studies looking at the quality of certain experiential purchase situations (Swanson & Timothy 2011, Wakefield & Baker 1998), these studies have been purposely conducted from a strictly phenomenological, or destination-specific, standpoint and thus have low levels of generalizability across all experiences. For the current research, the factors that go into experiential purchases of all types will be explored in order to not only identify the dimensions that contribute to experiential purchases of high quality, but also to gain an understanding of the outcomes stemming from high quality experiential purchases. This holistic approach is in line with concepts such as the holistic experience process (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2004; Richins, 1997; Schmitt, 1999; Tynan & McKechnie,

2009) and will allow for the examination of not only the factors and outcomes stemming from the experience, but also the comparison of these measures across experiences of differing time and intensity horizons.

Discovery of an appropriate method for the measurement of experiential purchase quality is required as existing measurements for service quality, including SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) and SERVPERF (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), are not conducive to experience quality measurements (Maklan & Klaus, 2011, 2012). In addition to economic distinctions between services and experiences being distinct (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009), the emotion stemming from the experience does not allow for proper quality measurements using traditional satisfaction expectancy-disconfirmation measurements (Baumgartner, 2002; Koenig-Lewis & Palmer, 2004; Kwortnik & Ross, 2007; Phillips & Resenzwig & Gilovich, 2003). Experience quality measurement from a holistic standpoint needs a unique quality measurement developed with account for the *emotional aspects* that are a crucial component of the experience.

This understanding of experiential purchase quality is of particular importance for experience providers as experiential purchase management is something of a high-risk, high-reward proposition. Highly successful, highly memorable experiences that are successful can produce reliable, strong financial returns for experience providers. For example, according to their 2013 shareholder report, The Walt Disney Company reported \$2.2 billion in theme park profits. Also, according to movie industry site BoxOffice.com, since its release in 1975, Universal has made over \$2 billion (adjusted for inflation) from the movie Jaws. However, experiences of low quality have been shown to produce exponentially lower satisfaction levels and higher levels of negative word-of-mouth than

equivalent goods purchases (Nicolao, Irwin & Goodman, 2009). For example, The Walt Disney Company lost over \$200 million on only one failed movie, John Carter. Disney has also lost considerable money at its Disneyland Paris theme park due to not understanding the experiential expectations of the European market (Matusitz, 2010). As of spring 2014, Disney operates the Disneyland Paris with \$1.9 billion in debt and has lost \$292 billion from 2006-2011 (Sylt, 2013). Understanding what factors go into high quality experiences can help experience providers avoid expensive and potentially crippling experiential failures.

Organization

This dissertation is organized as follows: first, a review of literature regarding the concept and evolution of experience in marketing, as well as experience as an extension of the self is conducted. Next, two qualitative studies are performed. The first study is series of fourteen depth interviews with individuals discussing their interpretations of self-reported, high quality experiential purchases. The purpose of the first study is to better understand the makeup of high quality experiences, including post-experience factors such as how these respondents shared their experience with others, and how their memory of the experience may have changed over time. In an attempt to generalize the findings of study one to a broader group of consumers, a second qualitative critical incident technique (CIT) study, based on the findings of the study 1 depth interviews, is conducted. This second study consists of a questionnaire containing four open-ended questions, designed to further isolate inputs and outcomes of high quality experiential purchases. The collective data from the interviews from study one and the CIT responses from study two are analyzed. This analysis, along with the literature review, leads to the

identification of key input and outcome variables and hypothesized relationships between these variables as they relate to experiential purchase quality.

In order to empirically examine the relationships, a conceptual model is proposed. This model is based on the findings from studies one and two, as well as relevant literature. A survey containing measures of key constructs is created in order to test the relationships and relative influence of these constructs as they either contribute to or stem from a high quality experiential purchase. A pretest of the data is then conducted. An exploratory factor analysis is performed on the pretest data in order to test for internal consistency and unidimensionality. In addition, a confirmatory factor analysis is conducted in order to establish convergent and discriminant validity. A final data collection consisting of three experiential time horizons grounded in the qualitative data is conducted. The data is then analyzed, hypothesized relationships present in the model are examined and a multi-group comparison is conducted in order to explore differences present in the model across the time horizons. The results of this study, as well as a discussion regarding the results are presented, theoretical and managerial implications are provided and future research and limitations of the study are discussed.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun

To more fully understand the current knowledge and state of experiential purchases in the academic literature, it is essential to review the concept of experience itself, including how and why the concepts surrounding experience became such an influential topic in marketing scholarship. Holbrook (2001, p.178) states “I believe that every consumption event provides some sort of experience and this has been true since the time of (say) Adam and Eve.” While the study of experience in the consumption process may very well go back as far as Holbrook (2001) suggests, the modern view of experiential marketing can be traced back to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) which identifies the role that experience plays in the consumption process. Because of the implications and impact of the concepts presented within, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) is the considered the seminal piece on experience-based consumption.

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) take a position and viewpoint concerning the motivation behind the consumption process that is in contrast to the analytical and logic-based consumption theories of the time, such and Howard and Sheth’s (1969) bounded rationality approach and Bettman’s (1979) information processing model. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) posit that the consumption process does not simply follow the rules of logical and dispassionate process of exchange, but is rather guided by the consumer’s

pursuit of fantasies, feelings and fun. According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), logic-based theories are valuable as they provide a compulsory understanding of the consumption process, however they are incomplete, as they do not take the consumer's emotional motivations into account. Consumption is not presented as a process of unemotional inputs and outputs, but is rather guided by the consumer's need and desire for emotion, self-expression, playfulness and excitement. This viewpoint of the consumption process is presented as the "experiential view" of marketing. A model of the experiential view was also designed and presented. This model places more abstract (and therefore more difficult to measure) components such as personality, creativity and daydreaming directly next to more traditional components such as tangible benefits and socioeconomic status.

Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) primary categories of fantasies, feelings and fun are very much a reframe of the cognitive, affective and conative aspects found in the hierarchy of effects model presented in Lavidge and Steiner (1961). Fantasies are the cognitive aspect of the process where the customer imagines about the consumption process and envisions how the experience can take place in different contexts, with different people, or with more information (Holbrook, 2001; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). This fantasizing aspect of the experiential view is later redefined in Schmitt (1999) as the customer sensing or thinking about the consumption process. In later experiential literature, the fantasizing aspect of experience has been seen in research exploring video game players rethinking how they could have approached a certain aspect of the game (Molesworth, 2009) and movie viewers replaying the movie in their minds and imagining themselves as a participant in the story

(Hackley & Tiwsakul, 2006). Fantasizing an outcome in some way helps to not only reduce the uncertainty associated with a purchase, but also to increase the desirability of making a purchase (Lee & Qui, 2009).

Feelings, the second aspect of the experiential view, describe the emotional affect that stems from the experience. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) present a category of feelings as not simply just one's attitude about the consumption, but one's awareness of much deeper and more abstract emotions. Emotions, such as love, hate, fear, and lust, described in the experiential view were generally not measured or discussed in the consumer-based research of the time. This emotional component of the experiential view has driven much of the influential research in the experiential marketing literature stream. Pine and Gilmore (1998) later expand on this emotional aspect of experience, and present the emotional sensation provided as the primary driver of demand for experiential purchases. Schmitt (1999) makes the separation from product-based marketing to experience-based marketing based on the fact the experience-based marketing is driven by an emotional component. In addition, Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) detail the emotional component of an experiential purchase as a principal driver of experiential purchases bringing more joy to consumers than material purchases.

Emotion-based constructs, such as those found in an experience, tend to be more abstract and complex and as such do not necessarily follow the same anticipated patterns as cognitive-based constructs (Edell & Burke 1987; Holbrook 2006; Zajonc, 1980). For example, Phillips and Baumgartner (2002) explore the role of emotions in the satisfaction process and find that when strong emotions come into play, the predictive power of the traditionally dominant expectancy-disconfirmation model of satisfaction (Oliver, 1980) is

negatively affected. This is further seen in Koenig-Lewis and Palmer (2002) who demonstrates that emotional response to an experience is a better predictor of constructs such as repurchase intention and positive word-of-mouth than is overall satisfaction with the experience. The emotional element of an experience, and the difficulties that it can bring in terms of measurement, is one of the main reasons measures designed for customer experience quality that take customer emotion into consideration, such as those presented by Maklan and Klaus (2011), Lemke, Clark and Wilson (2011) and Kim, Cha, Knutson and Beck (2013), have more explanatory power than traditional product or service quality conceptualizations (Maklan & Klaus 2012, 2012).

The final component of the Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) experiential view is fun, which is characterized as being behavioral or connotative in nature. In the experiential view, consumption is not simply done in order to fulfill wants and needs, but the act of consumption is performed because the consumer desires to extract some sort of hedonic enjoyment from it. Although this may seem a pedestrian thought for modern marketing research, hedonic enjoyment as a primary aspect of and motivator for consumption was not present in much of the consumer research of the time. The fun component of the experiential view has influenced prominent marketing research such as Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994) who develop an oft-cited scale for shopping experience as either utilitarian (defined by the usefulness) or hedonic (defined by the fun derived), McAlexander, Shouten and Keonig (2002) who explore the hedonic benefits a consumer derives from a brand community which positively transfer to the brand, and Venkatesh, Thong and Xu (2012) who expound upon the aspect of fun as it relates directly to a user's desire to adopt a new technology. These recent interpretations of fun

in the consumption process demonstrate that the concepts behind the Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) experiential view have been expanded upon and have evolved over time.

The Experience Economy

Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Gilmore and Pine (1999) are two of the articles that expand on the ideas presented in Holbrook and Hirschman (1982). Pine and Gilmore (1998) conceptualize the “Experience Economy” by taking ideas presented in the experiential view and state that experience should not just be considered as a component of the marketplace, but rather experience itself drives the modern marketplace. Pine and Gilmore (1998) suggest the concepts behind traditional experiential purchases, such as theme parks and theatre performances, can be transferred to product and service-based business in order to transmit the positive affect stemming from an experience to a retail location. Retail locations that are heavy in atmospherics, such as Niketown and The Sharper Image are presented as examples of companies engaging in The Experience Economy. Pine and Gilmore have updated the Experience Economy literature stream, most notably in Gilmore and Pine (2000) focusing on the importance of customization into the experience process and Gilmore and Pine (2007) stressing the importance of making the experience authentic for the customer in order for it to be truly memorable.

Even with the suggestion that experiences can and should be combined into product and service offerings, one of the most oft-cited contributions of Pine and Gilmore (1998) is their graphical representation of the economic distinctions that exist between commodities, products, services, and experiences. This chart can be seen as Figure 1.1.

Gilmore and Pine (1999) updated this chart with an even more abstract category of

transformations that follow experiences. Pine and Gilmore (1998) define an experience as being present when a firm uses services as the stage, and goods as a prop, to create a memorable event for the consumer. Another chart (shown in figure 1.2) displays a successful experience as being at the center of an axis consisting of the four “E’s” of entertainment, educational, escapism, and esthetic.

Although the experience is separated from the other primary economic offerings in their graphical representation, the Pine and Gilmore (1998) definition of an experience conceptualizes it as integrated with products and services. This integration of experience with other economic offerings is not necessarily a new concept. In fact, Holbrook (2000) states that there is a consumer expectation of experience in every economic transaction. In the Pine and Gilmore (1998) model, experiences are conceptualized as memorable and personal, are revealed over duration, and judged by the sensation created.

Economic Distinctions				
Economic Offering	Commodities	Goods	Services	Experiences
Economy	Agrarian	Industrial	Service	Experience
Economic Function	Extract	Make	Deliver	Stage
Nature of Offering	Fungible	Tangible	Intangible	Memorable
Key Attribute	Natural	Standardized	Customized	Personal
Method of Supply	Stored in bulk	Inventoried after production	Delivered on demand	Revealed over a duration
Seller	Trader	Manufacturer	Provider	Stager
Buyer	Market	User	Client	Guest
Factors of Demand	Characteristics	Features	Benefits	Sensations

Figure 2.1 Economic Distinctions of an Experience

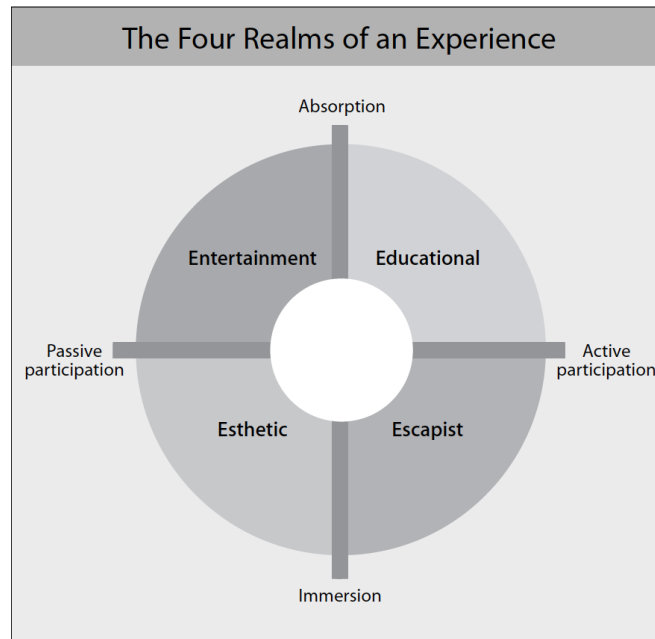


Figure 2.2 The Four Realms of an Experience

In response to Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) work, Holbrook (2000, 2001) reframes the original three aspects of the Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) experiential view of fantasies, feelings and fun into the sixteen categories grouped by his own four “E’s” of experience, entertainment, exhibitionism, and evangelizing. Holbrook (2000) responds to the Pine and Gilmore (1998) experience conceptualization and states his disagreement with the experience as being staged for guests rather than being naturally integrated into the consumption process. Simply put, Holbrook (2000) states that you cannot add an experience into another offering and expect dramatically increased results.

Fragmentation, Consolidation, and the Holistic Experience

Following the late 1990’s and early 2000’s the notion of experience in marketing continued to expand and fractured into different areas of study. It is of note that,

stemming from the popularity and impact of Pine and Gilmore (1998), the majority of the work being done in this time period was done not necessarily by academics publishing empirical articles in peer reviewed journals (although that certainly did take place), but by publishing conceptual material books for mass market consumption such as Schmitt (1999) and the aforementioned Gilmore and Pine (1999). Holbrook (2006b, 2007a, b and c) derided popular press books becoming the primary outlet for experience marketing publication as he claimed these works generally ignore contributions from academics and are, perhaps unsurprisingly, focused more on managerial usefulness than on knowledge creation.

The term “customer experience”, driven by Swinyard’s (1993) examination of the retail environment on the mood, involvement and ultimately on the purchase intentions of the customer, takes shape and emerges as the dominant thought behind the experience marketing literature. Unlike an experiential purchase, which is made with the primary intention of acquiring a life experience, customer experience is more retail-centric and is defined as the customer’s “cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical response to the retailer” (Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros, & Schlesinger, 2008, p. 32).

Verhoef et al. (2008), co-authored by Parasuraman the primary author of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), states that customer experience quality is a separate construct altogether than service quality and cannot be measured using the same customer satisfaction model as SERVQUAL’s 22-item scale of reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness. The emotional aspect of experience is again declared as a leading reason for this difference. The measurement of customer experience

remains a popular pursuit with competing designs presented in research such as the Customer Experience Quality EXQ scale (Maklan, 2012; Maklan & Klaus, 2011,) and the Customer Experience Index (CEI) scale Kim et al. (2013). It is important to note, that although these existing scales share the term “experience” with the present research, they are attempting to measure very different concepts. What is not different, however, is that customer experience quality, and experiential purchase quality, both contain aspects of emotional response that, according to the co-author of SERVQUAL, are completely different constructs than service quality and cannot be measured in the same way. Although the retail-centric concepts behind customer experience is indeed different than experiential purchases, any review of literature on the topic of experiential purchases would be incomplete without at least a mention of the topic, as the underlying concepts for both constructs is undoubtedly shared.

Because of the shared underlying concepts between multiple experience-based constructs and the fragmentation of the research, multiple authors, including Poulsson and Kale (2004), Tynan and McKechnie (2009), and Same and Larimo (2012), have attempted to clarify and distinguish the nature of experience in marketing. While Tynan and McKechnie (2009) attempt to clarify the concept of experience in marketing according to Vargo and Lusch’s (2004) service-dominant logic. Poulsson and Kale (2004) and Same and Larimo (2012) attempt to derive a proper definition of experience in marketing as the term has become ubiquitous and it’s meaning has become uncertain.

In Tynan and McKechnie’s (2009) clarification of experience in marketing, a model of the holistic experience process, seen in Figure 1.3, built from logic provided by a review of experience marketing literature is presented. The logic of the holistic

experience posits that an experiential purchase is not simply a static event for the customer, but is rather an ongoing, dynamic process that takes place across three distinct stages: the pre-experience, the customer experience, and the post-experience (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2004; Richins, 1997; Schmitt, 1999; Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). Each of these stages involves unique activities, value sources, and outcomes. Customers obtain sensory and emotional meaning through stimuli provided throughout the entire three-stage experience process. In the pre-experience stage, the customer engages in activities that resemble the cognitive aspect presented in the Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) experiential view, such as imagining the sensations that will be provided by the experience, planning for that experience and budgeting, in terms of both monetary and time considerations, for the experience (Arnould et al., 2004)

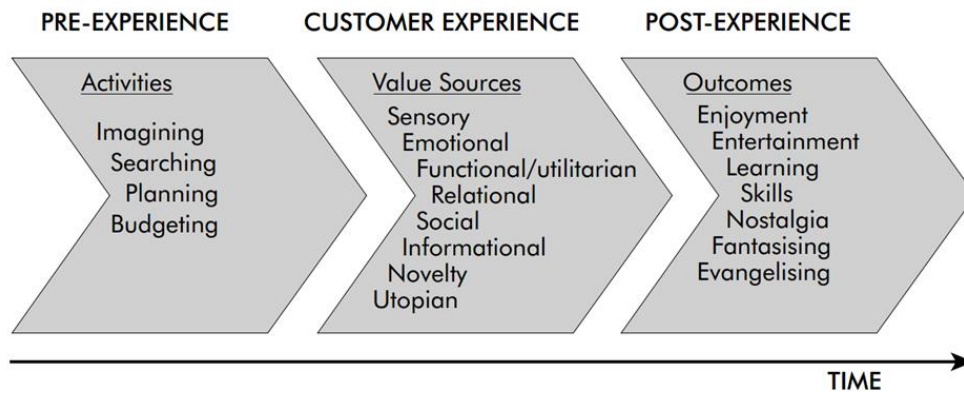


Figure 2.3 The Holistic Experience

During the customer experience stage, the experience fully absorbs the consumer, emotions are at their peak and lasting impressions about the experience are formed (Peñaloza & Venkatesh, 2006). It is during this stage that the customer engages in the

process of determining experience value (Bigné et al., 2008). The value-sources presented by Tynan and McKecknie (2009) used for customer value judgment include the emotion brought about by the experience, the ability of the consumer to relate to the experience, the knowledge gained from the experience, and how unique the experience is to the consumer (Arnould et al., 2004; Tynan & McKecknie, 2009). Superior value perceptions during the experience can lead to, among other positive benefits, increased satisfaction, larger share-of-wallet and increased brand loyalty (Grewal, Levy & Kumar 2009; Schouten et al., 2007). The memorable nature of the experience, judged by the value sources present during the experience itself, has been shown to be the most effective measurement of overall experiential customer satisfaction (Geissler & Rucks, 2011).

The final stage of the holistic experience, the post-experience stage, is when the customer reflects on the meaning and connection to the experience. Outcomes from this phase include fantasizing, nostalgia, and evangelizing. Fantasizing is the “cognitive process focused on how the experience could have been in other contexts, such as with increased knowledge or with different people” (Tynan & McKecknie, 2009, p.509). Fantasizing also allows the consumer to relive the experience through the eyes of their ideal selves and stems from high levels of entertainment extracted from the experience (Holbrook, 2000).

The exact definition of nostalgia in the marketing literature differs from study to study, but the common thread present in all the nostalgia literature is that nostalgia is based on the desire to return to a past time. Holak and Havlena (1991) define nostalgia as a painful yearning by the consumer to return to a prior place. In the cognitive

psychological literature, Bassin (1993) defines nostalgia as “a deeply longed-for past”. The common theme found in a majority of the nostalgia definitions is the conflicting view of positive memories and a sense of loss over a past time. A key aspect of nostalgia is that it deals with idealized, not actual, past events, and as such, nostalgia is remembered with a certain motivation to reframe the past in a certain way (Thaler & Johnson, 1990; Nicaaclo et al., 2007).

Although nostalgia contains the aforementioned bittersweet mix of both joy and sorrow, nostalgia is largely seen as a normal human reaction consisting of both affective and cognitive components (Davis, 1979; Havlena & Holak, 1991; Holak & Havlena, 1998). More recent literature has focused on the positive aspects of nostalgia, especially as it relates to the strengthening of the self. For example, Wildschut, Sedikides, Arndt, and Routledge (2006) suggest that nostalgia can lead to positive affect by allowing the individual to remember events as they wish to remember them, generally by focusing on the positive aspects. In addition, Vess, Arndt, Routledge, Sedikides, & Wildschut (2012) show that nostalgia cognitions are frequently used by individuals to heighten positive self-attributes.

In terms of nostalgia as an outcome of experience, as suggested by Holbrook (2001) and Tynan and McKechnie (2009), there exists a disappointingly limited amount of empirical research. Nostalgia studies have primarily explored how nostalgia motivates attitudes and behaviors towards physical products and brands. However there are some notable exceptions, Braun, Ellis and Loftus (2002) demonstrated how advertising could affect memories concerning remembered childhood experiences at the Disneyland theme park. A small number of respondents actively recalled and discussed meeting and

shaking hands with Bugs Bunny at Disneyland, which is objectively impossible as Disney has never owned the rights to that character. In addition, Chen, Yeh and Huan (2014) look at the role that nostalgic emotion has on experience-dependent retail locations and finds that nostalgia positively influences brand image and repurchase intention.

Finally, evangelizing is “a more active and committed way of spreading positive opinions and trying fervently to convince or persuade others” to get engaged with the same experience (Pichler & Hemetsberger, 2007 p. 25). Evangelizing done by the consumer transcends, although does not replace, positive word-of-mouth and can escalate to something more reminiscent of a religious devotion (Holbrook, 2001; Kozinets, de Valck, & Wilner, 2010; Pichler & Hemetsberger, 2007). As described by Holbrook (2001), evangelizing stems from a deep connection to the experience and regards the experience as more than just consumption, but something deeply meaningful. The Holbrook (2001) emotionally charged conceptualization of evangelizing is supported by research such as Ladhari (2007) who examines the positive impact of evangelizing behavior on movie box office performance and Hosany and Gilbert (2010) who identify evangelizing behavior as stemming from high quality, emotional experiences.

It is important to note that the conceptualizations of experience seen throughout the entirety of not only Tynan and McKechnie’s (2009) holistic experience, but also Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) Experience Economy as well as Holbrook and Hirschman’s (1982) experiential view are just what they state and claim to be, conceptualizations. These are not presented as empirical examinations into the dimensions and outcomes of experience

quality, but rather outlines of what factors could or should be present before, during and after an experience.

It's Not What I Have, It's What I do

Holbrook (2001) designates evangelizing as coming from a place that is deeply attached to the self. This concept of experience and the self has been the focus of much research stemming from both the marketing and the social psychology disciplines. Arnould and Price (1993) describe their own self-proclaimed extraordinary experience of taking a rafting trip down the Colorado River. By examining not only their own evaluations of the experience, but also others with whom the experience was shared, Arnould and Price (1993) draw the conclusion that their “river magic” trip exists in the collective memory of those who shared it, and as such it becomes an aspect of who those people are individually and collectively. According to Carter and Gilovich (2012, p.1305) experiences, like the one described in Arnould and Price (1993), “once enacted on and ‘consumed,’ persist essentially as episodic memories that, by their very nature, are autobiographical and thus connected to the self-concept.”

The works stemming from social psychology concerning the attachment of experiential purchases to the self generally stem from explorations of outcomes stemming from material and experiential purchases. Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) explore the question of whether or not people are happier when they make experiential purchases rather than material purchases. In doing so, Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) provide clear and concise definitions of for both material and experiential purchases. Van Boven and Gilovich (2003, p.1194) define a material purchase as a purchase “made with the primary intention of acquiring a material good: a tangible object that is kept in one’s possession”

while a experiential purchase is defined as a purchase “made with the primary intention of acquiring a life experience: an event or series of events that one lives through.” Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) make the conclusion that experiential purchases do indeed make the consumer happier in terms of the anticipation associated with imagining the purchase before it takes place and the post hoc evaluations of the purchase.

Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) present three causes explaining their findings regarding experiential and material purchases. First, experiences are more open to positive reinterpretation. Similar to the conceptualizations from Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), Holbrook (2000) and empirical studies such Nicaulo et al. (2008), Braun et al. (2002), and Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) suggest that because experiences are intangible and exist solely in the memories of the consumer, fantasizing and reimagining the experience can take place in ways that are motivated by the intention of the consumer. With experiences, negative thoughts can be suppressed and positive thoughts can be strengthened (Wildschut et al., 2006). This is the primary reasoning behind Van Boven’s (2005) suggestion that because experiences are reimagined in a way that the consumer *chooses* to reimagine them, the consumer’s perceptions of purchased experiences will improve with time.

The second cause of greater experiential happiness presented by Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) is that experiences are more central to one’s identity. This deep connection of the experience to the self is explored and identified in multiple marketing and social psychology studies. Carter and Gilovich (2012) suggest that people are essentially what they do, not necessarily what they have. Through a series of studies, Carter and Gilovich (2012) find that people believe that purchased experiences define

more of who they truly are as individuals, are more likely to be discussed when telling stories about their own lives, provide memories that are more cherished, and provide greater insight into other people's true selves than do material purchases. It for this reason that multiple studies, such as Carter and Gilovich (2010) and Rosenzweig and Gilovich (2012), have found that unlike material purchases, experiential purchases are much less likely than material purchase to exhibit buyer's remorse stemming from unfavorable comparisons of the purchase to others. The reasoning behind this finding is that material purchases are less attached to the self than experiential purchases, increasing their likelihood of being compared to other, possibly more attractive, alternatives. As an experience is viewed as a connection to the self, comparison with other experiences is avoided in order to maintain one's own need for self-enhancement (Baumgartner, 1998; Carter and Gilovich, 2010; Rosenzweig & Gilovich, (2012),

The third and final cause presented in Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) for the material / experiential separation is that experiences have greater social value. This suggestion mirrors the "river magic" described in Arnould and Price (1993). Schouten, McAlexendar, and Koenig (2002), drawing direct inspiration from Arnould and Price (1993), and Ramanathan and McGill (2007), find empirical evidence that sharing powerful experiences with others can indeed strengthen social relationships between the consumer and with whom the experience is shared, as well as between the consumer and the experiential brand and can lead to higher overall customer evaluations of the experience. This was found to be especially true if there is a sense of congruency between the consumer and the group. Pieters (2013) finds a link between materialism and social isolationism, suggesting experiential purchases are done to heighten the social needs and

well-being of the consumer. In fact, in the development of their experiential / material preference scale, Howell, Pchelin and Iyer (2012) found that psychological wellbeing was more closely associated with experiential, rather than material, purchase preference.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Study 1

Although experience has been a topic in marketing for quite some time, there have been very few empirical studies looking at the components that make experiential purchase quality, as well as the outcomes stemming from high quality experiential purchases. While Tynan and McKechnie (2009) do an admirable job of describing and mapping out the components of the holistic experience as conceptualized by the academic literature, an actual empirical identification and measurement of this process does not, to the author's knowledge, currently exist. In order to explore these concepts, depth interviews are initially employed in order to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that make up and the outcomes that stem from an experiential purchase of high quality. With this method, preliminary interviews are used to gather data regarding the respondent's interpretation of a high quality experiential purchase. Depth interviews were chosen for this initial study because of the ability of depth interviews to probe into the thoughts, perceptions and feelings of the respondent (Weiss, 1994). For a concept as abstract and personal as experience (Carter & Gilovich, 2010, 2012; Holbrook, 2006a,) depth interviews are effective tools for exploratory data and have been used to explore concepts such as brand loyalty (Fournier, 1997) and service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). According to Weiss (1994, p.1), depth interviews allow for the

interviewer to understand “people’s interior experiences” including “what people perceived, and how they interpreted their perceptions. We can learn how events affected their thoughts and feelings” For these initial interviews, a judgment sample of 14 respondents was recruited through word-of-mouth and personal connections.

Interviewees were asked a series of questions regarding a high quality, highly memorable experiential purchase chosen and specified by the respondent at the beginning of the interview.

Interviews were conducted, either in person or by telephone, on the campus of a large southeastern university. Respondents were informed that their response to the interview questions would be confidential, that they could choose to not answer any questions they did not wish to answer, and they were free to stop the interview at any time. The interview participants were 57% female, with ages ranging from 24-47. An overview of the participant characteristics can be seen in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Characteristics of Interview Participants

	Respondent Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Experiential Purchase
1.	Sunny	35	Female	Walt Disney World Vacation
2.	Art	27	Male	African Safari
3.	Michael	41	Male	Walt Disney World Vacation
4.	Susie	24	Female	Brazilian Soccer Trip
5.	Joanie	24	Female	Beach Trip
6.	Mary	30	Female	Weekend in Asheville, NC
7.	Ray	47	Male	Scuba Diving Trip
8.	Bill	25	Male	Tom Waits Concert
9.	Holden	26	Male	Music Festival in Atlanta
10.	Gloria	30	Female	Elton John Concert
11.	Paul	30	Male	Honeymoon in Maui
12.	Kim	34	Female	Disney Cruise
13.	Sasha	29	Female	European Trip
14.	Robin	47	Female	Mexican ATV Tour

An interview guide was developed and was used for semi-structured interviews. This interview guide can be found under Appendix A. The interview guide allowed for uniformity of structure and style for the interview process, however the interviewer deviated from the guide in order to probe the respondent for a deeper response, to clarify a response, or to allow the interview to go in the direction that the respondent desired. After recording the demographic information of the respondent, the respondents were asked to recall a high quality experiential purchase. Definitions and examples of material and experiential purchases, using terminology inspired by Van Boven and Gilovich

(2003), were provided to ensure the respondent was clear on the desired experiential response. After the respondent acknowledged that they had indeed recalled such an experiential purchase, they were asked what the chosen experiential purchase was and to provide a brief description. The first depth question asked the respondent to discuss their memories about the experience, specifically asking about why this particular experience was so memorable. This question was designed to get an overall holistic view on the factors that went into this particular experience being memorable to the respondent. As a lived experience exists solely in the memory of those who experienced it (Carter & Gilovich, 2012), this question was meant to explore the factors that go into a successful and highly memorable experience. After follow up questions were asked, the next question asked about the respondent's thoughts on the experience after it was over. The key to this second question was getting the respondent to look back on the experience and describe their cognitions that took place after the experience was over. This question was followed up with another question asking the respondent if they believe that they remember the experience any differently than it actually was. The purpose of this question was to examine if the respondent engaged in the type of nostalgic, self-affirming memory selection behavior suggested by Wildschut, et al. (2006) and Arndt and Routledge (2008). The fourth question asked the respondent what they believed made a memorable experience in general, not necessarily just the experience that they had described at the beginning of the survey. The purpose of this question was to expand the scope of the respondent's opinion of what factors go into a high quality experience beyond the initial example provided. Next, the respondents were asked if they would like to go back and relive the experience. Follow up questions concerning whether or not they

would change the experience in some way, and whether or not they would be willing to pay more or less for the experience were then asked. The final question was about how the respondents told others about the experience after it was over. This question was followed up with a question asking whether or not the respondents engaged in talking to others about this particular experience.

All interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis with the respondent and the interviewer. The interviews were recorded on digital media and then transcribed by the interviewer. Using a grounded theory methodology of coding, suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008), responses were read, notes were made by the interviewer, and the interviews were then re-read and initial themes emerging from the interviews were developed. From these themes, categories were created and then data for each of the interviews was then categorized. Relationships among the categories were also developed. The transcripts of the interviews can be seen in their entirety in Appendix B.

Findings

Through the textual analysis of the data emerging from the interviews, a number of variables began to emerge concerning the inputs to and outcomes from experiential purchases of high quality. These findings represent the factors that emerged from the analysis of the interviews and are supported by quotes from the interview respondents.

Dimensions of the Experience

Two of the questions asked the respondents to describe the factors present in high quality experiences. One of the most frequently occurring themes emerging from this particular question was the uniqueness of the experience. Uniqueness describes the

perceived novelty or distinctness of an offering (Franke & Schreier, 2008). Many of the respondents reported that uniqueness of the experience was what made it so memorable to them. For example:

“It was unlike anything else that I had ever experienced before. Brazilian soccer is just completely different than United States soccer and everything that we did down there was all out of the Brazilian culture and we got to go to the different islands and it was just a real unique experience. I’ve been on trips my whole life, we did a yearly trip with my family and nothing that I ever did in Florida or California would even compare to this.” (Susie 24, Brazilian Soccer Trip)

“I mean how many times do you get to swim with a shark and have an octopus wrapped around your arm? So there was a lot of uniqueness to the particular experience” (Ray 47, Scuba Diving Trip)

“I think unique, as in it has to be different than what you would expect, it can’t be something routine. And mine was that. It can’t be something that happens all the time. You know, I probably don’t have any memorable experiences playing basketball because I play basketball almost every day, but I go to a music festival once every 26 years.” (Holden 26, Atlanta Music Festival)

Another emerging factor was the fun, the overall level or perceived hedonic enjoyment (Dabholkar, 1994), stemming from the experience. Fun is a primary component of the Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) conceptualization of experience, making its emergence as a factor in this study perhaps foreseeable. In terms of the

coding for this depth interview study, fun was not always explicitly stated (“I had so much fun!”) but was rather implied by the examples given and the respondent’s detailed descriptions. Elements of fun and hedonic enjoyment permeate throughout the entirety of the depth interviews. Examples include:

“These two guys, I mean these two guys were hilarious. They had this helmet microphone system where we all had helmets but you could talk to everybody, and they were telling jokes. The only thing that I can compare it to is the Jungle Cruise at Disneyland. It was that kind of time and they had that kind of personality.” (Robin 47, Mexican ATV Tour)

“Elton was adorable. When he was done singing a song he would get up and like clap for the crowd, like praising us. He would face all four directions and praise us. He had this look on his face after every song that was like “did I do good?” it was like a wanting to please you kind of face. It was very adorable. Everything about it was super cool and fun, and the music was great.” (Gloria 30, Elton John Concert)

“It was like 135 feet and I was like no way you could see that far down. And then we go down and we’re kind of looking around all this stuff. And the dive master is just sort of fishing around back there and out comes this 4-5 foot long black-tip reef shark. I was like (laughing) I was just like freaking cool! There is this live shark just a few feet from me!” (Ray 47, Scuba Diving Trip)

The next emerging theme had to do with who participated in the experience with the respondent. The other people present at the experience, both in terms of the people who went to the experience with the respondents and the group of people with whom the experience was shared, was another factor that added to the memorable nature of the experience. Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) describe how experiences are inherently social in nature, and it appears that social interactions add to the quality of the experience. Examples include:

“It has to be with someone that you want to spend time with. You can go somewhere, like I take a family vacation with my family to the beach and I love the beach, but that trip is not necessarily an experience that I remember fondly because of who you are with. You have to be with, whether it’s your husband or your wife or maybe friends, but the people are a big part of that.” (Sunny 35, Disney Vacation)

“I think that a lot of it is the dynamic of the people you are with and who you are around. Like I would go and see an Elton concert no matter what. Like I went to a concert with my mom and her friends we went to go see Aerosmith and Lenny Kravitz, and it was a great concert, but I don’t think about that the same way I think about that Elton Concert. Everyone had bought into that concert being awesome. My girlfriend who I was immediately with, even Elton, everything seemed to have bought into the experience.” (Gloria 35, Elton John Concert)

“We went with my sister and my brother-in-law so we obviously get along and we like each other and we have the same personality and stuff so that makes a big difference when you are going somewhere new or doing something new with somebody. When you are different from someone and you are trying to have the same life experience I think it makes it a lot different.” (Sasha 29, European Trip)

Mimicking the findings of the service quality literature, the quality of the servicescape, the physical environment where the experience took place including the employees and the accessibility/design of the surroundings (Bitner, 1992), emerged as a factor of experiential purchase quality. Of note is the fact that not all respondents immediately mentioned this in their interviews. Experiences that were more emotional in nature seemed to mention this factor less than experiences predicated on a more relaxing value proposition. However, even for experiences like concerts, the quality of the surrounding physical environment was a factor. Examples include:

“The staff there really went the extra mile versus other hotels that I’ve stayed at in other places, I mean they really express the fact that it’s family owned by the people that set up the hotel. They have all of these different things that they do a little differently because like down the road is a Sheraton. I didn’t go inside, but it probably didn’t have as authentic an experience as this one. They really catered to that aspect. They even gave everybody these leis that were hand made with coconuts. And they had this big show at the end where you leave the hotel and they give you one of these leis. So, they really did try to go the extra mile, so that played into the experience as well. I mean we didn’t even know that you would be getting that when we went there.” (Paul 30, Honeymoon in Maui)

“They sat us at this perfect little table and the edge of the veranda, where we had a great view. It was the perfect time of day. It was sunset. It was perfect weather. The food was exceptional. The service was great. They offered us complimentary champagne and desserts.” (Marry 30, Weekend in Asheville, NC)

“The concert hall was nice, and it was nice that the city got involved. The hotel was nice, the restaurants were nice, being in El Paso was cool because we popped into Juarez for a little bit. So that definitely helped it. I think if it were just a concert like down the street, like if it was in Albuquerque where I was living, then I probably wouldn’t think of it as the best concert.” (Bill 25, Tom Waits Concert)

Outcomes of the Experience

Many of the questions and responses were used to detail the outcomes stemming from the reported experience. Each of these outcomes generally mentioned the experiential purchase quality input factors as a reason for engaging in these behaviors. Of the outcomes that emerged, nostalgia was one of the most prominent. The majority of respondents reported that they actually, and in some cases rather dramatically, remember the experience differently than it actually took place, similar to the manner suggested by Wildschut et al. (2006) and Arndt and Routledge (2008). In some cases, the behavior of accentuating the positive and deemphasizing the negative aspects of the experience can actually be seen taking place in real time as the negative aspects were recalled after some thought was given to the question, and then the respondents reemphasized the positive components to the experience in the same answer. Examples of this behavior include:

Mary (30, Weekend in Asheville, NC): *“I am sure that I remember it with a little more of a rosy tint because of the emotional element. Like, it was perfect and magical. But then again, we have been back and we have always had that kind of experience. So, maybe no, building on those experiences, I think back to the first one and it’s pretty magical. But, the funny thing is that I had a horrible headache. I was nervous and that was my body’s response.”*

Interviewer: *“You remember having the headache?”*

Mary (30): *“I remember having the headache, but it does not at all impede the experience because everything was just so perfect.”*

At least one respondent refused to even consider the thought that their memories had been idealized in this exchange:

Interviewer: *“When you are thinking back on it, do you think that you remember it now differently than it actually was?”*

Kim (34, Disney Cruise): *“No. Because I think it was magical and even when we were there we knew that it was magical. So, it’s just as magical as I believe in my mind that it truly was.”*

Interviewer: *“Do you think that sometimes it is possible to forget about certain aspects of the experience?”*

Kim (34): *Nope. It was a perfect trip. It was a really great trip.”*

Other examples of motivated and selective recollection found in nostalgia include:

“I probably don’t think about all the dirt that goes flying up, all the dust or the hours spent without seeing any animals. I just think fondly of the moments. You

know, the particular moments. And those are the memories that I really remember.” (Art 27, African Safari)

“...I look back, and I don't know if it was really that good of music. I'm still a Tom Waits fan; I still like most of his stuff. It was a cool experience and how I was feeling at that point is probably different. I guess you're right. As soon as it was done, I can't really tell much about the concert itself but mostly after and before.” (Bill 25, Tom Waits Concert)

Consistent with Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and Tynan and McKechnie's (2009) experience outcome conceptualizations, the act of fantasizing about the experience, the respondent focusing on how the experience could have been in other contexts, was present. Generally this response was prompted by asking if the respondent would change anything about the experience if they were to do it again, however this behavior was also present when the respondents discussed whether or not they would want to relive the experience. Examples include:

“I think that I would be a little more carefree. You go the first time Europe and not that I was scared or anything, but I just didn't know what to expect. So when you are a little more familiar with it, you think, “Oh, I've done this before.”
(Sasha 29, European Trip)

“Well, really I think I would just do more of it. You know, we only had one day that we did that dive. I would dive everyday if I could change or redo it, I'd make

it so it was like a weeklong thing and do several dives.” (Ray 47, Scuba Diving Trip)

“I know what to do the next time right. I know how to make the reservations for the German restaurant so we can get into there if we want to, I know how to get into the princess lunch. That was the thing that was the frustration. I know the differences between the different hotels. I know which places I’d like to get into. For instance the Grand Floridian if I am really and truly made of money. I guess my thing is, with the next experience, not just relive it, but I know how to improve it” (Michael 41, Disney Vacation)

One of the strongest outcomes was a desire to relive the experience again. The majority of the respondents reported a desire to do this experience, perhaps changed in some way, again. Often this intention was reported before the interviewer brought up reliving the experience. Many times the desire to go back was mentioned in the first few moments of the interview and was repeated by the respondents throughout the entirety of the interview, as if the cognitive process of recalling this memory also triggered the desire to do it again. Examples include:

“For sure. I’d suffer through the 20-hour plane ride, all the cultural differences; suffer through the fear of being mugged in South Africa. All of it. Because the experience was worth it.” (Art 27, African Safari)

“I would love to not only go back and relive it, I’d like to see Tom Waits again solely because of the fact that, I saw him in El Paso, so I’d like to see what

changed and what was different, but even going back to that same experience, wow, I'd like to...I don't even really remember what songs he was playing so I'd like to go in there and see a little bit more and have a new appreciation and realizing that in three years this person is going to be huge.” (Bill 25, Tom Waits Concert)

“I'd definitely, 100% do it again. It was the rainy season, which I kind of forgot until I just talked it about it right now, but of the ten days it rained nine. But we still did everything; we still went to the beach and went sand surfing and that kind of stuff. But, I would probably pick a different time period to go.” (Susie 24, Brazilian Soccer Trip)

Another outcome that emerged was a decrease in the price consciousness if the respondent was to do the experience again. Price consciousness is defined in Lichtenstein, Ridgway and Netemeyer (1993) as the consumer's solitary focus on the price for a purchase. With the exception of two, each of the respondents stated that, regardless of inflation, if they were to go back and relive this experience, they would indeed be willing to pay more for it. Examples include:

“Because you want to go back. If it costs more then it costs more. It doesn't matter. Maybe you have to cut back on souvenirs to do the trip. Maybe have one less dinner in a fancy place. If it costs more then it just costs more.” (Sunny 35, Disney Vacation)

“...it’s not a cheap hobby or cheap thing to do anyways. And that’s why I haven’t done it in ten years because it costs so much to go to these places. It’s certainly kind of one of those things that when I have money to do things, to plan and annual trip, I could be like “I’m going to drop five grand on this dive trip.” Maybe every other year or something like that. But I’d definitely do it. And the plan would be to spend more and do more the next time.” (Ray 47, Scuba Diving Trip)

“Yes. Because even though it is expensive I feel as though the experience is worth it. And I think that for the dinner and every time we go back I would probably pay double and still be happy just because they have never disappointed us.” (Mary 30, Weekend in Asheville, NC)

Finally, another outcome behavior was the desire to talk to other people about the experience, but this behavior was a bit different than expected in the sense that it seemed to take the form of self-enhancing word-of-mouth, or braggart behavior. Angelis, Bonezzi, Peluso, Rucker, and Costabile (2012) define self-enhancing word-of-mouth as word-of-mouth behaviors, which are driven, implicitly or explicitly, by one’s desire to boost self-esteem and receive positive recognition from others. For some, the desire to self-enhance was the admitted reason to telling others about the experience, for others the experience was not talked about because they did not want to be seen as a braggart. This behavior does seem in line with the Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) and Carter and Gilovich (2012) findings that experiences are closely tied to one’s sense of self.

Examples include:

“I feel that it is kind of a unique case in the sense that, I’ve had the opportunity to experience a lot of cool and great things in my life that a lot of people haven’t, so I’d really hate to come off as braggadocios. I don’t want to flaunt things like that.” (Art 27, African Safari)

“Maybe if it’s a good movie you want to recommend it to people or if it’s camping. All of that. We had a real good time. Maybe in a sense it’s like bragging. Telling everyone ‘hey, look what we did.’” (Sunny 35, Disney Vacation)

“I mean I got to swim with a shark. It’s kind of a neat experience. It’s kind of bragging, I guess. I mean, so you went skiing? Well I swam with a shark. I had an octopus wrapped around my arm. What did you do? You know, it’s kind of one of those real unique kind of things” (Ray 47, Scuba Diving Trip)

These qualitative depth interviews provide a much more complete picture as to the inputs that make up and the outputs that stem from a high quality experiential purchase. The factors identified through these studies confirm some of the conceptualizations found in previous literature, but differ from others. For instance the holistic experience conceptualization by Tynan and McKecknie (2009) identifies fun as an outcome of an experience, while these depth interviews suggest that it is a value source found during the experience. In addition, while identified by Van Boven and Gilovich (2003), the social component of experiential purchase quality, which emerged

very strong in this first study, is not present in the majority of existing experiential conceptualizations.

The outcomes identified through these textual analyses are noteworthy in the fact that many of them seem to take some sort of self-centric or self-affirming type of behavior. Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) and Carter and Gilovich (2010, 2012) describe experiential purchases becoming connected with the self. With this connection of experience to the self, the theory of self-enhancement (Baumeister, 1998) seems fit to explain this behavior. Self-enhancement refers to the basic human need to feel good about oneself (Baumeister, 1998). This need drives the desire to enhance or improve the self-concept, achieve a positive self-image, and maintain one's sense of self-esteem (Brown, Collins, & Schmidt, 1988; Sedikides, 1993; Shrauger, 1975). The word-of-mouth behavior described in these responses appears to be a conduit for self-enhancement. Nostalgia, also present in the analysis, is a motivated way for an individual to remember events in ways that can reinforce the self-image (Vess et al., 2012). Also, fantasizing is the activity of reimagining and reliving the experience in a manner done to enhance the experience in one's mind (Holbrook, 2001). When fantasizing about the experience, it appears to be done in such a way that this experience, connected to the self, reaches its maximum potential. In the textual analysis performed in this first study, the dimensions of experiential purchase quality measurement are beginning to emerge, however more data analysis is necessary in order to increase the generalizability of these findings and build an empirical model.

Study 2

Study one provides insight into the inputs leading to and outcomes stemming from experiential purchases quality. The findings suggest that the social environment, the hedonic enjoyment to be found, the physical environment, and a sense of uniqueness are factors of experiential purchase quality, while the connection of the experience to one's self plays a role in shaping the outputs. Respondents also appeared to have strong intentions to relive the experience, and a willingness to pay more for the experience the next time. Although these findings were generally consistent across the respondents, the small size of the sample used for study one makes it difficult to suggest that these findings are indeed generalizable to a larger population of consumers. Therefore, a second qualitative study was conducted using the critical incident technique or CIT (Flanagan, 1954). In this technique, the respondent is asked to provide a detailed response to a provided critical incident, in this case a high quality, highly memorable experiential purchase. The CIT approach was chosen for this study as it has been shown to be effective in providing groundwork for theory development (Gremier, 2004). Due to its effectiveness, the CIT is frequently used in marketing research; including highly influential studies exploring service encounters (Bitner, Booms & Tetreault, 1992) and switching costs (Keaveney, 1995).

This CIT study is intended to build on the knowledge and information gleaned from the first study. This study is used to gain more information regarding the themes and categories that emerged from the first study. To do so, four open-ended questions were designed to expand on the findings of study one. An open-ended questionnaire would not only allow for the richness associated with a qualitative study to be examined, but it

would also allow for the survey to be completed by a larger and more diverse group of respondents without the need for the researcher to be present.

The questionnaire consisted of four open-ended questions regarding an experience of high quality provided by the respondent. Respondents were first asked to provide the name and a brief description of the experience they were keeping in mind for the rest of the survey. This question was used to filter out results that did not meet the criteria for the survey (an experiential purchase of high quality) and to ensure that a wide variety of different experiences were used in order to properly assess generalizability across different experiential settings. The first open-ended question asked the respondents, with as much detail as possible, to describe and explain the factors that went into making this particular experience so memorable. This question was very similar to the first question in study one in both design and purpose. This question was asked to identify what factors go into making a high quality experiential purchase. Next, respondents were asked to explain and describe if and why they would like to relive this experience again. The purpose of this question was to get a good look at the factors stemming from the experience itself to the repurchase intentions of the experience from the respondents. The respondents were then asked to describe and explain in what ways, if any, they shared and communicated about their experience with others. The purpose of this question was to expand and clarify the word-of-mouth behaviors stemming from a high quality experience. Finally, the respondents were asked to describe and explain the factors that go into a bad, terrible or disappointing experience. This question was designed to strengthen and add further generalizability to the first question by looking at what factors are lacking in an experience of poor quality.

Amazon Mechanical Turk was used to recruit survey respondents. Mechanical Turk is growing in popularity as a means to recruit diverse samples for research and has been evaluated and utilized by a number of published studies in multiple disciplines (Amar, Ariely, Ayal, Cryder, & Rick, 2011; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Leonhardt, Keller & Pechmann, 2011). Respondents were paid 75 cents for successfully completing the survey and the average survey took 13 minutes. Congruent with similar types of research and suggestions available from the literature, such as Gremler (2004) and Gremler and Gwinner (2008), steps such as identification and descriptions of the experience were taken to encourage authentic responses. The definitions and examples both of experiential and material purchases were provided to the respondents in order to clarify the requirements of the survey. This method resulted in 334 responses. Thirty-four responses were ultimately excluded from analysis due to incompleteness. This resulted in a final total of 300 usable responses. Of the respondents, 54% were female and the average age was 34. The categories of experiential purchases, examples of each category, and their frequency of response, can be seen in Table 3.2

Table 3.2 Study 2 Experiential Purchase Response Categories

Please provide the name and a very brief description of the experience that you will be describing today.

Response Category	Percentage
Trips and Vacations	30.30%
Concerts	15.15%
Theme Park	12.12%
Activities (Sky diving, rafting, etc.)	5.72%
Cruises	5.05%
Sports Events	4.38%
Theme Park Vacations	4.38%
Music Festivals	4.04%
Beach Trips	3.70%
Exhibits and Museums	3.70%
Plays or Shows	3.03%
Camping Trips	2.69%
Movies	2.69%
Miscellaneous / Other	1.68%
Conventions or Gatherings	1.35%

After the responses were compiled, three judges familiar with the experience literature sorted responses for each question into a series of categories and subcategories. A constant comparison method was used, allowing judges to read, sort, and re-read responses, combining these responses into larger categories (Bitner et al., 1990; Spiggle, 1994). During the first part of the analysis, one judge employed open coding to identify categories of responses. These categories were then coded and briefly defined. The developed categories, their codes and their definitions were then supplied to the second and third judges, who were then instructed to classify each response into its appropriate category. Instances where coding discrepancies arose, or in instances where the subsequent coders believed that new codes should exist, which was infrequent, were

resolved through discussion between the judges. Inter-rater agreement showed consistency with values ranging from .90 to .95. To further validate the coding, Perreault and Leigh's (1989) Index (Ir) was calculated. The index for each question was also above .80, with values ranging from .87 to .96, demonstrating support for the coding process.

Findings

Question 1

Question 1 asked respondents, with as much detail as possible, to identify, explain and describe the factors that went into making their chosen experience so memorable. A variety of responses emerged. Seven categories of factors arose from the analysis. See table 3.3 for illustrative quotes from each category. Multiple categories could, and often would, emerge from a single response. Percentages represent the frequency of a particular category across the entirety of the responses.

Table 3.3 Results from Study 2, Question 1

Q1: What factors went into making this particular experience so memorable?

Response Category	Illustrative Quotes	Percentage
Friends and Family	"I had a great time since I was with a group of friends"	68.87%
Servicescape	"Their seating was spacious and use these great reclining chairs."	34.44%
First Time	"It was my first time to the city and also at the theme park."	29.47%
Fun	"We laughed together and just really had a lot of fun."	17.88%
Uniqueness	"It was a nice dinner in an unusual setting and we don't get to do that often."	17.22%
Shared with Group	"I met some of the most amazing people in the whole world."	14.57%
Escapism	"We were able to be distracted from our lives, and just focus on having fun."	13.59%
Value	"We like this hotel because the food and rooms are affordable."	11.59%

Category 1: Friends and Family (68.8%)

A large percentage of respondents discussed how being present with, and enjoying the experience alongside, friends and family that came with them to the experience added to overall success of the experience. This falls in line with the social conceptualization of an experience from Van Boven and Gilovich (2003). Examples from responses in this category include *“It was an amazing thing to do with my family! We went to Europe and we had the most amazing time”*, *“I think having my spouse there was the key factor of making it a memorable event”*, and *“We had such a wonderful time, enjoying our friends, and the company and companionship”*.

Category 2: Servicescape (34.44%)

Responses in this category stemmed from the respondents believing that the quality of the servicescape, the physical environment where the experience took place, was a factor in the experience being so memorable. Examples from this category include *“The beach was fantastic, we had a villa right on a private beach, the food and service was exceptional”*, *“It was great, a small venue that makes it very personal”*, and *“I really enjoyed the architectural design of the Beacon theatre”*.

Category 3: First Time (29.47%)

In this category, respondents reported the fact that this was their first time doing this experience added to the memorable nature of the overall experience. Examples from this category include *“It was a great and memorable experience because for one, I had never been there before”*, *“it was the first vacation that I ever took that I actually went*

somewhere”, and “Almost everything on that trip was a first for me, so that is why it is so important to me”.

Category 4: Fun (17.88%)

Unsurprisingly, the perception by the respondent that the experience was fun was a positive factor in the memorable nature of the experience. For this category, since a majority of the responses could be considered fun simply by their very nature, the response was only coded for this category when the respondent explicitly stated as such. Examples in the category include: *“We had an absolute blast”, “We had a lot of fun and we have a lot of memories from the trip! It was such a wonderful experience”, and “We had so much fun on our trip”.*

Category 5: Shared with Group (14.57%)

Responses in this category were from the respondents reporting that the experience was made more memorable because of the people, other than the friends and family brought to the experience, with whom the experience shared. Responses in this category generally described situations in which the respondents and the group of people at the experience had a sense of congruity in terms of wanting to get the same things out of the experience. Responses in this category include, *“Everyone in there felt like a lifelong fan and people were so into the concert”, “There is no competition, no rivalry, just 5000 people all excited and happy for the same reason”, and “All the smiling other people there made you not help but to smile yourself”.*

Category 6: Escapism (13.59%)

This category consists of respondents that described the experience as being memorable because it took them away from the stress and worry associated with their everyday lives. Responses in this category include, *“While on this trip we could do what we wanted to do and we could do so without worrying about whiny children, bored spouses, trying to plan our activities and schedules around meals, potty training, naptime and/or TV programs and weekend sports broadcasts”, “I wanted to go somewhere fun and forget about the things at home for a little bit”, and “We chose a cruise because it would be fun to “get away” from the hustle of life and to just enjoy each other”.*

Category 7: Value (11.54%)

For this category, respondents reported the experience stuck in their heads because of the overall value or affordability of the experience. Responses in this category include *“It was a tad expensive, but I feel it was well worth it”, “I still had the money for the admission cost, so it was cost efficient as well”, and “It was also very affordable for us on a tight budget”.*

Question 2

Question 2 asked respondents, with as much detail as possible, to identify, explain and describe if and why they would like to relive this experience again. The majority (86.75%) of respondents stated they would like to relive this experience again in some way. Many of the quality factors from question 1, such as fun and escapism, were echoed and coded in this category as well, since there were no restraints on what the respondent could discuss. For parsimony and clarification, only emerging categories concerning the

intention to relive the experience are presented in this analysis. Five categories of outcomes arose from the analysis. See table 3.4 for illustrative quotes from each category.

Table 3.4 Results from Study 2, Question 2

Q1: Do you want to relive this experience? Please describe and explain way?

Response Category	Illustrative Quotes	Percentage
Revise	“I would go later, with less people, and I would bring more money.”	33.11%
Nostalgia	“The memories that we shared on that trip were just priceless”	14.24%
Repurchased	“(Yes) In fact, I am going to see Willie in concert this summer again.”	9.33%
Impossible	“(Yes) But that is impossible as Johnny Carson is no longer with us.”	7.95%
Singular	“(No) This was an event that I needed to do, but only once.”	7.62%

Category 1: Revise (33.11%)

This category was respondents who stated that they would want to relive this experience again, but would like to change the experience again in some way. This category very much mirrors the concept of fantasizing from Holbrook (2000). Examples from this category include “I would maybe want to share it with another person this time, to relive it through their eyes”, “I feel this time I will approach it with less apprehension than before going into the water the first time”, and “I plan on bringing a go-pro camera with me next time to document it myself”.

Category 2: Nostalgia (14.44%)

Responses in this category deal with instances where the respondents wanted to relive the experience because of their attachment to memories of the past. Because many

of these responses could be considered nostalgic as the question asks the respondent to look back on an experience that was highly memorable, the response only fell into this category if the respondent explicitly mentioned the memories from the previous experience as a motivation to relive it. Examples from this category include *“I can remember this situation vividly and that makes me want to experience it again even more”*, *“It would be awesome to relive it again, because of the bonding time that we had together in a new space and the memories that we captured”*, and *“Yes, all of the history surrounding Disney World is so nostalgic to me”*.

Category 3: Repurchased (9.33%)

For this category, respondents reported that they actually already had repurchased and relived this experience again or plan to in the near future. Examples from this category include *“I would like to relive this experience because I want to return again to Paris. By the way, I am planning to return to Paris again”*, *“As a matter of fact, I already did relive the experience. I ended up going again four years later”*, and *“We're already planning to go back and get our old seats for an upcoming musical this year”*.

Category 4: Impossible (7.95%)

Responses in this category stem from responses where the respondent stated that the experience could no longer be repeated due to some circumstance. Of note is the fact that just because these responses reported that this particular experience was impossible to relive in the same way, many of them did actually respond that they would still like to relive the experience. Examples of this category include: *“I can't, I am no longer dating the person who took me”*, *“I would love to relive it, but knowing that I'm now 60 years*

old, that will never happen”, and “They tore that place down, I couldn’t go back if I wanted to”.

Category 5: Singular (7.62%)

For this category, respondents were specific in their belief that if they were to do this experience again, it would either not be as successful as the first time or the second experience would somehow ruin the memories of the first experience. Without exception, all of these responses indicated that they would not want to relive this experience again. Examples in this category include *“That was a once in a lifetime event that could only be cheapened by repetition”, “Doing it again would not be as fun as it was the first time”, and “I already experienced it and don't believe in rehashing something I've already done”.*

Question 3

Question 3 asked respondents, with as much detail as possible, to identify, explain and describe their behaviors and motivations for how they shared the experience with others after the experience was over. The majority of the respondents (86.09%) stated that they did indeed feel the need to share the experience with others. Again, many of the quality factors from question 1 were echoed and coded in this category; however only emerging categories concerning the sharing of the experience with others is presented in this analysis. Four categories of outcomes associated with word-of-mouth behaviors arose from the analysis. See table 3.5 for illustrative quotes from each category.

Table 3.5 Results from Study 2, Question 3

Q1: Did you feel the need to tell others about this experience? Please describe and explain way?

Response Category	Illustrative Quotes	Percentage
Word-of-Mouth	“I would highly recommend going there for anyone that wanted to go.”	33.11%
Evangelizing	“I wanted to try to convince other people how much fun it was”	14.24%
In-group	“It only seemed natural to share my enjoyment with other fans”	9.33%
Bragging	“I instantly went on Facebook and bragged to all my friends”	8.28%

Category 1: Word-of-Mouth (33.11%)

Respondents in the category engaged in word of mouth behaviors or recommended the experience to others. It is of note that this category exhibited a great deal of self-enhancing word-of-mouth as identified and defined in Angelis et al. (2012) but did not explicitly mention bragging so they were not coded into that category. Examples of this category include “*I really wanted others to know about what we experienced, and how great of a time we had*”, “*Yes. Because everyone should know how great of a time I had*”, and “*It is not every day that people go to a foreign country so I wanted to show pictures, tell about my experience and recommend it to everyone*”.

Category 2: Evangelizing (14.24%)

With this category, respondents reported that they actively attempted to recruit others to go on this particular experience or a similar kind of experience. In many ways, these responses revolved around the fact that the respondent wanted others to partake in the experience so that they could have someone with whom to share stories. Examples of responses in the category include “*I posted on Facebook and called a few people telling*

them they should try a similar experience because ours was so wonderful”, “I wanted others to embark on the same experience that I did so they could know what I meant when I said that the experience was so memorable and be able to empathize with me” and “I felt the need to share this with them because my family and friends should go and experience Disneyland too”.

Category 3: In-group (9.33%)

The responses in this category were respondents who only talked about their experience with either people who shared the same interest or people who were also at the experience. These respondents didn't seem to want to share their experience with anyone who wasn't in that group. Examples of the category include *“The majority of people I know don't care anything about Alaska and know very little about it”, “I discussed the performance a lot with my wife, but that was the only person with whom I talked about it”, and “I liked to talk to the kids about it... the people who had actually been there... but not really anyone else”.*

Category 4: Bragging (8.28%)

With this category, respondents were explicit about their desire to brag about their experience to others in an attempt to make others jealous or out of self-admitted pride felt by the respondent having engaged in the experience. Examples of this category include *“We also sort of wanted to brag to our friends about how much fun we had”, “Yes, I updated all my friends on it. They were so jealous. It was great”, and “Oh my yes, I came right home, and told everyone, I came in contact with, people were so jealous that I got to meet a big country music singer”.*

Question 4

Question 4 asked respondents to recall an experiential purchase that was bad, terrible, or disappointing. The respondents were then asked to describe, again with as much detail as possible, to identify, explain the factors that went into making this experience so disappointing. Not surprisingly, the results were similar to the results for question 1; however there were some interesting and enlightening distinctions stemming from this question. The categories are the same as question 1, but in this context they take on a negative tone. Three categories of outcomes associated with word-of-mouth behaviors arose from the analysis. See table 3.6 for illustrative quotes from each category.

Table 3.6 Results from Study 2, Question 4

Q1: *What factors went into making this particular experience so disappointing?*

Response Category	Illustrative Quotes	Percentage
Servicescape	“The hotel we stayed in was extremely filthy.”	47.68%
Friends and Family	“She was miserable and I was miserable because I had to listen to her.”	21.19%
Shared with Group	“Most people were just rowdy and drunk.”	20.20%
Value	“It was a waste of time and money, and a frustrating night.	17.22%
Bad Surprise	“My family and I went to the beach and I got stung by a jellyfish.	11.92%
Lack of Fun	“It just seems so old and boring to me.”	9.93%

Category 1: Servicescape (47.68%)

Somewhat surprisingly, the servicescape category has a much higher response rate for the negative experience than for the positive experience. Examples for this

category include *“When we checked in I inquired if our room had a view of the strip. The desk clerk advised ‘Oh yes, you have a view of the strip!’ When we got to the room there was a view of the strip all right ... a view of the airport strip on the back side”, “The cabins we stayed in were nothing like what was pictured on the website. It had no running water, and we had to use the outside as our bathroom”, and “When we got there, it looked like a cattle ranch. A bunch of tables shoved into a room in the back of the hotel, like if you pushed your chair back to get up you would hit the person behind you. I was so angry I couldn't speak”.*

Category 2: Friends and Family (21.19%)

In this negatively charged question, the friends and family category contained respondents that had a bad experience because of those friends and family with whom the experience shared. In general, these negative responses described instances where the respondent and their partner(s) in the experience were not congruent in terms of what they were expecting from the experience. Example of this category include *“I had gotten my hopes up that we would all have such a great time and could do this on a regular basis. Unfortunately, she hated it and whined/complained the whole first half, so we left at half time”, “The kids didn't want to be there so that made it bad from the start”, and “I planned a trip to South Padre Island with a boyfriend and it was a disaster. He didn't want to swim or go beachcombing. We ended up not speaking to each other, so it was a long 7-hour drive back home. I cried all the way”.*

Category 3: Shared with Group (20.20%)

Similar to the friends and family category for this question, this category includes responses from respondents who believed that the others at the experience impeded the quality of the experience. Frequently in this category, the respondent and the others with whom the experience is shared had different goals and expectations concerning the experience. Examples from this category include *“We almost got into a fight with one drunk lady who was sitting next to us as she kept telling us that we should die”*, *“The event was over-crowded and about half of the attendees were there for entirely different purposes (e.g. drink as much beer as quickly as possible and be belligerent jerks)”*, and *“Rob Zombie's Halloween, there was a group of teen girls who were too young for a rated R movie who talked throughout out the movie, we had to get theatre employees to have them removed”*.

Category 4: Value (17.22%)

Responses from this category include those from respondents who believe that the experience was either too expensive, or the value of the experience was lacking. Examples from this category include *“I was expecting a show whereby they would interact with the audience throughout the show, or at least some of the time, and that didn't happen. I felt that it was a complete waste of money”*, *“It was very expensive and the lines were very long. Everything was way overpriced”*, and *“the convention itself was expensive and a waste of money”*.

Category 5: Bad Surprise (11.92%)

This category contained responses where respondents had something go wrong in the experience that was not planned for by the respondent. Examples from this category include *“I lost my bathing suit on one of the slides. This was not fun”*, *“The ending result: I was stuck on a roller coaster for 2 hours! The whole trip was a disappointment, and sometimes I wonder if I will ever go to an amusement park again”*, and *“Sightseeing boat that broke down and had to get towed in by the coast guard”*.

Category 6: Lack of Fun (9.93%)

Responses from this category described experiences that were not fun for the respondent. The most frequent word used to describe these experiences was “boring.” Examples from this category include *“He sang terribly and though the band played well, virtually note perfect (they must have had a really good sound team), the show itself was boring”*, *“His music is no good and he is boring”*, and *“The movie was terrible, for all the awards it earned. The plot was slow, the dialogue mind numbing. I kept waiting for the movie to get interesting, I kept telling myself that it won awards, so it has to get interesting, soon”*.

Study 1 and Study 2 together provide us with insight as to the constructs at play in the inputs and outcomes of experiential purchase quality. With study 2, some of the dimensions discovered through Study 1 were confirmed, such as fun and uniqueness, while other dimensions, such as escapism, emerged. The social aspect of the experience, in terms of how it affects perceptions of quality, is also clarified. The CIT responses, especially those stemming from the negative experience, appear to indicate that the level of congruence between the respondent and the others at the experience was key to

experiential quality evaluations. In addition, outcomes such as nostalgia and fantasizing were confirmed, and word-of-mouth behaviors were again shown to take on a “bragging” type of characteristic.

Study 3

Unlike previous conceptualizations that have been primarily theoretical in nature, the present research seeks to empirically test an original empirical model. For study 3, key constructs related to experiential purchase quality are isolated and an empirical model is developed in order to quantitatively test relationships present. The quantitative analysis of these relationships will allow for the relative strength of relationships amongst the variables in the models to be analyzed. The analysis of this model will demonstrate the relative impact of the dimensions as they relate to experiential purchase quality. Understanding the relative strength of each of these dimensions will be valuable for experience providers looking to understand what factors have the most influential impact on customer quality perceptions.

The results from the qualitative studies reveal that customers evaluate quality of the experience using many different factors, but the factors with the most impact appear to be the level of perceived fun, the uniqueness of the experience, the quality of the experiential servicescape, the level of escapism provided, and the level of social congruence between the customer and those with whom the experience is shared. Using this information, a grounded theory design is used for the formation of an experiential purchase quality construct.

In addition, outputs stemming from experiential purchase quality were identified in Study 1 and 2. These outputs were recognized as the customer fantasizing about the

experience, feeling nostalgic about the experience, using self-enhancing word-of-mouth behaviors, evangelizing to others about the experience, desiring to relive the experience and possessing decreased levels of price consciousness regarding a future experiential purchase. Experience providers can gain further insight from a quantitative examination of these outcomes and how these outcomes interact with each other, potentially leading to repeat purchase intentions. In order to perform this analysis, the theory of self-enhancement is applied to the knowledge gained through Study 1 and 2. Using self-enhancement theory as a guide, relationships concerning the outcomes of EPQ are hypothesized and a conceptual model of EPQ and its outcomes is presented.

Theoretical Development

The purpose of this study is to analyze the factors that form, and the outcomes stemming from EPQ. In order to analyze the factors that form EPQ, a grounded theory methodology is used. The grounded theory methodology is an “inductive, theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data” (Martin & Turner 1986, p.141). Grounded theory methodology was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and has been refined over the years by the original authors including Glaser (1978, 1992) as well as Corbin and Strauss (1990), Strauss and Corbin (1994) and Corbin and Strauss (2008). Grounded theory methodology is well established in the marketing literature having been used in studies and topics such as advertisement perceptions (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997), marketing strategy implementation (Noble & Makwa, 1999), and service recovery models (Beverland, Kates, Lindgreen, & Chung, 2010; Ringberg, Odekerken-Schroder, Christiansen, 2007;).

The grounded theory method is especially effective in discovering factors that form second-order constructs, and has been used as such for constructs such as brand love (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012), and mobile word-of-mouth (Palka, Pousttchi, & Wiedemann, 2012).

The steps for a grounded theory design are identical to the open, axial and selective steps used throughout the first two qualitative studies as identified throughout the entirety of the grounded theory literature stream. In the open coding process, a constant comparison technique is used where interview texts are analyzed and emerging themes are noted, coded and recorded. These themes are then subsequently compared with emerging themes in other interviews in order to strengthen the data. In the next stage of axial coding, the researcher identifies the relationships emerging amongst the data. This stage involves the researcher identifying an understanding of the phenomenon that is taking place amongst the variables. Finally, in the selective coding phase, a core variable is identified and all of the other variables are analyzed as to how they relate to that core variable. Through this process, theoretical significance is grounded in the data and should then subsequently be traceable back through the data (Goulding, 2005). For this study, the central construct was EPQ, and the axially coded constructs that go into EPQ's formation were identified through the grounded theory design. Each of these input factors is examined in the proposed model shown in Figure 3.1.

Although the formation of EPQ can be driven through grounded theory design, the nature and relationships of the outcome constructs are different in that the relationship of these behaviors cannot be solely determined by the open, axial, and selective coding process. Experiences have been shown to be central to the self (Carter & Gilovich, 2010,

2012; Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). As this is the case, the theory of self-enhancement (Baumeister, 1998) is appropriate to examine these behaviors stemming from EPQ. Self-enhancement refers to the basic human need to feel good about oneself (Baumeister, 1998). According to the theory of self-enhancement, individuals will engage in behaviors and attitudes to fulfill the need to improve one's own self-image and maintain one's own sense of self-esteem. Self-enhancement as a theoretical concept can be traced to the Maslow (1943) hierarchy of needs. Esteem needs are on the fourth level of the needs hierarchy, and come after the basic needs of physiological, safety and belonging, but before the need for self-actualization. In short, every human has a basic need to feel some sense of self-worth, accomplishment, and social recognition by others. Self-enhancement, as presented by Baumeister (1998), is a component of this basic need demonstrated by preference for favorable and enhancing information, behaviors and attitudes about the self. In addition, the concepts behind the sociometer hypothesis suggest that enhancement of one's own self-esteem is done for the purpose of maintaining one's own sense of social value in interpersonal relationships (Anthony, Wood & Holmes, 2007; Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995,). As the qualitative analysis demonstrates the inherent social nature of experience, it stands to reason the desire to enhance one's sense of social value will drive behaviors related to that experience.

Self-enhancement has been shown to be a driver behind concepts such as role-model selection (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997), narcissistic tendency development (Paulhus & Williams, 2002), and religiosity self-identification (Eriksson & Funcke, 2014). Self-enhancement has been used in marketing research to help explain such concepts as word of mouth behaviors (Angelis et al., 2012; Wien & Olsen, 2014), charitable donation

behaviors (Shang, Reed, & Croson, 2008), and advertising message congruency (Chang, 2005). As has been shown throughout the entirety of the qualitative analysis, the outcomes from EPQ take on a self-enhancing motivation. These relationships from EPQ to these outcomes will be explored in the proposed model shown in Figure 3.1.

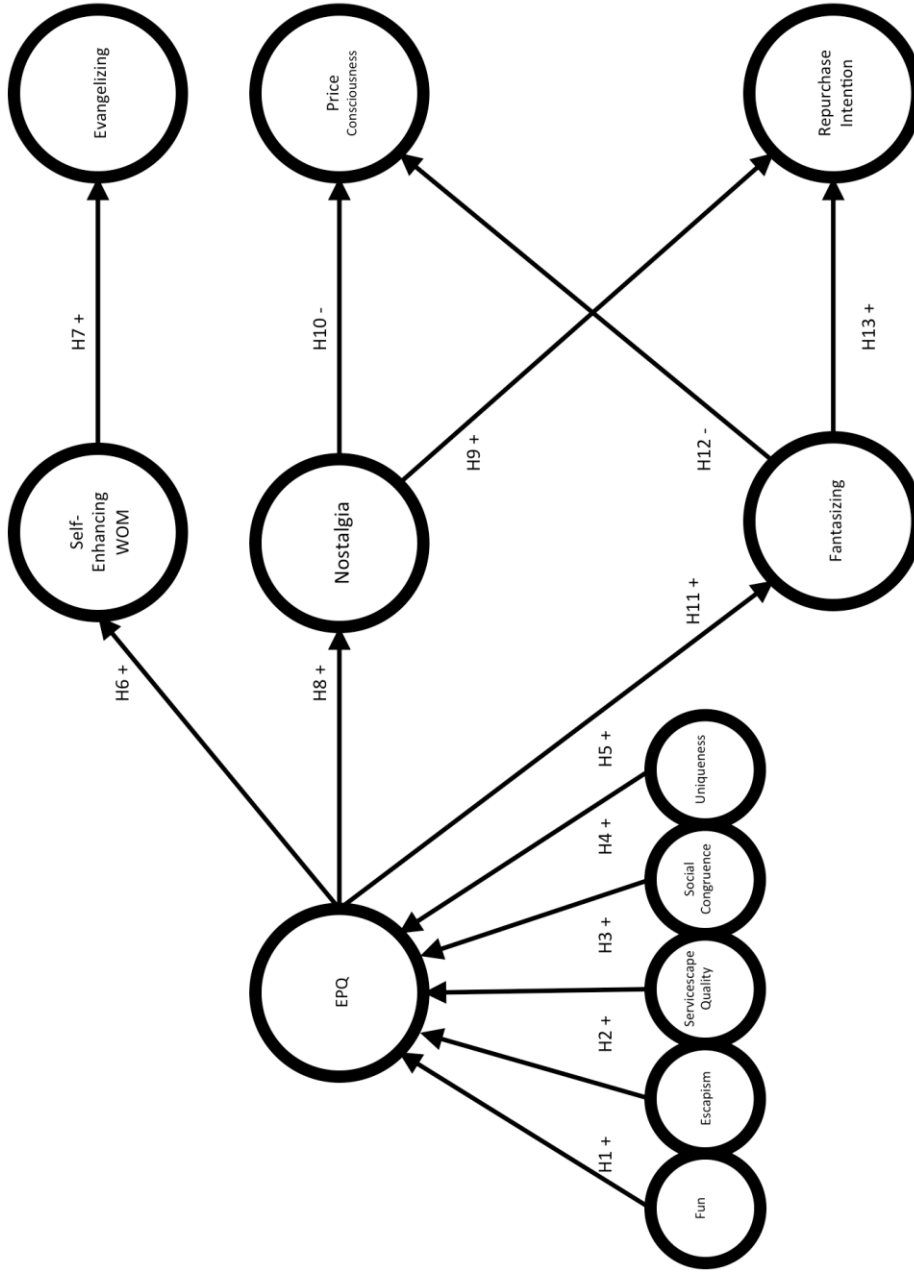


Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework Measuring EPQ and its Outcomes

Hypotheses Development

Dimensions of EPQ

Experiential purchase quality (EPQ) is conceptualized as a first order reflective, second order formative (Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003) construct consisting of fun, escapism, servicescape quality, social congruence and uniqueness. Each of these constructs, explicitly or implicitly, was found through the textual analysis of the depth interviews and/or in the examination of the CIT responses to contribute positively to the consumer's overall evaluation of experiential purchase quality.

Perceived Fun

Fun is defined as the overall level of perceived hedonic enjoyment (Dabholkar, 1994), stemming from the experience. The aspect of fun is one of the primary components of the Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and Holbrook (2000) conceptualizations of experience and is identified as being a value source of experience quality evaluation in the Tynan and McKechnie (2009) holistic experience model. The level of perceived fun has been shown to be a primary driver of experiential purchase choice, and has been shown to decrease tension when making an experiential purchase (Cooper-Martin, 1991; Laran & Janikzewski, 2011). As such:

H1: Perceived Fun will be a positive determinant of EPQ

Escapism

In this context, escapism is defined as the perceived level to which the experience allowed the respondent to remove themselves away from the demands of daily life (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2002). Prelec and Loewenstein (1998) and Patrick and

Park (2006) established that when customers were forced to think about real world costs during an experience, customers reported being taken away from the experience and quality evaluations decreased. In other words, the consumer did not want to think about real world stress factors during the experience. Similarly, attitudinal evaluations of video game and tourist experiences have been shown to increase as the respondents felt more separated from the worries of their actual lives (McIntyre, 2007; Molesworth, 2009). Molesworth (2009) determined that a video game playing experience is most thoroughly enjoyed by the player, when the game becomes a tool for the player to escape from reality and enter the world of the video game. In addition, McIntyre (2007) presents a typology of the process that takes place in the mind of the customer while on a vacation. A key aspect to this process is the customer removing themselves from their routine daily life. This desire for escapism was seen in the qualitative studies, when respondents reported that during their own experiential purchases, they could “sit on the beach, listen to the waves, and not have to think about anything at all.” This leads to the hypothesis:

H2: Escapism will be a positive determinant of EPQ

Serviscape Quality

Serviscape quality in this context is defined as the consumer’s evaluation of the physical environment where the experience took place, including the exterior and interior design, ambient conditions such as temperature and noise as well as tangible parts of the service such as hotel rooms, concert halls, restrooms (Bitner, 1992; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996; Zeithaml, 1988). Serviscape quality (sometimes under the banner of tangibles) is one of the fundamental pillars of service quality (Parasurman et al., 1988) and has been shown to increase evaluations of service quality in countless service studies,

such as influential studies by Thompson and Arsel (2004) and Grove and Fisk (1997). Although experiential purchase quality differs in abstraction and value sources than service quality (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Tynan & McKechnie 2009), it stands to reason that quality evaluations of the physical environment where the experience takes place would have similar effects. As such;

H3: Servicescape quality will be a positive determinant of EPQ

Social Congruence

Social Congruence is defined as the degree to which an individual views a similarity and congruency between their desired outcome of the experience and the perceived desired outcome of those with whom the experience was shared (Rindfleisch, Burroughs, & Wong, 2009). Respondents spent more money on shared experiential purchases and valued these shared experiences more than solo experiences (Caprariello & Reis, 2013; Van Boven, 2005; Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). Congruency with others in experiential situations has been shown to add to the hedonic stimuli (Raghunathan & Corfman, 2006) and the increased enjoyment (Ramanathan & McGill, 2007). In addition, Vacharkulksemsuk and Fredrickson (2011) demonstrate that congruence with others is a key factor in predicting the quality of interpersonal communication. In both qualitative studies, the social component of the experience was a strong factor that emerged. In the CIT responses found in Study 2; whether the respondents were discussing friends, family, or others at the experience, respondents reported a sense of congruency between themselves and those with whom the experience was shared led to positive experiences. For bad or disappointing experiences, the respondent and the entirety of those with whom the experience was shared were not in agreement with each other in terms of what they

were expecting to get out of the experience. Responses such as “The event was overcrowded and about half of the attendees were there for entirely different purposes”

illustrate this finding. This leads to the hypothesis:

H4. Social congruence will be a positive determinant of EPQ

Uniqueness

Uniqueness is defined in this context as the level of perceived novelty and distinctiveness offered by the experience (Franke & Schreier, 2008). Uniqueness (under the synonym of “novelty”) is shown presented as an experiential value source in the Tynan and McKechnie (2009) holistic experience conceptualization, and the Pine and Gilmore (1998) Experience Economy conceptualization. According to Keinan and Kivetz (2011), experiential customers will seek out events that are novel, placing more value on experiences that possess high levels of uniqueness. This behavior was seen in Study 1 and 2 as well. The majority of respondents reported that the uniqueness of the experience was a decisive factor in their overall experiential quality evaluations. Formally hypothesized:

H5 Uniqueness will be a positive determinant of EPQ

EPQ Outcomes

Self-Enhancing Word-Of-Mouth

Self-enhancing word-of-mouth is defined as word of mouth behaviors concerning the experience, which are driven, implicitly or explicitly, by one’s desire for positive recognition from others (Angelis et al., 2012). While positive word-of-mouth has been shown to be an outcome variable in numerous marketing studies on product quality and

service quality, including Herr, Kardes, and Kim (1991), Bone (1995), and Parasuruaman et al. (1988), experiences have a higher attachment to the self than either one of these economic offerings (Carter & Gilovich, 2010, 2012; Van Boven, 2005; Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). Self-enhancement theory (Baumgartner, 1998) states that individuals will act in ways that enhance one's sense of self. As such, because experiences are more attached to one's sense of self, word-of-mouth behaviors concerning experiences of high quality should take on a self-enhancing nature. This activity was seen in both the study 1 and 2. Thus,

H6: EPQ will positively impact self-enhancing word-of-mouth

In addition, self-enhancing word-of-mouth should positively impact evangelizing. Evangelizing in this context is defined as a “more active and committed way of spreading positive opinions and trying fervently to convince or persuade others to get engaged” with the same experience (Pichler & Hemetsberger, 2007 p.27). An important aspect of self-enhancing word-of-mouth is the identification of oneself as exceedingly knowledgeable about the subject (Angelis et al., 2008). In other words, individuals engaging in self-enhancing word-of-mouth behavior often consider themselves to be an expert on the discussed topic. This type of self-confidence, expertise and opinion leadership has been identified as a primary trait leading to evangelism (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki & Wilner, 2010; Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H7: Self-enhancing word-of-mouth will positively impact evangelizing

Nostalgia

Nostalgia is defined as an affect-laden reminiscence of the experience (Muehling & Sprott, 2004). As the experience is highly connected to the self, self-enhancement theory suggests that memories created by an experience should be done in a way that enhances that self-connection. The Wildschut et al. (2006), Arndt and Routledge (2008) and Vess et al. (2012) conceptualizations of nostalgia suggest that nostalgic memories are developed by the individual in order to remember events as the individual chooses to remember them. It is further suggested that these memories will generally focus on the aspects of the event that enhance one's own self-esteem. In addition, the concepts behind retrospective impact bias (Wilson, Meyers & Gilbert, 2003) suggest that individuals will enhance and exaggerate their own sense of happiness stemming from recalled positive events and experiences. Using these conceptualizations and the concepts of self-enhancing theory as a guide, it stands to reason that nostalgic thoughts should be strong following an experience of high quality and the desire to remember it in a self-enhancing way will be powerful. Thus,

H8: EPQ will positively impact nostalgia

In addition, nostalgia should positively impact repurchase intention and negatively impact price consciousness. Repurchase intention is defined as the likelihood that a customer will purchase this particular experience again in the future (Oliver & Swan 1989). Strong relationships between nostalgia and repurchase intention have been established in previous research, such as Sierra and McQuitty (2007) and Hevlena and Holak (1991). Nostalgia, by its very definition, consists of an individual remembering a previous time fondly and wanting to return. It stands to reason that high levels of

nostalgia (high levels of wishing to return to when the experience took place) should positively impact repurchase intentions. In addition, nostalgia should have a negative impact on price consciousness, the buyer's unwillingness to pay more the experience (Lichtenstein et al., 1993), as affect-laden constructs have a negative effect on price consciousness (Zielke, 2011, Fullerton & Bruneau, 2013). In a study on nostalgia and price, Fullerton and Bruneau (2013), determine that consumers are willing to pay more for tickets to baseball stadiums when the consumer feels a sense of nostalgia. As such, we hypothesize:

H9: Nostalgia will positively impact repurchase intention

H10: Nostalgia will negatively impact price consciousness

Fantasizing

Fantasizing is defined in Tynan and McKechnie (2009, p.509) as a “cognitive process focused on how the experience could have been in other contexts, such as with increased knowledge or with different people” Tynan and McKechnie (2009, p.509) also go on to state, “fantasizing allows consumers to go beyond things they have actually experienced and even experience things as their ideal selves.” With this conceptualization of fantasizing, self-enhancing theory suggests that EPQ will positively impact fantasizing, as individuals will be motivated to engage in self-enhancing cognitions focused on making the experience (and hence themselves) better. This reasoning behind fantasizing about an experience is evident in Kwortnik and Ross (2007) who detail individuals engaging in fantasy cognitions concerning an experience for the purpose of enhancing the positive view of the experience. Thus,

H11: EPQ will positively impact fantasizing

Similar to nostalgia, fantasizing should have a positive impact on repurchase intention and a negative relationship with price consciousness. Kwortnik and Ross (2007) identify the act of fantasizing as the consumer replaying and reimagining the experience in a positive way. The proceeding logic suggests that continual positive reimagining will lead to increased intention to return to the experience. In support of this concept, Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez (2001) show that a consumer imagining a tourism experience in their minds leads to increased perceptions of the destination, and ultimately to increased intention to visit that destination. Furthermore, fantasizing has similar emotional components to nostalgia, which have been shown to decrease price consciousness. This concept is demonstrated in MacInnis and Price (1990) who establish that experiences containing a high level of associated mental imagery are perceived to be more desirable and of greater value than experiences containing a low level of associated mental imagery. As such, we hypothesize:

H12: Fantasizing will positively impact repurchase intention

H13: Fantasizing will negatively impact price consciousness

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

Measures

In order to test the proposed model, a survey was developed for the purpose of measuring the eleven latent constructs in the model. Scales were adapted to the context of this study based on scales from previous research. EPQ is conceptualized as a first order reflective, second order formative (Jarvis et al., 2003) construct. In other words, while the EPQ construct is formative, it consists of constructs that are themselves reflective in nature. For the reflective first order dimensions of EPQ, scales for measurement of fun, servicescape quality, uniqueness, escapism, and social congruency were adapted from Dabholkar (1994), Sprott and Shimp (2004) and Franke and Schreier (2008), Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon (2002), and Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Wong (2009) respectively. For the outcomes of EPQ, scales for nostalgia, price consciousness and repurchase intention were adapted from Muehling and Sprott (2004), Shinha and Batra (1999), Oliver and Swan (1989) respectively. The scale for evangelizing was adapted from Pichler and Hemetsberger (2007) and Melancon, Noble, and Noble (2011). There were a total of sixty-one scale items in the survey. Scales were all on a 7-point Likert scale (1-*Strongly Disagree* to 7-*Strongly Agree*), with the exception of repurchase intention, fun, and servicescape quality, which employ 7-point semantic differential scales. In order for clarity, all items in the price consciousness scale were reverse coded.

An extensive review in the extant literature found no scales that could adequately be adapted to capture self-enhancing word-of-mouth in the context of this study, therefore a scale was developed from the self-enhancing word-of-mouth behaviors described in Angelis et al. (2012). Similarly, the scale for fantasizing was developed based on the definitions and descriptions of the construct from Tynan and McKechnie (2009) and Holbrook (2000). In addition, based on the suggestions of Jarvis et al. (2003) two holistic reflective indicators of EPQ were also collected for model identification. All items are shown in Table 4.2.

As EPQ is conceptualized as a formative construct, following the suggestions of Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001), content specification, indicator specification, multicollinearity, and external validity need to be addressed. First, for content specification, the construct of EPQ was defined using well-cited extant literature (Von Boven & Gilovich, 2003) that properly defined both the content and scope of the construct, and the construct itself is composed of dimensions grounded in the qualitative contextual analysis from Study 1 and 2. Second, for indicator specification, there were an ample number of indicators and construct measurements for the dimensions that form EPQ that were grounded in established literature using well-known scales. These steps indicate that the scope of the constructs have been properly identified and specified. Third, in order to assess multicollinearity, the correlations between the dimensions were examined. As can be seen in Table 4.4, multicollinearity does not appear to be a substantial concern. Finally, the items used to measure the constructs are not specific to only one type of experience, suggesting that external validity can be established.

Analysis of Pretest

To test the validity of these scales, a pretest was performed. Similar to the CIT procedure used in Study 2, respondents for the pretest were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk. In order to qualify for this study, participants had to be United States citizens and had to be over the age of 18. Participants were again compensated for their participation in the study. The definitions and examples of both experiential and material purchases were provided to the respondents in order to clarify the requirements of the survey, and attention checks were used throughout the survey. This method resulted in 321 responses. Twenty-one responses were ultimately excluded from analysis due to incompleteness or inappropriateness of response. This resulted in a final total of 300 usable responses. Of the respondents, 60% were female and the average age was 32. The categories of experiential purchases provided by the respondents can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Experiential Purchase Response Categories (Pretest)

Please provide the name and a very brief description of the experience that you will be describing today.

Response Category	Percentage
Trips and Vacations	22.14%
Theme Parks	15.36%
Concerts	11.79%
Camping Trips	6.43%
Sports Events	6.07%
Activities	6.07%
Theme Park Vacations	5.71%
Cruises	5.00%
Exhibits or Museums	4.64%
Beach Trips	3.57%
Conventions or Gatherings	3.21%
Music Festivals	2.86%
Miscellaneous / Other	2.86%
Movies	2.50%
Plays or Shows	1.79%

A reliability analysis and an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were run on the scale items for all 11 constructs present in the model. The coefficient alpha for each of the scales exhibited an acceptable level of reliability ($\alpha > .70$, Nunnally & Berstein, 1994). In addition, each of the items possessed squared multiple correlations (SMC's) greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) as well as inter-item correlations greater than 0.3 and item-total correlations greater than 0.5 (Cortina, 1993). The items were then placed into an EFA in order to test the constructs for unidimensionality as well as convergent and discriminant validity. A principal components extraction method was used and a varimax rotation was performed on each of the constructs separately as well as together. With the exception of two items for uniqueness, two items for fun and one item for nostalgia that

were eliminated from the survey, all items loaded on their respective constructs with no cross-loadings. In addition, when tested individually, all items loaded on a single individual factor, providing evidence of unidimensionality. To view the rotated factor analysis, see Table 4.2.

Next, the scale items were measured using a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). One item measuring self-enhancing word-of-mouth, one item measuring nostalgia, and two items measuring price consciousness demonstrated weak convergent validity and were excluded from the measurement model. This ultimately resulted in forty-seven items used to measure the eleven constructs present in the model. The analysis of the measurement model suggested an acceptable fit of the model to the data ($\chi^2 = 1868.66$, $df = 974$, $p < .001$; CFI = .94, IFI=.94, RMSEA = .055). For complete CFA results, see Table 4.3. The convergent and discriminant validity of the scales were further examined by calculating the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct along with the shared variance between constructs. The AVE for each construct exceeded .50 supporting the convergent validity of the items. No shared variance between constructs exceeded the AVE for an individual construct providing evidence of discriminant validity. To view correlations between constructs and AVE's see Table 4.4.

Table 4.2 Rotated Factor Analysis (pretest)

		Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Fun	This experience was:												
	Not Entertaining	Entertaining											.74
	Not Fun	Fun											.77
	Not Enjoyable	Enjoyable											.76
Escapism	During this experience:												
	I didn't have to think about my usual routine problems.									.73			
	I could step away from my everyday concerns.									.73			
	I didn't have to worry about the demands of daily life.									.82			
	I left the stress of the real world behind									.65			
Servicescape Quality	The physical environment where this experience took place was:												
	Poor	Excellent					.87						
	Low Quality	High Quality					.81						
	Terrible	Superior					.87						
	Horrible	Outstanding					.87						
Social Congruence	The people that I shared this experience with and I:		.77										
	Wanted to get the same thing out of this experience.		.79										
	Shared the same goals.		.82										
	Had the same type of mindset during the experience.		.87										
	Wanted to engage with this experience in a similar manner.		.67										
	Were "all in it together."	Approached this experience in the same way.		.82									
Uniqueness	This experience was:												.83
	One of a kind												.87
	Highly unique	Unlike any other											.84
Self-Enhancing Word-of-Mouth	When talking about this experience:		.81										
	I want to tell others how great of a time I had.		.86										
	I'm excited to let others know exactly what I have experienced.		.84										
	I'm eager to tell people what I have done.		.86										
	I'm enthusiastic about describing the experience that I had done.		.67										
	I want to brag about the experience to others.	I'm excited to let others know what I had been through.		.83									

Table 4.2 (Continued)

	Factor											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Nostalgia												
Thinking back on this experience												.45
Brings back good memories.												.59
I wish I could go back to that time.												.68
I'm pleasantly reminded of a past time.												.58
I recall happy memories.												.67
Makes me reminisce about a previous time.												
Fantasizing												
With this experience, I have thought about:												.84
Ways to make this experience better.												.89
Modifying this experience to make it more enjoyable.												.90
What I could do differently in this experience the next time.												.89
Ways in which I could do this experience differently.												.85
How I can "change it up" if I do the experience again.												
Evangelizing												
Regarding this experience:												.87
I often try to get others to do this kind of experience.												.86
I have tried to persuade others to think about doing this kind of experience.												.87
I try to convince others possible to do this kind of experience.												.69
I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about the great time they could have doing this kind of experience.												.81
I have tried to recruit others to do this kind of experience.												
Price Consciousness												
Regardless of inflation, if I were to do this experience again												.72
I would be willing to spend more money on it next time.												.73
I would not look to only buy the lowest-priced option available.												.78
I would not rely exclusively on price for my decision.												.70
The price of the experience would not be my only concern.												.73
Price would not be the most important factor.												.78
I would be willing to pay more than last time.												
Repurchase Intention												
How likely is it that you will purchase this experience again?												.88
Unlikely: Likely												.86
Very Improbable: Very Probable												.81
Impossible: Possible												.78
No Chance: Certain												

Table 4.3 Confirmatory Factor and Reliability Analysis (Pretest)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Fun (cr=.98)			
This experience was:			
-Entertaining / Not Entertaining	.82	**	.68
-Fun / Not Fun	.91	19.06	.83
-Enjoyable / Not Enjoyable	.88	18.27	.77
Escapism (cr=.95)			
During this experience:			
- I didn't have to think about my usual routine problems.	.81	**	.66
- I could step away from my everyday concerns	.90	18.14	.81
- I didn't have to worry about the demands of daily life.	.84	20.79	.71
- I left the stress of the real world behind	.87	17.34	.75
Servicescape Quality (cr=.97)			
How would you rate the quality of the physical environment where this experience took place?			
- Poor / Excellent	.91	**	.82
- Low Quality / High Quality	.85	21.48	.73
- Terrible / Superior	.91	25.07	.83
- Horrible / Outstanding	.92	25.98	.85
Social Congruency (cr=.97)			
The people that I shared this experience with and I:			
- Wanted to get the same thing out of this experience	.81	**	.66
- Shared the same goals	.84	20.80	.71
- Had the same type of mindset during the experience.	.89	18.82	.79
- Wanted to engage with this experience in a similar manner.	.93	20.09	.86
- Were "all in it together"	.75	14.75	.57
- Approached this experience in the same way.	.89	18.83	.79
Uniqueness (cr=.96)			
This experience was:			
- One of a kind	.89	**	.79
- Highly Unique	.93	23.38	.87
- Unlike any other	.85	20.29	.73
Self-Enhancing Word-Of-Mouth (cr=.98)			
When talking about this experience:			
- I want to tell others about what a great time I had	.88	**	.78
- I'm excited to let others know exactly what I have experienced.	.96	27.42	.91
- I'm eager to tell people what I have done.	.93	25.19	.86
- I'm enthusiastic about describing the experience that I had done.	.93	25.54	.87
- I'm excited to let others know what I had been through.	.91	24.33	.83

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Nostalgia (cr=.93)			
Thinking back on this experience:			
- Brings back good memories	.83	**	.68
- I'm pleasantly reminded of a past time	.75	14.50	.57
- I recall happy memories.	.84	16.89	.71
- Makes me reminisce about a previous time.	.77	14.94	.60
Fantasizing (cr=.98)			
With this experience, I have thought about:			
- Ways to make this experience better	.93	**	.65
- Modifying this experience to make it more enjoyable.	.95	28.78	.74
- What I could do differently in this experience the next time	.96	19.40	.85
- Ways in which I could do this experience differently	.79	19.27	.84
- How I can "change it up" if I do the experience again.	.91	18.44	.79
Evangelizing (cr=.98)			
Regarding this experience:			
- I often try to get others to do this kind of experience	.93	**	.86
- I have tried to persuade others to think about doing this kind of experience	.95	32.01	.89
- I try to convince others to do this kind of experience	.96	34.64	.93
- I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about the great time they could have doing this kind of experience	.79	19.69	.63
- I have tried to recruit others to do this kind of experience	.91	27.71	.82
Price Consciousness (cr=.93)			
Regardless of inflation, if I were to do this experience again:			
- I would not look to only buy the lowest-priced option available	.78	**	.61
- I would not rely exclusively on price for my decision	.86	15.48	.74
- The price of the experience would not be my only concern	.80	14.44	.65
- Price would not be the most important factor	.76	13.54	.58
Repurchase Intention (cr=.98)			
How likely is it that you will purchase this experience again?			
- Unlikely / Likely	.97	**	.94
- Very Improbable / Very Probable	.96	41.68	.92
- Impossible / Possible	.88	27.97	.77
- No Chance / Certain	.90	31.00	.81
Note - ** = denotes a constrained relationship to 1.00 in order for identification			
Model Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 1868.661$, $df = 974$ $p < .001$; CFI = .94, IFI=.94, RMSEA = .055			
n = 300 , cr = Composite Reliability, SMC = Squared Multiple Correlation			

Table 4.4 Means, Standard deviations and correlations (Pretest)

	Mean	Std Dev	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Uniqueness	5.37	1.26	.80										
2. Fun	6.64	0.64	.28	.76									
3. Escapism	6.14	0.97	.30	.53	.73								
4. Servicescape Quality	5.88	1.02	.22	.38	.34	.81							
5. Soc Congruence	5.86	1.07	.25	.44	.55	.32	.73						
6. Nostalgia	6.12	0.84	.34	.59	.59	.35	.57	.64					
7. Self En WOM	5.42	1.27	.34	.33	.36	.25	.44	.52	.85				
8. Fantasizing	4.03	1.68	-.12	-.12	-.13	-.05	-.08	-.09	.06	.77			
9. Price Con	4.82	1.27	.24	.24	.31	.19	.31	.31	.41	.17	.65		
10. Evangelizing	4.66	1.56	.12	.18	.29	.2	.29	.28	.51	.28	.42	.83	
11. Repurchase Intent	5.88	1.39	.01	.28	.31	.33	.26	.32	.35	.16	.44	.52	.86
Values in the diagonal represent the average variance extracted for each construct 7-point scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 7-Strongly Agree)													

After further consideration, an additional scale for self-enhancing word-of-mouth was designed for the purpose of measuring more explicit self-enhancing motivations behind word-of-mouth behavior. For this scale, three researchers well versed in the appropriate literature generated scale items, again grounded in the definition of the construct and manipulation checks presented in Angelis et al. (2011). After items were generated and decided upon by the researchers, the scale was then pretested with the other scales in the analysis. For this pretest, Amazon Mturk was used to collect 127 responses, 17 of which were eliminated due to being incomplete or inappropriate. This method resulted in a final total of 110 usable responses. Of the respondents, 53% were

male and the average age was 32. A reliability analysis was performed and the scales exhibited an acceptable level of alpha ($>.70$, Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) and all of the scale items loaded on a single factor in an EFA. In addition, a CFA was performed that demonstrated no significant measurement concerns.

After the survey instrument was refined in the pretest EFA, the pretest CFA and the self-enhancing word-of-mouth construct refinement, the revised scale ultimately used in the final study measured eleven constructs with a total of forty-eight scale items. The final survey instrument can be seen in the CFA charts for the primary data collection shown in Table 4.5.

Primary Data Collection

Data were collected from three different time horizons each encompassing two different experience categories. This analysis will allow for the exploration of differences that may exist between dimensions and outcomes of short and intense experiential purchases and dimensions and outcomes of longer experiential purchases where the customer can presumably engage with the experience at a much more leisurely pace. By looking across these time horizons, a more holistic understanding of experiential purchase quality can hopefully be obtained. Furthermore, by investigating the differences between experiential time horizons, further practitioner-focused discussion and future academic research opportunities can be generated. For instance, are there any dimensions, such as servicescape quality or escapism, which are more impactful across longer experiences? Do longer experiences allow for more nostalgic memories to be generated? With time and intensity categories grounded in the qualitative data analysis, a multi-group comparison is performed for the purpose of answering questions such as this.

The time horizon and experiential categories used in this research were chosen as they emerged through analysis of the experiential categories found in Study 2 and the Study 3 pretest, seen in Tables 3.1 and 4.1 respectively. The time horizon and experiential categories ultimately utilized for this research represent a majority of the responses present in the aforementioned previous studies. The three time horizon categories that emerged through this analysis are hours-long experiences, two-to-three day experiences, and weeklong experiences. Hours-long experiences are categorized as experiences that last for less than one full day and do not include an overnight stay in the experiential physical environment. Experience categories used for the hours-long analysis are concerts and one-day theme park visits. Two-to-three day experiences are categorized as experiences that include one or two overnight stays in the experiential physical environment, such as a weekend trip. Experience categories used for the two-to-three day analysis are two-to-three day theme park visits and two-to-three day vacations. Finally, weeklong experiences are categorized as experiences where the consumer spends over five overnight stays in the experiential environment. Similar to the two-to-three day analysis, vacations and theme park visits are used for the weeklong analysis. In addition to analyzing the structural model for each of these time horizons individually, a multi-group analysis will be performed for the purpose of examining differences in the dimensions and outcomes of EPQ across these different time horizons.

Respondents were again recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk for each of the six data collections. In order to qualify for the study, participants had to be United States citizens, over the age of 18, and have had successfully completed over 1,000 Mechanical Turk surveys with a 95% approval rating. Participants were compensated 75

cents for their participation in the study. Once again, definitions and examples of the experiential and material purchases were provided to the respondents in order to clarify the requirements of the survey. In addition, the respondents were provided with a detailed description of the exact experimental category (concert, theme park, or vacation) and experiential time horizon category (hours-long, two-to-three days, or weeklong) for the specific data collection. The respondent was also taken through a series of questions in order to ensure that the experience was appropriate for the collection. This method resulted in a final total of 1,839 usable responses across all experiential categories and time horizons. Of the respondents, 55% were male and the average age was 35. In order to test for common methods bias, the common latent factor method suggested in Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff (2003) was used. In this analysis, all of the items are connected to a single factor and the χ^2 difference between the model with the latent factor and the model without the latent factor are compared. The results of the common latent factor analysis ($\Delta \chi^2 < .10$) suggest that common methods bias is not a substantial concern in the analysis.

Hours-long Experiences

In order to assess the hypothesized relationships present in the model for hours-long experiences, two samples were obtained. The first sample consists of respondents answering questions about a concert experience and the second sample consists of respondents answering questions about an hours-long theme park visit. For the concert experience sample, 365 participants completed the survey. Sixty-four were excluded due to incompleteness, failure of an in-survey attention check, or failure to provide an appropriate concert experience lasting less than one day. This resulted in a final, usable

sample of 301. This sample was 53% male, and the average age was 36. The hours-long theme park visit sample resulted in 379 completed surveys. Seventy-five responses were excluded due to incompleteness, failure of an in-survey attention check, or failure to provide an appropriate theme park experience. This resulted in a final, usable sample of 304 responses. This sample was 52% male, and the average age was 34.

The scale items for each data collection were then analyzed using a CFA. Composite reliability was calculated for each of the scales and each of the scales exhibited an acceptable level of reliability ($>.70$, Hair, Tatham, Anderson & Black, 2006). The analysis of the measurement model suggested an acceptable fit of the model to the data for both the concerts ($\chi^2 = 2085.200$, $df = 1018$, $\chi^2/df = 2.05$, $p < .001$; CFI = .93, IFI = .93, RMSEA = .059) and the hours-long theme park samples ($\chi^2 = 1699.350$, $df = 1018$, $\chi^2/df = 1.67$, $p < .001$; CFI = .96, IFI = .96, RMSEA = .046). For complete CFA results for the concerts and the hours-long theme park samples, see Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 respectively. The convergent and discriminant validity of the scales were further examined by calculating the AVE for each construct along with the shared variance between constructs. The AVE for each construct exceeded .50 supporting the convergent validity of the items. No shared variance between constructs exceeded the AVE for any of the individual constructs, providing evidence of discriminant validity. To view correlations between constructs and AVE's see Table 4.7.

The samples were combined in order to examine the hours-long time horizon. To ensure construct conceptualizations were consistent the same across the two groups, invariance analyses were performed. Configurable invariance was found to be present following the suggestions of Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1994). In addition, partial

metric invariance ($df=38, \chi^2=41.10, p=.34$) was also found to be present following the suggestions of Hair et al. (2006).

After the invariance analyses were performed, the structural model presented in Figure 3.1 was then analyzed for the combined samples. The results suggest an acceptable fit of the model to the data for both samples ($\chi^2= 2181.767, df= 1018, \chi^2/df= 2.14, p < .001, \chi^2/df= 2.58, IFI=.95, CFI=.96, RMSEA=.044$). After assessing the overall fit of the model to the data, the structural relationships between constructs were examined. The standardized path estimates and t-values for each hypothesized relationship in each model can be seen in Table 4.8 and Figure 4.1.

Table 4.5 Confirmatory Factor and Reliability Analysis – Concerts (Hours)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Fun (cr=.92)			
This experience was:			
-Entertaining / Not Entertaining	.86	**	.75
-Fun / Not Fun	.85	19.53	.72
-Enjoyable / Not Enjoyable	.96	23.82	.93
Escapism (cr=.94)			
During this experience:			
- I didn't have to think about my usual routine problems.	.85	**	.72
- I could step away from my everyday concerns	.94	22.57	.89
- I didn't have to worry about the demands of daily life.	.85	23.30	.72
- I left the stress of the real world behind	.90	20.95	.81
Servicescape Quality (cr=.96)			
How would you rate the quality of the physical environment where this experience took place?			
- Poor / Excellent	.91	**	.83
- Low Quality / High Quality	.87	23.05	.75
- Terrible / Superior	.94	29.12	.89
- Horrible / Outstanding	.96	30.73	.92
Social Congruency (cr=.93)			
The people that I shared this experience with and I:			
- Wanted to get the same thing out of this experience	.82	**	.68
- Shared the same goals	.75	15.13	.56
- Had the same type of mindset during the experience.	.90	19.56	.80
- Wanted to engage with this experience in a similar manner.	.93	20.71	.86
- Were "all in it together"	.75	14.90	.56
- Approached this experience in the same way.	.85	18.00	.73
Uniqueness (cr=.94)			
This experience was:			
- One of a kind	.90	**	.81
- Highly Unique	.97	29.29	.95
- Unlike any other	.89	23.74	.78
Self-Enhancing Word-Of-Mouth (cr=.94)			
When talking about this experience:			
- Makes me feel good about myself	.74	**	.55
- Boosts my self-esteem	.86	20.09	.73
- Makes me feel like the center of attention	.80	14.17	.64
- Makes me feel special	.90	16.37	.81
- Makes me feel a sense of pride	.90	16.38	.82
- Makes me feel important	.91	16.56	.83

Table 4.5 (Continued)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Nostalgia (cr=.91)			
Thinking back on this experience:			
- Brings back good memories	.81	**	.65
- I'm pleasantly reminded of a past time	.84	17.02	.71
- I recall happy memories.	.93	19.50	.87
- Makes me reminisce about a previous time.	.83	16.64	.69
Fantasizing (cr=.96)			
With this experience, I have thought about:			
- Ways to make this experience better	.93	**	.69
- Modifying this experience to make it more enjoyable.	.88	29.53	.78
- What I could do differently in this experience the next time	.94	22.08	.89
- Ways in which I could do this experience differently	.96	22.85	.92
- How I can "change it up" if I do the experience again.	.89	20.14	.80
Evangelizing (cr=.96)			
Regarding this experience:			
- I often try to get others to do this kind of experience	.93	**	.86
- I have tried to persuade others to think about doing this kind of experience	.96	33.34	.92
- I try to convince others to do this kind of experience	.98	36.01	.95
- I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about the great time they could have doing this kind of experience	.78	18.82	.60
- I have tried to recruit others to do this kind of experience	.87	24.31	.76
Price Consciousness (cr=.83)			
Regardless of inflation, if I were to do this experience again:			
- I would not look to only buy the lowest-priced option available	.80	**	.64
- I would not rely exclusively on price for my decision.	.83	14.17	.68
- The price of the experience would not be my only concern	.66	11.38	.44
- Price would not be the most important factor.	.68	11.66	.46
Repurchase Intention (cr=.97)			
How likely is it that you will purchase this experience again?			
- Unlikely / Likely	.98	**	.95
- Very Improbable / Very Probable	.98	54.94	.96
- Impossible / Possible	.90	31.63	.80
- No Chance / Certain	.94	38.98	.88
Note - ** = denotes a constrained relationship to 1.00 in order for identification			
Model Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 2085.200$, $df = 1018$, $\chi^2/df = 2.05$, $p < .001$; CFI = .93, IFI=.93, RMSEA = .059			
n = 301, cr = Composite Reliability, SMC = Squared Multiple Correlation			

Table 4.6 Confirmatory Factor and Reliability Analysis – Theme Parks (Hours)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Fun (cr=.94)			
This experience was:			
-Entertaining / Not Entertaining	.87	**	.76
-Fun / Not Fun	.95	24.92	.89
-Enjoyable / Not Enjoyable	.92	23.84	.85
Escapism (cr=.91)			
During this experience:			
- I didn't have to think about my usual routine problems.	.84	**	.71
- I could step away from my everyday concerns	.91	19.16	.82
- I didn't have to worry about the demands of daily life.	.86	24.31	.75
- I left the stress of the real world behind	.79	15.98	.62
Servicescape Quality (cr=.96)			
How would you rate the quality of the physical environment where this experience took place?			
- Poor / Excellent	.93	**	.86
- Low Quality / High Quality	.92	28.31	.84
- Terrible / Superior	.93	29.66	.87
- Horrible / Outstanding	.94	30.99	.89
Social Congruency (cr=.93)			
The people that I shared this experience with and I:			
- Wanted to get the same thing out of this experience	.79	**	.63
- Shared the same goals	.81	20.93	.66
- Had the same type of mindset during the experience.	.91	18.53	.83
- Wanted to engage with this experience in a similar manner.	.89	17.96	.79
- Were "all in it together"	.76	14.46	.58
- Approached this experience in the same way.	.86	17.20	.74
Uniqueness (cr=.95)			
This experience was:			
- One of a kind	.93	**	.86
- Highly Unique	.95	31.07	.91
- Unlike any other	.91	27.07	.82
Self-Enhancing Word-Of-Mouth (cr=.95)			
When talking about this experience:			
- Makes me feel good about myself	.73	**	.53
- Boosts my self-esteem	.85	19.69	.72
- Makes me feel like the center of attention	.87	15.31	.76
- Makes me feel special	.88	15.61	.78
- Makes me feel a sense of pride	.94	16.67	.89
- Makes me feel important	.93	16.47	.86

Table 4.6 (Continued)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t- values	SMC's
Nostalgia (cr=.92)			
Thinking back on this experience:			
- Brings back good memories	.90	**	.80
- I'm pleasantly reminded of a past time	.85	20.83	.73
- I recall happy memories.	.90	23.40	.81
- Makes me reminisce about a previous time.	.81	19.06	.66
Fantasizing (cr=.94)			
With this experience, I have thought about:			
- Ways to make this experience better	.91	**	.60
- Modifying this experience to make it more enjoyable.	.82	29.15	.67
- What I could do differently in this experience the next time	.90	17.70	.81
- Ways in which I could do this experience differently	.94	18.53	.88
- How I can "change it up" if I do the experience again.	.90	17.74	.82
Evangelizing (cr=.97)			
Regarding this experience:			
- I often try to get others to do this kind of experience	.91	**	.84
- I have tried to persuade others to think about doing this kind of experience	.97	33.76	.94
- I try to convince others to do this kind of experience	.98	35.52	.97
- I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about the great time they could have doing this kind of experience	.81	20.51	.66
- I have tried to recruit others to do this kind of experience	.91	27.20	.83
Price Consciousness (cr=.84)			
Regardless of inflation, if I were to do this experience again:			
- I would not look to only buy the lowest-priced option available	.69	**	.47
- I would not rely exclusively on price for my decision.	.87	12.32	.76
- The price of the experience would not be my only concern	.73	11.08	.53
- Price would not be the most important factor.	.70	10.74	.49
Repurchase Intention (cr=.97)			
How likely is it that you will purchase this experience again?			
- Unlikely / Likely	.97	**	.94
- Very Improbable / Very Probable	.99	53.92	.97
- Impossible / Possible	.89	30.14	.79
- No Chance / Certain	.90	31.36	.81
Note - ** = denotes a constrained relationship to 1.00 in order for identification			
Model Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 1699.350$, $df = 1018$, $\chi^2/df = 1.67$, $p < .001$; CFI = .96, IFI = .96, RMSEA = .046			
n=304 , cr = Composite Reliability, SMC = Squared Multiple Correlation			

Table 4.7 Means, Standard deviations, AVE's and correlations (Hours)

	Concerts		Theme Parks Mean		AVE Concerts		AVE Theme Parks		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Concerts	Theme Parks														
1. Uniqueness	5.64	1.33	5.36	1.30	.85	.86	.51	.47	.54	.27	.53	.43	.01	.25	.31	.03				
2. Fun	6.63	0.77	6.47	0.73	.80	.84	.41	.58	.60	.31	.71	.34	-.13	.23	.29	.43				
3. Escapism	6.23	0.93	6.08	0.91	.78	.72	.40	.55	.47	.39	.62	.30	-.10	.22	.25	.28				
4. Servicescape Quality	5.58	1.13	5.88	0.99	.85	.86	.37	.35	.25	.36	.52	.42	.03	.18	.28	.42				
5. Soc Congruence	5.71	1.01	5.59	0.97	.70	.71	.42	.52	.55	.37	.39	.37	-.03	.07	.31	.23				
6. Nostalgia	6.17	0.93	6.10	0.86	.73	.75	.51	.63	.63	.37	.66	.44	-.05	.27	.32	.44				
7. Self En WOM	4.74	1.41	4.49	1.34	.73	.76	.35	.19	.30	.31	.41	.38	.16	.26	.55	.31				
8. Fantasizing	3.28	1.63	4.07	1.53	.81	.75	-.24	-.31	-.30	-.12	-.23	-.36	.06	.12	.22	.10				
9. Price Con	5.17	1.35	4.62	1.26	.56	.56	.38	.31	.34	.20	.28	.39	.32	-.06	.1	.25	.19			
10. Evangelizing	4.54	1.56	4.33	1.59	.82	.85	.25	.23	.21	.33	.40	.31	.51	.10	.34	.45				
11. Repurchase Intent	5.59	1.79	5.76	1.38	.90	.88	.29	.33	.23	.22	.29	.31	.23	-.05	.35	.39	.1			

Values above the diagonal represent theme parks, values below the diagonal represent concerts
7-point scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 7-Strongly Agree)

Table 4.8 Structural Model Test Results for Hours-long Experiences

Hypothesized Relationship	Standardized Estimate	t-Value	Hypothesis Supported
H1: Fun → EPQ	.44	11.26 *	Yes
H2: Escapism → EPQ	.08	2.18 *	Yes
H3: Servicescape Quality → EPQ	.17	5.43 *	Yes
H4: Social Congruence → EPQ	.03	0.96	No
H5: Uniqueness → EPQ	.37	11.19 *	Yes
H6: EPQ → Self-Enhancing Word-of-mouth	.42	9.64 *	Yes
H7: Self-Enhancing Word-of-mouth → Evangelizing	.53	12.59 *	Yes
H8: EPQ → Nostalgia	.76	18.88 *	Yes
H9: Nostalgia → Repurchase Intention	.41	9.96 *	Yes
H10: Nostalgia → Price Consciousness	.41	8.84 *	Yes
H11: EPQ → Fantasizing	-.22	-5.04 *	No
H12: Fantasizing → Price Consciousness	.04	1.00	No
H13: Fantasizing → Repurchase Intention	.11	2.74 *	Yes

$\chi^2 = 2951.7830$, $df = 1145$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.578$
 IFI < .95, CFI < .95, TLI < .94, RMSEA = .051
 Note: * = <.05

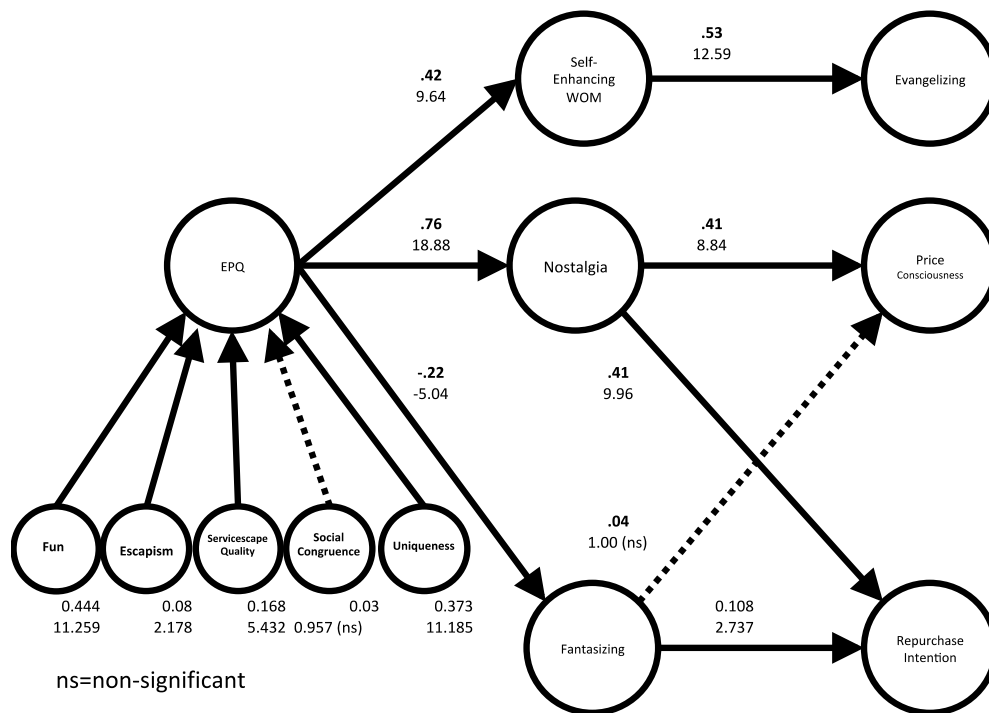


Figure 4.1 Structural Model Test Results for Hours-long Experiences

Results (Hours-Long)

In terms of the dimensions of EPQ, hypotheses concerning the positive EPQ determinants of fun (H1), escapism (H2), servicescape quality (H3), and uniqueness (H5) were supported. However, H4 is not supported, as social congruence was not shown to be a significant positive determinant of EPQ. Of the significant dimensions, fun has the largest impact on EPQ ($\beta=.44$), followed by uniqueness ($\beta=.37$), servicescape quality ($\beta=.17$), and escapism ($\beta=.08$) respectively. In terms of the outputs, EPQ was shown to have a positive impact on self-enhancing word-of-mouth, therefore H6 is supported. In addition self-enhancing word-of-mouth was demonstrated to positively impact evangelizing, supporting H7. Nostalgia is positively impacted by EPQ, showing support for H8. It is of note that the relationship between EPQ and nostalgia ($\beta=.76$) is the strongest relationship present in the model. Given the strength of the EPQ to nostalgia relationship, it is perhaps unsurprising that nostalgia was shown to have a significant positive relationship with both repurchase intention and decreased price consciousness, supporting H9 and H10 respectively. Surprisingly, while there is a significant relationship between EPQ and fantasizing, that relationship is negative and not the positive relationship hypothesized. Due to this negative relationship, H11 is not supported. It is interesting that while a strong positive EPQ to nostalgia relationship is found to present, the relationship between EPQ and the somewhat related construct of fantasizing is significantly negative. Results for the hypothesized relationships stemming from fantasizing are mixed. Support for H12 is not found, as fantasizing does not positively impact decreased price consciousness. Conversely, fantasizing is shown to positively impact repurchase intention supporting H13. It is notable that while fantasizing itself has

a significant negative relationship with EPQ, fantasizing does indeed lead to increased levels of purchase intention for the experience.

Two-to-Three Day Experiences

Similar to the method used to assess hours-long experiences, two samples were obtained for the purpose of assessing the hypothesized relationships present in the model for experiences lasting two-to-three days. The first sample consists of respondents answering questions about a two-to-three day theme park experience and the second sample consists of respondents answering questions about a two-to-three-day, non-theme park-centric vacation. For the theme park experience sample, 365 participants completed the survey. Sixty-five were excluded due to incompleteness, failure of an in-survey attention check, or failure to provide an appropriate theme park experience for the desired time horizon. This resulted in a final, usable sample of 300. This sample was 53% male with an average age 36. The two-to-three day vacation sample resulted in 388 completed surveys. Sixty-one responses were excluded due to incompleteness, failure of an in-survey attention check, or failure to provide an appropriate two-to-three-day vacation experience. This resulted in a final, usable sample of 327 responses. This sample was 53% male and had an average age of 35.

The scale items for each data collection were analyzed using a CFA. Composite reliability was calculated for each of the scales and exhibited an acceptable level of reliability ($>.70$, Hair et al., 2006). The analysis of the measurement model suggested an acceptable fit of the model to the data for both the two-to-three-day theme park ($\chi^2 = 1946.976$, $df = 1018$, $\chi^2/df = 1.91$, $p < .001$; CFI = .94, IFI = .94, RMSEA = .055) and the two-to-three-day vacation samples ($\chi^2 = 1805.217$, $df = 1018$, $\chi^2/df = 1.77$, $p < .001$; CFI

= .95, IFI=.96, RMSEA = .049). For complete CFA results for the two-to-three day theme park and vacation samples, see Table 4.9 and Table 4.10 respectively. The convergent and discriminant validity of the scales were further examined by calculating the AVE for each construct along with the shared variance between constructs. Supporting evidence of the convergent validity of the items, the AVE for each construct exceeded .50. Supporting evidence of discriminant validity, no shared variance between constructs exceeded the AVE for an individual construct. To view correlations between constructs and AVE's see Table 4.11.

Similar to the hours-long analysis, the samples were combined in order to examine the two-to-three day horizon. To ensure construct conceptualizations were consistent the same across the two groups, invariance analyses were performed. Configurable invariance was found to be present following the suggestions of Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1994). Furthermore, partial metric invariance ($df=33$, $\chi^2=40.76$, $p=.166$) was also found to be present following the suggestions of Hair et al. (2006).

After analysis of the combined sample's invariance, the structural model presented in Figure 3.1 was analyzed for the combined samples. The results suggest an acceptable fit of the model to the data for both samples ($\chi^2= 2243.827$, $df = 1018$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.20$, IFI =.96, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .044). After assessing the overall fit of the model to the data, the structural relationships between constructs were examined. The standardized path estimates and t-values for each hypothesized relationship in each model can be seen in Table 4.12 and Figure 4.2.

Table 4.9 Confirmatory Factor and Reliability Analysis – Theme Park (Days)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Fun (cr=.95)			
This experience was:			
-Entertaining / Not Entertaining	.89	**	.79
-Fun / Not Fun	.96	27.85	.92
-Enjoyable / Not Enjoyable	.96	28.12	.92
Escapism (cr=.92)			
During this experience:			
- I didn't have to think about my usual routine problems.	.89	**	.79
- I could step away from my everyday concerns	.83	18.58	.69
- I didn't have to worry about the demands of daily life.	.87	24.94	.75
- I left the stress of the real world behind	.85	19.25	.72
Servicescape Quality (cr=.95)			
How would you rate the quality of the physical environment where this experience took place?			
- Poor / Excellent	.90	**	.80
- Low Quality / High Quality	.86	21.90	.74
- Terrible / Superior	.92	25.87	.85
- Horrible / Outstanding	.95	27.62	.90
Social Congruency (cr=.93)			
The people that I shared this experience with and I:			
- Wanted to get the same thing out of this experience	.84	**	.70
- Shared the same goals	.76	19.17	.58
- Had the same type of mindset during the experience.	.88	19.31	.78
- Wanted to engage with this experience in a similar manner.	.90	19.93	.81
- Were "all in it together"	.70	13.59	.49
- Approached this experience in the same way.	.88	19.03	.77
Uniqueness (cr=.95)			
This experience was:			
- One of a kind	.90	**	.82
- Highly Unique	.96	28.56	.92
- Unlike any other	.91	25.11	.82
Self-Enhancing Word-Of-Mouth (cr=.94)			
When talking about this experience:			
- Makes me feel good about myself	.74	**	.55
- Boosts my self-esteem	.84	18.69	.71
- Makes me feel like the center of attention	.86	15.42	.74
- Makes me feel special	.89	16.15	.79
- Makes me feel a sense of pride	.90	16.35	.82
- Makes me feel important	.91	16.51	.82

Table 4.9 (Continued)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Nostalgia (cr=.93)			
Thinking back on this experience:			
- Brings back good memories	.82	**	.66
- I'm pleasantly reminded of a past time	.92	19.90	.84
- I recall happy memories.	.94	20.60	.88
- Makes me reminisce about a previous time.	.85	17.62	.72
Fantasizing (cr=.93)			
With this experience, I have thought about:			
- Ways to make this experience better	.96	**	.60
- Modifying this experience to make it more enjoyable.	.82	26.78	.67
- What I could do differently in this experience the next time	.91	17.15	.82
- Ways in which I could do this experience differently	.90	16.93	.80
- How I can "change it up" if I do the experience again.	.84	15.65	.70
Evangelizing (cr=.97)			
Regarding this experience:			
- I often try to get others to do this kind of experience	.96	**	.92
- I have tried to persuade others to think about doing this kind of experience	.96	40.85	.92
- I try to convince others to do this kind of experience	.97	44.19	.95
- I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about the great time they could have doing this kind of experience	.86	25.44	.74
- I have tried to recruit others to do this kind of experience	.92	32.25	.84
Price Consciousness (cr=.88)			
Regardless of inflation, if I were to do this experience again:			
- I would not look to only buy the lowest-priced option available	.79	**	.62
- I would not rely exclusively on price for my decision.	.91	16.70	.83
- The price of the experience would not be my only concern	.80	14.64	.63
- Price would not be the most important factor.	.72	12.96	.52
Repurchase Intention (cr=.96)			
How likely is it that you will purchase this experience again?			
- Unlikely / Likely	.98	**	.96
- Very Improbable / Very Probable	.98	55.36	.96
- Impossible / Possible	.86	26.90	.74
- No Chance / Certain	.89	30.13	.78
Note - ** = denotes a constrained relationship to 1.00 in order for identification			
Model Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 1946.976$, $df = 1018$, $p < .001$; CFI = .94, IFI=.94, RMSEA = .055			
n=300 , cr = Composite Reliability, SMC = Squared Multiple Correlation			

Table 4.10 Confirmatory Factor and Reliability Analysis – Vacation (Days)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Fun (cr=.93)			
This experience was:			
-Entertaining / Not Entertaining	.87	**	.76
-Fun / Not Fun	.94	24.99	.89
-Enjoyable / Not Enjoyable	.90	22.81	.81
Escapism (cr=.93)			
During this experience:			
- I didn't have to think about my usual routine problems.	.92	**	.85
- I could step away from my everyday concerns	.92	27.82	.85
- I didn't have to worry about the demands of daily life.	.93	30.14	.86
- I left the stress of the real world behind	.89	25.13	.79
Servicescape Quality (cr=.95)			
How would you rate the quality of the physical environment where this experience took place?			
- Poor / Excellent	.90	**	.81
- Low Quality / High Quality	.90	25.23	.82
- Terrible / Superior	.89	24.64	.80
- Horrible / Outstanding	.92	26.35	.84
Social Congruency (cr=.96)			
The people that I shared this experience with and I:			
- Wanted to get the same thing out of this experience	.87	**	.77
- Shared the same goals	.87	24.74	.75
- Had the same type of mindset during the experience.	.90	23.47	.81
- Wanted to engage with this experience in a similar manner.	.94	26.24	.89
- Were "all in it together"	.86	21.40	.74
- Approached this experience in the same way.	.91	24.26	.83
Uniqueness (cr=.94)			
This experience was:			
- One of a kind	.91	**	.83
- Highly Unique	.95	29.29	.91
- Unlike any other	.90	25.33	.80
Self-Enhancing Word-Of-Mouth (cr=.94)			
When talking about this experience:			
- Makes me feel good about myself	.68	**	.47
- Boosts my self-esteem	.81	18.36	.65
- Makes me feel like the center of attention	.86	14.22	.75
- Makes me feel special	.89	14.67	.79
- Makes me feel a sense of pride	.92	15.12	.85
- Makes me feel important	.93	15.26	.86

Table 4.10 (Continued)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Nostalgia (cr=.93)			
Thinking back on this experience:			
- Brings back good memories	.89	**	.80
- I'm pleasantly reminded of a past time	.89	24.10	.80
- I recall happy memories.	.94	27.28	.88
- Makes me reminisce about a previous time.	.80	19.22	.64
Fantasizing (cr=.95)			
With this experience, I have thought about:			
- Ways to make this experience better	.94	**	.65
- Modifying this experience to make it more enjoyable.	.85	29.29	.72
- What I could do differently in this experience the next time	.92	20.33	.85
- Ways in which I could do this experience differently	.94	20.92	.88
- How I can "change it up" if I do the experience again.	.89	19.17	.78
Evangelizing (cr=.96)			
Regarding this experience:			
- I often try to get others to do this kind of experience	.94	**	.88
- I have tried to persuade others to think about doing this kind of experience	.95	35.02	.90
- I try to convince others to do this kind of experience	.97	38.87	.94
- I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about the great time they could have doing this kind of experience	.82	22.52	.68
- I have tried to recruit others to do this kind of experience	.90	28.48	.80
Price Consciousness (cr=.88)			
Regardless of inflation, if I were to do this experience again:			
- I would not look to only buy the lowest-priced option available	.73	**	.53
- I would not rely exclusively on price for my decision.	.90	15.31	.80
- The price of the experience would not be my only concern	.84	14.56	.71
- Price would not be the most important factor.	.76	13.18	.58
Repurchase Intention (cr=.96)			
How likely is it that you will purchase this experience again?			
- Unlikely / Likely	.95	**	.90
- Very Improbable / Very Probable	.97	40.99	.94
- Impossible / Possible	.86	25.92	.74
- No Chance / Certain	.90	29.60	.81
Note - ** = denotes a constrained relationship to 1.00 in order for identification			
Model Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 1805.217$, $df = 1018$, $p < .001$; CFI = .95, IFI=.96, RMSEA = .049			
n=327 , cr = Composite Reliability, SMC = Squared Multiple Correlation			

Table 4.11 Means, Standard deviations, AVE's and correlations (Days)

	Concerts Mean Std Dev	Theme Parks		AVE Theme Parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
		Mean	Std Dev													
1. Uniqueness	5.05	1.37	5.26	1.33	.85	.85	.49	.47	.35	.32	.51	.57	-.16	.19	.37	.23
2. Fun	6.33	0.89	6.37	0.90	.88	.48	.63	.54	.41	.72	.43	-.09	.27	.34	.39	
3. Escapism	5.91	1.12	5.94	0.99	.84	.53	.64	.44	.40	.68	.43	-.17	.30	.33	.27	
4. Servicescape Quality	5.68	1.06	5.86	0.98	.82	.58	.63	.61	.24	.44	.32	-.06	.23	.29	.32	
5. Soc Congruence	5.64	1.20	5.64	0.99	.8	.37	.35	.49	.34	.46	.34	-.09	.2	.28	.16	
6. Nostalgia	6.01	1.02	6.03	0.94	.78	.48	.72	.67	.61	.39	.48	-.21	.29	.33	.34	
7. Self En WOM	4.85	1.33	4.72	1.32	.73	.46	.24	.43	.38	.36	.38	.01	.24	.54	.32	
8. Fantasizing	4.32	1.52	4.56	1.48	.78	-.16	-.11	-.14	-.18	-.10	-.19	-.08	.06	.08	.12	
9. Price Con	4.88	1.32	4.66	1.35	.66	.37	.30	.33	.36	.18	.31	.30	.10	.32	.27	
10. Evangelizing	4.51	1.62	4.46	1.66	.84	.41	.31	.34	.30	.34	.31	.58	.13	.31	.42	
11. Repurchase Intent	5.68	1.49	5.83	1.36	.85	.46	.54	.50	.48	.39	.53	.44	-.03	.33	.55	.1

Values above the diagonal represent theme parks, values below the diagonal represent vacations
7-point scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 7-Strongly Agree)

Table 4.12 Structural Model Test Results for Two-to-Three Day Experiences

Hypothesized Relationship	Standardized Estimate	t-Value	Hypothesis Supported
H1: Fun → EPQ	.43	10.91 *	Yes
H2: Escapism → EPQ	.07	2.03 *	Yes
H3: Servicescape Quality → EPQ	.31	9.27 *	Yes
H4: Social Congruence → EPQ	.07	2.73 *	Yes
H5: Uniqueness → EPQ	.27	8.83 *	Yes
H6: EPQ → Self-Enhancing Word-of-mouth	.47	10.52 *	Yes
H7: Self-Enhancing Word-of-mouth → Evangelizing	.55	13.21 *	Yes
H8: EPQ → Nostalgia	.78	18.30 *	Yes
H9: Nostalgia → Repurchase Intention	.49	12.54 *	Yes
H10: Nostalgia → Price Consciousness	.37	8.44 *	Yes
H11: EPQ → Fantasizing	-.16	-3.66 *	No
H12: Fantasizing → Price Consciousness	.17	4.10 *	Yes
H13: Fantasizing → Repurchase Intention	.16	4.23 *	Yes

$\chi^2 = 3023.033$, $df = 1145$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.640$

IFI < .95, CFI < .94, TLI < .94, RMSEA = .051

Note: * = < .05

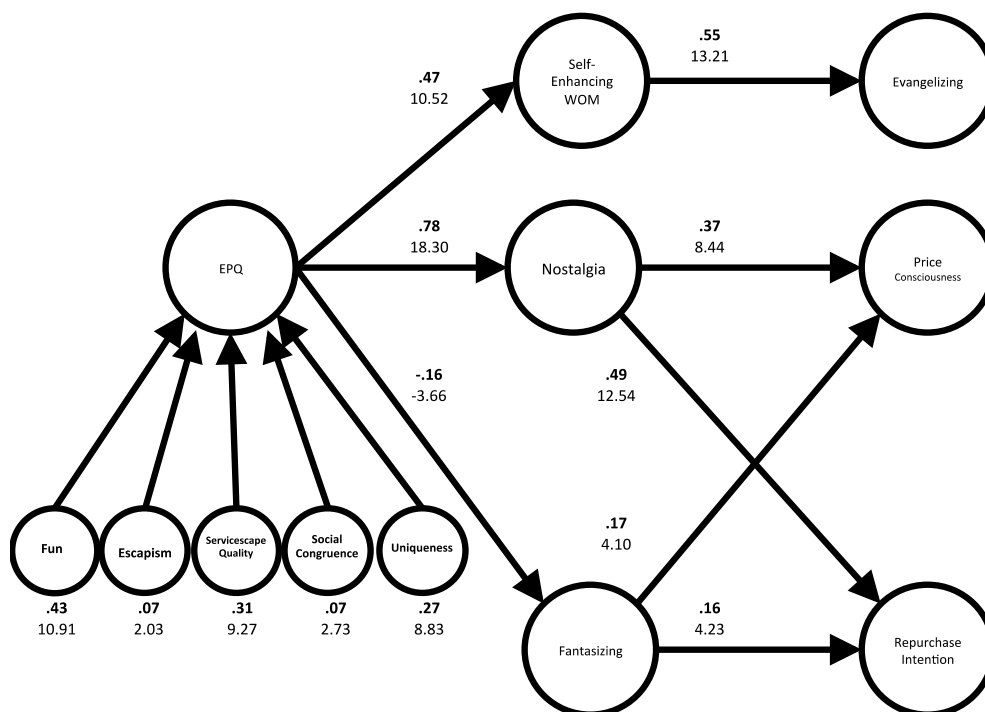


Figure 4.2 Structural Model Test Results for Two-to-Three Day Experiences

Results (Two-to-Three Days)

Unlike the hours-long analysis, where social congruence was not found to be a positive determinant of EPQ, all five hypotheses concerning determinants of EPQ were supported in the two-to-three day model. In other words, fun (H1), escapism (H2), servicescape quality (H3), social congruence (H4) and uniqueness (H5) were all shown to be positive determinants of EPQ. Similar to the hours-long analysis, fun ($\beta=.43$) had the largest impact on EPQ, however servicescape quality ($\beta=.31$) and uniqueness ($\beta=.27$) have switched places as the second and third most impactful EPQ dimensions. Escapism ($\beta=.07$) and social congruence ($\beta=.07$) are found to have approximately the same impact on EPQ. Similar to the hours-long model, EPQ was again shown to have a positive impact on self-enhancing word-of-mouth, therefore H6 is supported. Self-enhancing word-of-mouth was demonstrated to have a significant positive relationship with evangelizing, showing support for H7. Support for H8 is found as nostalgia is positively impacted by EPQ. As with the hours-long model, the relationship between EPQ and nostalgia ($\beta=.78$) is the strongest relationship present in the entirety of the two-to-three day analysis. Emphasizing the positive benefits of nostalgia in an experiential purchase, repurchase intention and price consciousness are both shown to have a significant positive relationship with nostalgia showing support for both H9 and H10 respectively. Once again, the relationship between EPQ and fantasizing is negative and not positive as was hypothesized. Because of this negative relationship, H11 is not supported. Fantasizing is again shown to be a complex construct, as the relationship between EPQ and fantasizing is significantly negative, but fantasizing does positively impact both

repurchase intention and price consciousness, demonstrating support for H12 and H13 respectively.

Weeklong Experiences

Two samples were obtained for the purpose of assessing the hypothesized relationships present in weeklong experiences. The first sample consists of respondents answering questions about a weeklong Disney theme park experience and the second sample consists of respondents answering questions about a weeklong, non-theme park-centric vacation. According to a 2013 report by the Themed Entertainment Association, a theme park industry expert, Disney operates the top six theme parks in the United States in terms of attendance. Four of these parks are located at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, and two of these parks are located at the Disneyland Resort in California. The proximity of these parks to each other in their respective resorts other allow for multiple-day stays and, as such, extended stays at Disney theme parks are a fundamental characteristic of their promotional efforts. For these reasons, it was decided that Disney theme parks be used for this temporally longer sample in order to ensure consistency of the results. Inclusion of other theme park locations could potentially weaken the results as it could not be determined if the entire week was spent at the theme park location itself or split between the theme park and other surrounding non-theme park attractions. While this phenomenon could have been present for Disney theme parks visits, extended stays for Disney theme parks are presumably more frequent due to their theme parks being clustered together into a single resort destination. For this reason, questions regarding the precise nature of the theme park visit were included with the weeklong theme park survey in order to verify the integrity of the survey response. For the weeklong theme park

experience sample, 465 participants completed the survey. A total of 153 surveys were excluded due to incompleteness, failure of an in-survey attention check, or failure to provide an appropriate Disney theme park experience for the desired time horizon. This resulted in a final, usable sample of 312. This sample was 52% male and the average age was 35. The weeklong vacation sample, which included vacations that were not theme park-centric in nature, resulted in 383 completed surveys. Eighty-two responses were excluded due to incompleteness, failure of an in-survey attention check, or failure to provide an appropriate weeklong vacation experience. This resulted in a final, usable sample of 301 responses. This sample was 67% male and the average age was 33.

The scale items for each data collection were analyzed using a CFA. Composite reliability was calculated for each of the scales and exhibited an acceptable level of reliability ($>.70$, Hair et al. 2006). The analysis of the measurement model suggested an acceptable fit of the model to the data for both the weeklong Disney theme park experience ($\chi^2 = 1710.986$, $df = 1018$, $\chi^2/df = 1.68$, $p < .001$; CFI = .95, IFI=.95, RMSEA = .047) as well as the weeklong vacation experience ($\chi^2 = 1657.002$, $df = 1018$, $\chi^2/df = 1.53$, $p < .001$; CFI = .95, IFI=.95, RMSEA = .046) samples. For complete CFA results for the weeklong Disney theme park and vacation samples, see Table 4.13 and Table 4.14 respectively. Consistent with the previous analyses, convergent and discriminant validity of the scales were examined by calculating the AVE for each construct as well as the shared variance between constructs. The AVE for each construct exceeded .50 supporting the convergent validity of the items and no shared variance between constructs exceeded the AVE for an individual construct providing evidence of

discriminant validity. To view correlations between constructs and average variance extracted, see Table 4.15.

Similar to the previous two analyses, the samples were combined in order to examine the two-to-three day horizon. To ensure construct conceptualizations were consistent the same across the two groups, invariance analyses were performed. Configurable invariance was found to be present following the suggestions of Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1994). Furthermore, partial metric invariance ($df=13$, $\chi^2=19.24$, $p=.115$) was also found to be present following the suggestions of Hair et al. (2006).

After the invariance analyses were performed, the structural model presented in Figure 3.1 was analyzed for the combined weeklong samples.. The results suggest an acceptable fit of the model to the data for both samples ($\chi^2= 1657.002$, $df = 1018$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 1.62$, IFI =.95, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .046). The structural relationships between constructs were then examined. The standardized path estimates and t-values for each hypothesized relationship in each model can be seen in Table 4.16 and Figure 4.3.

Table 4.13 Confirmatory Factor and Reliability Analysis – Theme Parks (Week)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Fun (cr=.91)			
This experience was:			
-Entertaining / Not Entertaining	.80	**	.63
-Fun / Not Fun	.93	19.08	.87
-Enjoyable / Not Enjoyable	.89	18.13	.79
Escapism (cr=.91)			
During this experience:			
- I didn't have to think about my usual routine problems.	.85	**	.72
- I could step away from my everyday concerns	.86	18.40	.74
- I didn't have to worry about the demands of daily life.	.87	20.32	.76
- I left the stress of the real world behind	.82	17.17	.67
Servicescape Quality (cr=.94)			
How would you rate the quality of the physical environment where this experience took place?			
- Poor / Excellent	.90	**	.80
- Low Quality / High Quality	.87	22.17	.75
- Terrible / Superior	.90	24.07	.81
- Horrible / Outstanding	.93	25.88	.86
Social Congruency (cr=.93)			
The people that I shared this experience with and I:			
- Wanted to get the same thing out of this experience	.77	**	.59
- Shared the same goals	.76	18.14	.57
- Had the same type of mindset during the experience.	.90	17.46	.82
- Wanted to engage with this experience in a similar manner.	.92	17.89	.85
- Were "all in it together"	.79	14.68	.62
- Approached this experience in the same way.	.85	16.24	.73
Uniqueness (cr=.95)			
This experience was:			
- One of a kind	.92	**	.85
- Highly Unique	.96	31.70	.92
- Unlike any other	.92	28.42	.85
Self-Enhancing Word-Of-Mouth (cr=.90)			
When talking about this experience:			
- Makes me feel good about myself	.72	**	.80
- Boosts my self-esteem	.82	2.87	.67
- Makes me feel like the center of attention	.86	2.88	.75
- Makes me feel special	.86	2.88	.73
- Makes me feel a sense of pride	.91	2.88	.83
- Makes me feel important	.89	2.88	.80

Table 4.13 (Continued)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Nostalgia (cr=.92)			
Thinking back on this experience:			
- Brings back good memories	.82	**	.68
- I'm pleasantly reminded of a past time	.89	19.33	.79
- I recall happy memories.	.87	18.57	.75
- Makes me reminisce about a previous time.	.84	17.59	.70
Fantasizing (cr=.93)			
With this experience, I have thought about:			
- Ways to make this experience better	.94	**	.59
- Modifying this experience to make it more enjoyable.	.80	28.28	.63
- What I could do differently in this experience the next time	.91	17.42	.82
- Ways in which I could do this experience differently	.92	17.70	.85
- How I can "change it up" if I do the experience again.	.84	15.88	.70
Evangelizing (cr=.97)			
Regarding this experience:			
- I often try to get others to do this kind of experience	.94	**	.89
- I have tried to persuade others to think about doing this kind of experience	.96	36.64	.92
- I try to convince others to do this kind of experience	.97	39.61	.95
- I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about the great time they could have doing this kind of experience	.84	23.78	.71
- I have tried to recruit others to do this kind of experience	.90	28.95	.81
Price Consciousness (cr=.88)			
Regardless of inflation, if I were to do this experience again:			
- I would not look to only buy the lowest-priced option available	.73	**	.54
- I would not rely exclusively on price for my decision.	.89	15.11	.79
- The price of the experience would not be my only concern	.81	13.92	.66
- Price would not be the most important factor.	.80	13.73	.64
Repurchase Intention (cr=.96)			
How likely is it that you will purchase this experience again?			
- Unlikely / Likely	.96	**	.93
- Very Improbable / Very Probable	.97	44.05	.94
- Impossible / Possible	.86	26.20	.74
- No Chance / Certain	.90	31.31	.82
Note - ** = denotes a constrained relationship to 1.00 in order for identification			
Model Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 1710.986$, $df = 1018$, $p < .001$; CFI = .95, IFI=.96, RMSEA = .047			
n=312 , cr = Composite Reliability, SMC = Squared Multiple Correlation			

Table 4.14 Confirmatory Factor and Reliability Analysis – Vacation (Week)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-values	SMC's
Fun (cr=.86)			
This experience was:			
-Entertaining / Not Entertaining	.75	**	.56
-Fun / Not Fun	.86	14.33	.73
-Enjoyable / Not Enjoyable	.85	14.22	.72
Escapism (cr=.89)			
During this experience:			
- I didn't have to think about my usual routine problems.	.81	**	.66
- I could step away from my everyday concerns	.83	14.58	.68
- I didn't have to worry about the demands of daily life.	.86	15.71	.74
- I left the stress of the real world behind	.76	13.42	.58
Servicescape Quality (cr=.94)			
How would you rate the quality of the physical environment where this experience took place?			
- Poor / Excellent	.84	**	.70
- Low Quality / High Quality	.90	20.65	.82
- Terrible / Superior	.93	21.72	.87
- Horrible / Outstanding	.89	20.27	.80
Social Congruency (cr=.93)			
The people that I shared this experience with and I:			
- Wanted to get the same thing out of this experience	.76	**	.58
- Shared the same goals	.85	17.57	.73
- Had the same type of mindset during the experience.	.86	15.82	.73
- Wanted to engage with this experience in a similar manner.	.89	16.49	.79
- Were "all in it together"	.77	13.78	.59
- Approached this experience in the same way.	.87	16.12	.76
Uniqueness (cr=.95)			
This experience was:			
- One of a kind	.92	**	.85
- Highly Unique	.97	32.33	.94
- Unlike any other	.90	26.03	.80
Self-Enhancing Word-Of-Mouth (cr=.91)			
When talking about this experience:			
- Makes me feel good about myself	.59	**	.34
- Boosts my self-esteem	.77	13.75	.60
- Makes me feel like the center of attention	.80	10.41	.64
- Makes me feel special	.87	11.02	.76
- Makes me feel a sense of pride	.83	10.65	.68
- Makes me feel important	.88	11.07	.77

Table 4.14 (Continued)

Construct and Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t- values	SMC's
Nostalgia (cr=.89)			
Thinking back on this experience:			
- Brings back good memories	.78	**	.61
- I'm pleasantly reminded of a past time	.85	15.87	.73
- I recall happy memories.	.87	16.29	.76
- Makes me reminisce about a previous time.	.74	13.29	.54
Fantasizing (cr=.94)			
With this experience, I have thought about:			
- Ways to make this experience better	.91	**	.63
- Modifying this experience to make it more enjoyable.	.85	31.70	.72
- What I could do differently in this experience the next time	.91	18.47	.83
- Ways in which I could do this experience differently	.91	18.37	.83
- How I can "change it up" if I do the experience again.	.82	15.98	.67
Evangelizing (cr=.95)			
Regarding this experience:			
- I often try to get others to do this kind of experience	.91	**	.82
- I have tried to persuade others to think about doing this kind of experience	.94	28.34	.88
- I try to convince others to do this kind of experience	.95	29.57	.91
- I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about the great time they could have doing this kind of experience	.81	19.64	.66
- I have tried to recruit others to do this kind of experience	.85	21.79	.72
Price Consciousness (cr=.85)			
Regardless of inflation, if I were to do this experience again:			
- I would not look to only buy the lowest-priced option available	.71	**	.50
- I would not rely exclusively on price for my decision.	.86	12.74	.74
- The price of the experience would not be my only concern	.78	12.04	.61
- Price would not be the most important factor.	.70	10.86	.48
Repurchase Intention (cr=.95)			
How likely is it that you will purchase this experience again?			
- Unlikely / Likely	.96	**	.91
- Very Improbable / Very Probable	.97	41.33	.95
- Impossible / Possible	.80	20.99	.64
- No Chance / Certain	.89	28.45	.79
Note - ** = denotes a constrained relationship to 1.00 in order for identification			
Model Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 1657.002$, $df = 1018$ $p < .001$; CFI = .95, IFI=.95, RMSEA = .046			
n=327 , cr = Composite Reliability, SMC = Squared Multiple Correlation			

Table 4.15 Means, Standard Deviations, Average Variance Extracted and Correlations

	Concerts		Theme Parks		AVE												
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Concerts	Theme Parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Uniqueness	5.59	1.24	5.88	1.13	.87	.87	1	.47	.55	.50	.37	.57	.51	-.07	.25	.41	.38
2. Fun	6.62	0.55	6.58	0.66	.67	.77	.27	1	.63	.60	.40	.68	.30	-.10	.21	.29	.45
3. Escapism	6.30	0.76	6.10	0.86	.66	.72	.17	.42	1	.55	.50	.67	.45	-.10	.31	.44	.44
4. Servicescape Quality	6.11	0.85	6.26	0.84	.80	.8	.31	.39	.21	1	.35	.58	.35	-.12	.25	.32	.40
5. Soc Congruence	5.83	0.96	5.74	0.94	.70	.69	.21	.30	.27	.29	1	.45	.45	-.07	.24	.34	.29
6. Nostalgia	6.36	0.71	6.22	0.80	.66	.73	.31	.63	.54	.37	.41	1	.42	-.12	.32	.38	.47
7. Self En WOM	5.14	1.11	4.92	1.29	.63	.63	.35	.19	.1	.27	.25	.22	1	.03	.37	.60	.45
8. Fantasizing	4.44	1.46	4.65	1.42	.74	.72	-.12	-.11	-.12	-.09	-.07	-.11	.07	1	.05	.09	.04
9. Price Con	5.14	1.11	4.93	1.29	.58	.66	.09	.12	.08	.12	.04	.16	.08	.12	1	.33	.42
10. Evangelizing	4.61	1.47	4.59	1.62	.80	.85	.34	.17	.19	.18	.26	.22	.53	.09	.10	1	.53
11. Repurchase Intent	5.82	1.35	5.85	1.40	.82	.86	.10	.23	.10	.25	.15	.20	.16	.06	.18	.37	1

Values above the diagonal represent theme parks, values below the diagonal represent vacations
7-point scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 7-Strongly Agree)

Table 4.16 Structural Model Test Results for 5+ day Experiences

Hypothesized Relationship	Standardized Estimate	t-Value	Hypothesis Supported
H1: Fun → EPQ	.48	9.86 *	Yes
H2: Escapism → EPQ	.13	3.33 *	Yes
H3: Servicescape Quality → EPQ	.21	5.83 *	Yes
H4: Social Congruence → EPQ	.09	2.78 *	Yes
H5: Uniqueness → EPQ	.29	8.58 *	Yes
H6: EPQ → Self-Enhancing Word-of-mouth	.46	9.32 *	Yes
H7: Self-Enhancing Word-of-mouth → Evangelizing	.57	12.79 *	Yes
H8: EPQ → Nostalgia	.80	15.31 *	Yes
H9: Nostalgia → Repurchase Intention	.41	9.68 *	Yes
H10: Nostalgia → Price Consciousness	.32	6.90 *	Yes
H11: EPQ → Fantasizing	-.14	-3.05 *	No
H12: Fantasizing → Price Consciousness	.11	2.44 *	Yes
H13: Fantasizing → Repurchase Intention	.10	2.30 *	Yes

$\chi^2 = 2627.147$, $df = 1145$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.294$

IFI < .95, CFI < .95, TLI < .95, RMSEA = .046

Note: * = < .05

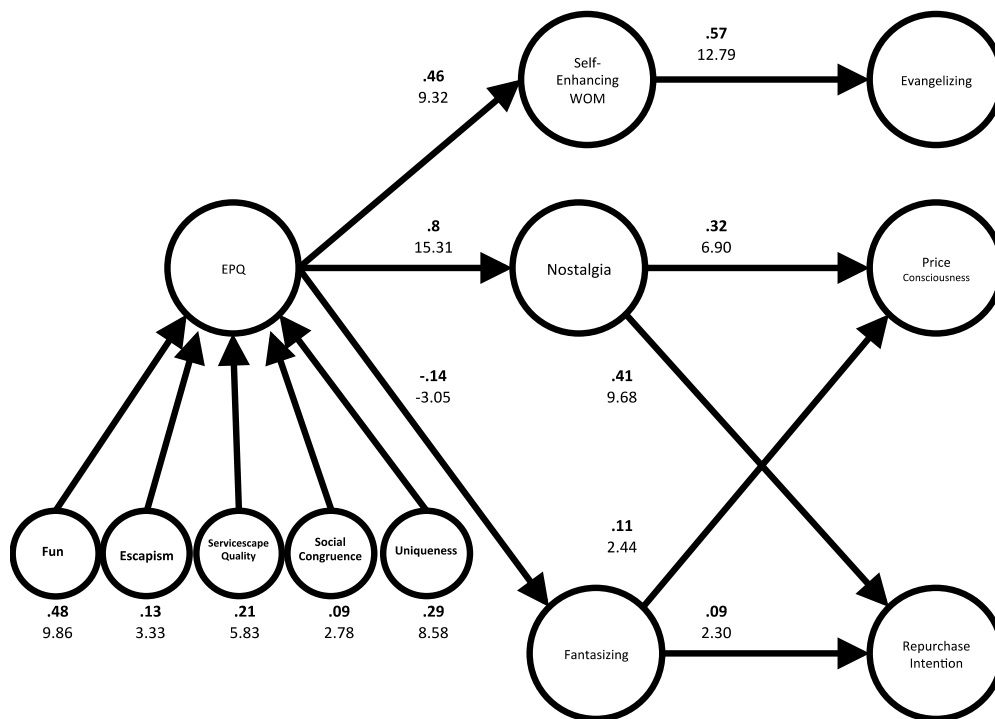


Figure 4.3 Structural Model Test Results for 5+ day Experiences

Results (Weeklong)

In terms of hypothesis support, the results for the weeklong experience model are very similar to the results for the two-or-three days experience model. Hypotheses concerning the positive determinants of fun (H1), escapism (H2), servicescape quality (H3), social congruence (H4) and uniqueness (H5) on EPQ were again all supported. Fun is the most impactful construct on EPQ ($\beta=.48$), followed by uniqueness ($\beta=.29$), servicescape quality ($\beta=.21$), escapism ($\beta=.13$), and finally social congruence ($\beta=.09$). It appears that the increased impact of servicescape quality on EPQ found in the two-to-three day analysis does not translate over to the weeklong model. The results concerning the EPQ outputs again mirror the results of the two-to-three day analysis. Once again, EPQ was shown to have a positive impact on self-enhancing word-of-mouth, supporting H6. Self-enhancing word-of-mouth was demonstrated to have a significant positive relationship with evangelizing, showing support for H7. Nostalgia is again strongly positively impacted by EPQ ($\beta=.80$) demonstrating support for H8. As with the shorter experiential time horizons, the EPQ to nostalgia relationship is the strongest relationship present in the model. Repurchase intention and decreased price consciousness are both shown to have significant positive relationships with nostalgia showing support for H9 and H10 respectively. The negative relationship between EPQ and fantasizing found in the other models is again present in this weeklong analysis, meaning that H11 is not supported. Despite the negative relationship between fantasizing and EPQ, fantasizing is once again shown to positively impact both repurchase intention and price consciousness, demonstrating support for H12 and H13 respectively.

Multi-Group Analysis

After the structural models for the different time horizons were examined individually, a two-group analysis was performed across the different horizons in order to determine if significant differences exist in the structural relationships between the models. Using a chi-squared difference test, each of the structural relationships was assessed across the three groups. First, the hours-long experience relationships were compared to the two-to-three day relationships. Next, the hours-long experience relationships were compared to the weeklong experience relationships. Finally, the two-to-three day relationships were compared to the weeklong experience relationships. In each comparison, the chi-square difference between the cross group constrained relationship and the unconstrained relationship was compared. A summary of the two-group analysis can be seen in Table 4.17.

Multi-Group Results

Although the model held relatively uniform for each of the three groups, the multi-group analysis did reveal some interesting differences in the relationships between the groups. While the majority of the EPQ dimensions were constant amongst the models, the impact of both servicescape quality and uniqueness on EPQ varied across the time horizons. In the servicescape quality to EPQ relationship, the two-to-three day model was significantly higher than both the hours-long group ($\Delta \chi^2=13.19$, β hours= .17, β days= .31) and the weeklong group ($\Delta \chi^2=12.88$, β days= .31, β week= .21). This finding is interesting as one could assume that the longer the customer spends in the physical environment the more impact the physical environment has on quality perceptions, but that does not appear to be the case. For the uniqueness to EPQ relationship, the hours-

long group is significantly higher than both the two-to-three days group ($\Delta\chi^2=4.42$, β hours= .37, β days = .27) and the weeklong group ($\Delta\chi^2=13.32$, β hours= .37, β week = .29). Although significant differences do exist in the impact of uniqueness on EPQ between the two-to-three days group and the weeklong group ($\Delta\chi^2=4.15$, β days= .27, β week = .29), it is interesting that the perceived uniqueness of the experience had the highest impact on EPQ in in the hours-long group.

For the outcomes of EPQ, because of the complex nature of fantasizing in the model it is perhaps not surprising that differences in the time horizons exist stemming from the fantasizing construct. Unlike the longer analyses, the fantasizing to price consciousness relationship was not found to be significant in the hours-long group and it is significantly lower when compared to the two-to-three days groups ($\Delta\chi^2=4.04$, β hours=.04, β days =.17). Interestingly, the fantasizing to price consciousness relationship was highest for the two-to-three days group and is also significantly higher than the weeklong group ($\Delta\chi^2=4.39$, β days=.17, β week =.11). Finally, while the relationship from EPQ to nostalgia was strong across all of the groups, the strength of this relationship increased as the length of the experience increased and the weeklong group had a higher relationship than the hour-long group ($\Delta\chi^2=6.03$, β hours= .76, β week = .80). This could be due to the fact that longer experiences have additional chances to create nostalgic memories simply due to the increased amount of time that the consumer spends immersed in the experience.

Overall, while differences do exist across the time horizons, the empirical model presented appears to be fairly consistent. In terms of the structural analyses, while the majority of the hypotheses of this research were supported, there were some notable

exceptions, especially related to the fantasizing construct and the impact of social congruence on EPQ. The results of this research, both the examination of the empirical model as well as the multi-group analysis, contribute theoretical and managerial knowledge to the area of experiential purchase quality and open up numerous avenues for future studies in this area to be conducted. The results of these analyses and the contributions made by this research are expanded upon and further explored in the discussion section of this paper.

Table 4.17 Multi-Group Analysis

	Hours		2 -3 Days		5+ Days		Two group test	Two group test	Two group test
	Regression Weight	t-value	Regression Weight	t-value	Regression Weight	t-value	Hours / 2-3 Days $\Delta X^2 / 1df$	Hours / 5+ Days $\Delta X^2 / 1df$	2-3 Days / 5+ Days $\Delta X^2 / 1df$
Fun to EPQ	.44	11.26	.43	10.91	.48	10.02	2.48	0.02	2.34
Escapism to EPQ	.08	2.18	.07	2.03	.13	3.16	0.12	0.11	0.13
Servicescape Quality to EPQ	.17	5.43	.31	9.27	.21	5.75	13.19*	0.30	12.88*
Social Congruence to EPQ	.03	0.96	.07	2.73	.09	2.59	0.84	0.73	0.69
Uniqueness to EPQ	.37	11.19	.27	8.83	.29	8.38	4.42*	13.32*	4.15*
EPQ to Self-Enhancing Word-of-mouth	.42	9.64	.47	10.52	.46	9.22	0.00	0.07	0.01
Self-Enhancing Word-of-mouth to Evangelizing	.53	12.59	.55	13.21	.57	12.79	2.14	1.00	2.26
EPQ to Nostalgia	.76	18.88	.78	18.30	.80	15.48	0.28	6.03*	0.26
Nostalgia to Repurchase Intention	.41	9.96	.49	12.54	.41	9.77	0.00	0.42	0.01
Nostalgia to Price Consciousness	.41	8.84	.37	8.44	.32	6.96	2.58	1.75	2.43
EPQ to Fantasizing	-.22	-5.04	-.16	-3.66	-.14	-3.09	1.51	0.20	1.55
Fantasizing to Price Consciousness	.04	1.00	.17	4.10	.11	2.53	4.04*	0.83	4.39*
Fantasizing to Repurchase Intention	.11	2.74	.16	4.23	.10	2.43	0.49	0.12	0.65
Model Fit Statistics	X2 = 2819.680 df = 1097 CFI = .95 IFI = .95 RMSEA = .05		X2 = 2928.766 df = 1097 CFI = .95 IFI = .95 RMSEA = .05		X2 = 2502.002 df = 1097 CFI = .95 IFI = .95 RMSEA = .05				

Note: * = <.05

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the dimensions and outcomes of high quality experiential purchases as well as to construct and test an empirical model of the experiential process. This examination can be of importance to marketers as not only are experiential purchases becoming more popular on a global scale but they also possess distinct characteristics that can benefit both the consumer and the experience provider (Caprariello & Reis 2013; Pieters 2013; Van Boven & Gohivich 2003). The high levels of abstraction and self-attachment found in experiential purchases distinguish experiences from material and service-based purchases, and can often be the source of the practitioner and consumer benefits discussed above. However, the abstract nature of purchased experiences also makes any empirical study into this area challenging. Through three studies, two qualitative and one quantitative, a model of experiential purchase quality dimensions and outcomes was constructed and analyzed. The results from this analysis can provide increased theoretical and managerial knowledge of this unique and understudied aspect of marketing behavior.

First, to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that form and the outcomes that stem from experiential purchase quality, a series of fourteen depth interviews were conducted. Interviewees were asked questions regarding a self-chosen, high-quality, highly memorable experiential purchase. The questions specifically focused on what

factors contributed to the quality of the experience and what kind of behaviors took place after the experience was over. In the analysis of these interviews, the level of uniqueness and the sense of hedonic enjoyment provided by the experience emerge as strong dimensions of experiential purchase quality. It is also seen that those with whom an experience is shared impact the quality of the overall experience. In terms of experiential outcomes, the consumer's high level of personal attachment to the experience is supported. Many of the interviewees describe bragging about themselves to others, focusing not on the experience that took place but on themselves and their own actions during the experience. In addition, idealized nostalgic memories about the experience are expressed. Also, many of the interviewees describe a desire to relive the experience regardless of any theoretical increase in price.

After getting a general picture of the dimensions and outcomes of experiential purchase quality through the depth interviews, a critical incident technique study was performed that expanded on the findings and knowledge gained from Study 1. The CIT-based Study 2 allowed for a broader sample of responses and a more focused qualitative design. This CIT analysis not only confirmed much of what was discovered in Study 1, but also clarified many of the concepts surrounding experiential purchases. Through this analysis, the ability of the experience to take the consumer away from the stress present in their everyday lives emerged as a dimension of experiential quality. Respondents described the experience allowing them to do things such as *"get away from the hustle of life"* as a factor of experiential value. Also, while Study 1 generally identified social interaction with others being a value source in experiential purchases, the broader CIT allowed for further refinement of the social component. The analysis of the CIT

responses indicated that the level of congruence between the respondent and the others at the experience was key to experiential quality evaluations. Finally, The enhancing nature of experiential outcomes is again revealed through the CIT analysis, as respondents describe idealizing not only their own nostalgic memories of how the experience took place, but also how they imagine the experience taking place again. Self-enhancing word-of-mouth, also known as braggart behavior, emerges as a strong outcome of high quality experiences, again refining what was discovered in Study 1.

Categories were derived from Study 1 and 2 and an empirical model of dimensions and outcomes of experiential purchase quality (EPQ) was developed. A grounded theory design was used to identify and model the constructs of fun, escapism, servicescape quality, social congruence, and uniqueness as the dimensions of EPQ. The theory of self-enhancement drove the outcomes stemming from EPQ, as previous empirical research has demonstrated the link between high-quality experiential purchases and one's own sense of self. Stemming from EPQ in the empirical model were nostalgia, self-enhancing word-of-mouth and fantasizing. Evangelizing, seen as recruitment of others to engage in the experience, stems from self-enhancing word-of-mouth. Finally, both fantasizing and nostalgia are modeled to lead to decreased levels of price consciousness and increased levels of repurchase intention.

The model was tested across three different time horizons, experiences lasting for hours, experiences lasting for two-to-three days, and weeklong experiences lasting great than five days. In addition, three different experiences were sampled for the analysis, concerts (hours), theme park visits (hours, two-to-three days, and weeklong), and vacations (two-to-three days and weeklong). The chosen time horizon and experiential

categories were grounded in the experiences chosen by the respondents of Study 2 and the Study 3 pretest. An analysis of the experiential categories provided by the respondents in the aforementioned studies found that the majority of those experiences provided could be classified in these experiential categories and time horizons. The model was examined for each of the three time horizons, and a multi-group analysis was run across the three time horizons in order to examine differences that may exist across the relationships.

For hours-long experiences, the positive determinants of EPQ were fun, escapism, servicescape quality, and uniqueness. Of these dimensions, fun had the largest impact followed by uniqueness, servicescape quality and escapism. Social congruence was not shown to be a positive determinant of EPQ in the hours-long analysis. This could be due to the fact that the experience does not last long enough for the perceived congruence between the experience goer and those with whom the experience is shared to factor into experiential quality perceptions. Another possible explanation could stem from the more intense nature of an experience that takes place in just a matter of hours. In an hours-long experience, such as a concert or theme parks visit, there may be very little time for the consumer to take a break from the actual experience itself and engage in social interaction with those around them.

In the hours-long analysis, support for the hypothesized output relationships is mixed. The hypothesized relationships concerning EPQ to self-enhancing word-of-mouth and nostalgia, as well as the outcomes of those two variables, were supported. The impact of EPQ on nostalgia is considerable with the highest regression weight in the entire hours-long analysis being present in this relationship. The relationship between EPQ and

fantasizing turned out to be more complex than originally assumed. While a relationship between EPQ and fantasizing was found to be present, it was not in the manner that it was hypothesized. There actually exists a significant negative impact from EPQ on fantasizing. In other words, a consumer imagining how an experience could be improved upon or changed in the future is negatively impacted by experiential purchase quality. Also, while fantasizing is shown to have a positive impact on repurchase intention, there is no significant relationship in the hours-long analysis between fantasizing and price consciousness.

Perhaps the reason for the negative impact of EPQ on fantasizing stems from the considerable positive impact that EPQ is shown to have on nostalgia. The concepts behind fantasizing and nostalgia are closely related. While nostalgia is an idealization and enhancement of memories of the experience as it took place in the past, fantasizing is an enhanced imagination of how the experience could take place again in the future. For example, one could have nostalgic memories concerning a Disney theme park visit, but still have a desire to enhance that same experience in the future and make the next visit to the park better in some way. The harmonious coexistence of fantasizing and nostalgia described above is hypothesized in the model. However, it could be that idealized memories in the minds of experiential consumers take precedent over imaging the experience any other way. For example, a consumer could have nostalgic memories about a Disney theme park visit and not want to change anything about that experience if they were to visit it again in the future. In a sense, the consumer may want to keep that next visit exactly how it was the first (or most memorable) time. The nature of the relationship

from EPQ to nostalgia and from EPQ to fantasizing suggests that perhaps a dichotomy between fantasizing and nostalgia is indeed taking place.

Next, the model was tested with experiences lasting two-to-three days and experiences lasting a week or greater. These two experiential time horizons provided very similar results. In each of these analyses there exists at least one overnight stay in the experiential physical environment that could influence the quality determinants and outcomes. In addition, a longer experience could take place at a much more leisurely pace, allowing for more interaction between the consumer and the experience itself as well as those with whom the experience is shared. The results from these two time horizons fall very much in line with each other. In each of these two analyses, all five of the hypothesized positive determinants of EPQ are significant. Unlike what was seen in the hours-long analysis, social congruence is shown to be a positive determinant of EPQ in both the two-to-three days analysis and the weeklong analysis. This could be due to the fact that longer experiences take place at a more leisurely pace, allowing for more social interaction with others. In shorter experiences, the experience itself may be too fast and intense to allow for social congruence with others to be a factor. In terms of the outcomes of EPQ, all of the positive hypothesized relationships are indeed present in both the two-to-three days analysis as well as the weeklong analysis, with the exception of the relationship between EPQ and fantasizing. In each of the analyses, EPQ is again found to have a negative impact on fantasizing.

In terms of relationship significance, there are some differences between the hours-long experiences and the two longer experiential time horizons. Unlike what was found in the longer experiential time horizons, the dimension of social congruence was

not found to be a significant positive determinant of EPQ in the hours-long analysis. As discussed previously, this difference could be due to the fact that in experiences shorter in temporal length, the consumer does not have the required time necessary for the others engaged with the experience to have a significant impact on the experiential quality. Also, the intensity of the experience could be increased during hours-long experiences not allowing for social interaction to take place. For example, in a three-hour concert, the experience is relatively quick and any benefit derived from the experience itself must take place in that short time frame. This is a very different type of experience than would be found on a seven-day Caribbean cruise, where the very nature of the experiential value proposition is one of relaxation and leisure. In addition, the hypothesized positive relationship between fantasizing and price consciousness, supported in the longer experiential time horizons, was not supported in the hours-long analysis. While the EPQ to fantasizing relationship across the three time horizons was negative, only the hours-long analysis failed to show a significant positive relationship between the consumer imaging how the experience could be improved in the future and the consumer's decreased focus on price.

In order to more deeply explore the differences that exist in the relationships amongst the three experiential time horizons, a multi-group analysis was performed to examine statistical differences that may exist amongst these relationships. While there were some differences found, the model was found to be reasonably consistent across the different time horizons. The two-group analysis also uncovers statistical differences in the relationship between uniqueness to EPQ amongst all three models. This relationship is strongest in the hours-long group, followed by the weeklong group, and finally the

two-to-three days group. This suggests that in shorter experiences, where the entirety of the value from the experience must be derived in a comparatively short amount of time, the uniqueness of the experience impacts the customer's perceptions of experiential quality greater than in longer experiences.

The difference found in the servicescape quality to EPQ relationship is perhaps the most notable finding of the multi-groups analysis. With a longer experience that includes an overnight stay and in which the consumer spends more time immersed in the servicescape, it is perhaps no surprise that in two-to-three day experiences, the quality of the servicescape has more of an impact on experiential quality than in experiences lasting only hours. However, no significant difference was found between the hours-long model and the weeklong model in the impact that servicescape quality has on EPQ. In fact, the high impact of servicescape quality on EPQ in the two-to-three days model is statistically higher than either the hours-long . One possible explanation of this difference could stem from the fact that in longer experiences the consumer spends enough time in the physical environment that time spent in that environment becomes routine for the customer and the positive impact of a higher-quality servicescape begins to dissipate with time. It is possible that the consumer becomes acclimated to the servicescape over time, and as the physical environment begins to become the norm, it loses its initial luster. While the reason for the difference can be speculated, the higher impact of servicescape quality on EPQ in the two-to-three day model than in the weeklong model is indeed curious.

Theoretical Implications

Although experiential purchases as a distinct economic offering have been the subject of many different theoretical conceptualizations in the marketing literature, there

have been relatively few empirical studies that explore the holistic experiential process. By testing a model of the dimensions that form experiential purchase quality as well as the unique outcomes that stem from experiential purchases of high quality, this research aims to fill this gap and provide insight into the area of experiential marketing. This research explores many concepts which have implications for academic experiential marketing as well as other areas of marketing research, particularly areas associated with social interaction and nostalgia.

Predominantly, this research supports the suggestions of previous research that detail how different purchased experiences are from other economic offerings. The dimensions of product quality or service quality cannot simply be translated over to experience quality, as experience itself is a unique type of purchase. Throughout the analysis of the depth interviews found in Study 1, the CIT responses from Study 2, and the empirical investigation of Study 3, it is seen that the attachment of the experience to one's sense of self drives the outcomes stemming from the experience. High levels of personal attachment are at the core of a high quality experiential purchase and the behaviors stemming from the experience, such as self-enhancing word-of-mouth and nostalgia, are driven by the desire to enhance the experience and one's own connection to the experience. These unique attributes of the experience, seen throughout the entirety of the analyses, add to the research that suggests experience is distinctive as an economic offering and should be studied and theorized as such.

An aspect of self-attachment at the core of high-quality experiential purchases is the consumer being an active participant in experiential value creation. This value creation is shown to take place both during the experience and after the experience is

over. The level of social congruence between the consumer and those with whom the experience is shared is shown to influence the quality of two-to-three day and weeklong experiences. In a sense, by being an active participant in the experience, the consumer can add value to that experience for others. This component of social congruence as a value source in the experiential process implies that the value created during the experience comes from multiple sources, only a few of which are under complete control of the experiential firm.

Further, the nostalgia that stems from the experience can add value to the experience long after the experience is over. As seen across the three studies, consumers often feel a sense of nostalgia about the experience after it takes place. As nostalgia is an idealizing of the experience, often in ways that enhance one's own self-esteem needs (Vess et al., 2012), the consumer can actually remember the experience better than how it actually took place. Nostalgia is a very popular marketing concept, however nostalgia as it relates to an experience has not been studied thoroughly in the marketing literature. This research finds that nostalgia is indeed a consequence of a high-quality experience. In fact, the strongest of all the relationships discovered in the testing of the empirical model was the relationship from EPQ to nostalgia. This research demonstrates that experiential quality and nostalgia are decidedly related.

Further, this research reveals that fantasizing, the consumer imagining how the experience can be better in the future (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009), does not stem from high quality experiences. In fact, there was a negative relationship between experiential purchase quality and fantasizing. This finding contradicts some of the theoretical conceptualizations of the experiential process, such as Holbrook (2000) and Tynan and

McKechnie (2009), which identify fantasizing as a post-experience outcome. While the relationship between fantasizing and nostalgia deserves future study, it stands to reason that if a consumer is highly active in idealizing the memory of how an experience took place, then that same consumer might not engage in cognitions about how to make that (already idealized) experience better in the future. Why improve on something that has already been improved upon in one's own mind? While the negative relationships between EPQ and fantasizing were unexpected, it is an interesting and important contribution of this research and suggests that the concept of fantasizing as it relates to experience is more complex than previously thought.

Finally, the differences in experiential purchase quality dimensions and outcomes discovered to exist across the different time horizons add to the significance of this research. These differences imply that research into factors of experiential quality should take the temporal length of the experience into account. Of note is the finding that social congruence acts as a factor of experiential quality in longer experiences, but not necessarily in shorter experiences. This implies that there is a point at which the level of congruence between the consumer and those with whom the experience is shared begin to add to the value to the experience, but that value is not instantaneous. Further, the lower levels of social congruence between the two-to-three day analysis and the weeklong analysis suggest that there may be a level where the value to be gained through social congruence is at its peak, and this value may actually dissipate over time. This is mirrored in the findings related to the differing relationships of servicescape to EPQ, which was higher in the two-to-three day experience analysis than in either the hours-

long or weeklong analysis. This finding adds support for a potential optimal point where these concepts contribute to the value of the overall experience.

Managerial Implications

While this research certainly has implications for academic research, it also has implications for managers of experiential firms. In fact, one of the catalysts behind this research was bringing the self-attachment and social congruence concepts found in other disciplines into the area of marketing for the purpose of providing managers of experiential-dependent firms with actionable and meaningful implications on which managerial decisions could be based. The depth interviews and CIT responses in Studies 1 and 2 allowed for an analysis of the dimensions that form and outcomes that stem from high quality experiential purchases. These dimensions and outcomes were included into the empirical model in order to identify value sources and outcome behaviors that could be useful in managerial decision making. Knowledge gained from this study includes the identification of experience purchase quality dimensions, how these dimensions vary across different time horizons, the importance of social congruence to experiential quality, the self-enhancing nature of experiential purchase outcomes, the connection between nostalgia and experience, and the curious role of post-experience fantasizing.

The dimensions of EPQ were identified through this research as being fun, escapism, servicescape quality, social congruence, and uniqueness. Experiential managers should focus on enhancing these specific qualities of the experience in order to gain the maximum returns of their experiential offering. Experiential managers should focus on making their experiences as unique and as hedonically enjoyable as possible. In addition, this research suggests that in order for an experience to be considered high

quality, it cannot be one that is simply mundane or conventional. This is especially true with experiences only lasting hours. Experiential managers cannot simply copy another successful experience and expect the same returns. Furthermore, experiential offerings should not only be distinct from other offerings, but they should also be able to allow the customer to separate him or herself from everyday anxieties.

Servicescape quality was found to be more important to customers of two-to-three day and weeklong experiences than it was to customers of hours-long experiences. Managers should focus efforts on ensuring a high quality servicescape for customers of longer experiences, and understand that the same servicescape evaluations made for hours-long experiences will not necessarily translate over to experiences that last for longer periods of time. Servicescape quality was specifically more important for experiences lasting two-to-three days, making servicescape management most imperative for experiential managers focused on experiences of this particular time horizon. Managers should not only give extra consideration to the physical environment of these types of experiences, but should also focus on servicescape quality during promotional activities regarding two-to-three day experiential offerings.

Social congruence is also an important factor for experiential managers to understand and focus on in order to maximize customer perceptions of experiential quality. Experiential managers should monitor the interactions of experiential customers, as well as attempt to facilitate positive interactions amongst the customers of the experience. While it may be difficult to control the social environment of an experience on a large scale, interactions that could upset the overall balance of the experiential social environment should be reduced as much as possible. For example, if during an

experience there is a group of customers that is engaging in activities that are disruptive to the larger group of customers, experiential managers should do their best to discontinue this type of behavior. As the level to which the customer feels that they are engaged in the experience in the same manner as those with whom the experience is shared adds to experiential quality perceptions, it is important for firms to monitor and manage the social setting of the experience as well as inform customers about the social surroundings of the experience in order to set the proper social expectations for potential consumers. For example, if an experience is expected to bring in a rowdy group of college students, but is being promoted as a family friendly experience where children will be welcome, the manager of the experiential firm should understand the possible negative ramifications of such a dichotomy.

The outcomes stemming from experiential purchases of high quality take on a self-enhancing nature, and experiential firms need to not only understand this self-enhancing notion, but they should also attempt to facilitate it as much as possible. Facilitation of this activity could be most possible when the customer is engaging in self-enhancing word-of-mouth behavior. Analysis of the qualitative responses from Studies 1 and 2 indicate that many customers engage in self-enhancing word-of-mouth behavior through social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Experiential firms that have a presence on such sites should make an effort to seek out these types of social media posts by experiential customers and encourage these types of posts through engagement with the customer. In addition, advertising and promotional efforts should be directed at consumer interaction after the experience takes place and promoting word-of-mouth behavior to take place. As self-enhancing word-of-mouth leads directly to active

recruitment of other potential customers, experiential managers should do everything in their power to encourage this type of behavior.

Another outcome of experiential quality that managers of experiential firms should focus on is nostalgia. Nostalgia, affect-laden memories of the experience that took place, was highly impacted by EPQ across all of the experiential time horizons. As nostalgia positively impacted repurchase intention and decreased price consciousness, experiential firms should direct their promotional efforts towards previous customers in ways that stimulate nostalgic memories. Disney engages in this type of behavior with a promotional campaign asking the customer to “Remember the Magic”, also the 1978 successful rerelease of the movie Jaws asked movie goers to “Remember the Terror”. By focusing promotional efforts on the enjoyment that the customer derived from their engagement with a previous experience, the experiential firm can perhaps stimulate customer nostalgia leading to the identified positive benefits. The findings of this research suggest that experiential firms can motivate future experiential purchases by reminding the customer about past experiential purchases.

While the interplay that may exist between nostalgia and fantasizing should be examined in future studies, this research shows that fantasizing, the customer imagining future instances of the experience being altered in some way, is negatively impacted by EPQ. However, fantasizing was shown to positively impact both repurchase intention and decreased price consciousness in the two-to-three day and weeklong experiential time horizons. Experiential managers focusing on promotional efforts for previous customers should be mindful that focusing on what is new about an experience should not necessarily come at the expense of the positive reminders concerning a previous

experience. Experiential managers should judiciously balance promotional activities directed at strengthening the customer's nostalgic memories and promotional activities directed at pointing out new and different aspects of the experience.

Limitations and Future Research

With any study there are limitations, and I would be would remise to not address the limitations of this research. In terms of the survey instrument itself, although the majority of scales were adapted from established scales used in similar context, there could have been instances of social desirability bias with the questions asked. This could be the case with the more internally reflective questions asked in the measurement of self-enhancing word-of-mouth. This bias could be tested for in future research. There are also limitations regarding the sampling method, specifically this research only examined responses from customers of three different experiences, concerts, theme park visits, and vacations. By focusing solely on these types of experiences, responses and insight from other types of experiences was not captured. These particular experiential categories were chosen as they emerged through the analysis of the qualitative responses, however future research should include responses that allow the model to be examined from multiple different experiences. Additionally, the weeklong sample for theme parks consisted only of customers who had been to a Disney-based theme park experience. While this was done to maintain the integrity of this particular sample, it may have skewed the results.

In addition, certain variables that may have been of interest to this research regarding the respondent's particular experience were not captured or controlled for. In this research, I did not control for how far in the past the experience took place. As

nostalgic memories are an important part of the model, future research should control for the temporal distance between the response and the experience itself. This would allow for the further examination of EPQ dimensions and outcomes based on how long ago the experience took place. Are there any differences in the model depending on whether the experience took place more recently as opposed to an experience that took place long ago? This type of question should be addressed in future examinations. Also, study into the number of times the respondent had engaged with that particular experience could provide future insight. Further, the level of dissonance felt by the experiential consumer when an experience does not live up to their idealized referential should be looked at. This could be of interest as the consumer's expectation of the experience may be idealized to the point where the expectation of that experience has no way of being met. Finally, the level attachment to which a customer has with the experience should also be explored.

As the responses across all three studies suggests, purchased experiences are highly social in nature. This being the case, future research should be directed at the level to which engaging in a purchased experience of high quality allows the customer to engage in the concepts behind the self-expansion. Self-expansion refers to an individual's motivation to promote perceived social efficacy by engaging in social relationships (Leary et al., 1995). As individuals are highly motivated to maximize their own self-expansion through social connections, and as experiences are highly social in nature, the level to which purchased experiences are engaged with for the purpose of self-expansion, and the level to which self-expansion takes place after an experience takes place should

be examined. Dean's (2009) self-expansion scale could be included in future studies in order to explore this concept.

Social interaction with others in the experience was a concept that emerged strongly in the qualitative studies. I attempted to capture that concept with the construct of social congruence, however as social congruence was not a significant positive indicator of EPQ in the hours-long group and had a significant but relatively small impact on EPQ in the longer groups, it is possible that this construct did not capture that concept in its entirety. Other constructs from social psychology, such as belongingness or social identification, should be used in future studies to extend the knowledge of this important social aspect of experiential purchases.

Future research should be directed at the level to which the social congruence between the experience customer and the employees of the experiential firm impacts the customer's perception of the experience. Interaction with employees during the experience may have an effect on the customer's perceived social congruence at the experience. While the employees are sure to engage with the customer in different ways than other participants in the experience, there is still interpersonal interaction taking place. While employee interaction for an experiential purchase did not emerge as a dimension of value through the qualitative analysis, it is perhaps possible that this interaction was captured in the concept of social congruence. Future research in this domain should explore this notion.

Finally, the interplay between nostalgia and fantasizing should be explored in future research. As discussed above, understanding how these two concepts interact would be beneficial to both the theoretical and managerial implications of this research.

While fantasizing was negatively impacted by EPQ in the empirical model, it still led to positive attributes for the experiential firm. An exploration into the relationship present in these two concepts can help managers understand how to effectively allow for the promotion of new or recently updated experiences while still allowing for all of the positive benefits stemming from nostalgic memories.

Summary

Experiential purchases represent a unique, and exceedingly popular, type of marketing behavior. While the marketing literature stream contains many different conceptualizations of the value sources and outcomes of experiential purchase quality, there exists a surprising lack of empirical research in this area. The current research explores this concept by conducting two qualitative and one quantitative study for the purpose of uncovering the dimensions and outcomes of experiential purchase quality, using those dimensions to build an empirical model driven by self-enhancement theory, and empirically testing that model across three different time horizons.

An exhaustive list of dimensions and outcomes of experiential purchase quality were uncovered through a series of depth interviews and open-ended CIT questions in Studies 1 and 2 respectively. Through this inductive process, the dimensions of experiential purchase quality revolved around the level of hedonic enjoyment of the experience, the level of distinctiveness of the experience, and a sense of congruence with the others with whom the experience is shared. It is also learned that the entire experiential process is very social in nature, with social interaction playing a role in value perceptions of the experience and behaviors that take place after the experience is over.

Through this process, it is also uncovered that outcomes from experiential purchases take

on a self-enhancing nature. The interviews and questionnaires also revealed that memories, word-of-mouth behavior and cognitions concerning future experiences are done in a manner that enhances the experience. In addition, respondents reported that there is a high desire to repurchase high-quality experiences and that they would be willing to pay a premium for doing so.

In Study 3, variables discovered and identified in Studies 1 and 2 were included in a model of experiential purchase quality (EPQ) that was constructed through a grounded theory design and through concepts found in self-enhancement theory. The results of testing this model across hours-long, two-to-three day and weeklong experiences found that the model held reasonably consistent across the time horizons. While hypothesized EPQ dimensions of fun, escapism, servicescape quality, and uniqueness were present across all the time horizons, the dimension of social congruence was found only in the longer two experiential time horizons. Hypotheses concerning the positive impact of EPQ to self-enhancing word-of-mouth and to nostalgia, as well as outcomes of both of those variables, were supported across all the time horizon models. The hypothesized positive impact of EPQ to fantasizing, defined as the consumer engaging in cognitions of how to make the experience better in the future, was not supported and that relationship was significantly negative across all models. Even with that finding, fantasizing still led to decreased price consciousness in the two longer models increased repurchase intention across all three models.

In summation, this research offers insight into the value sources of experiential purchase quality and the outcomes that stem from these unique types of purchases. One of the most enlightening findings revealed through this research is that self-attachment

found in high-quality experiential purchases drives the behavior stemming from these purchases. This attachment to self was shown to drive not only how the customer talked about the experience after it was over, but also how the customer recalls idealized memories of the experience that took place. Managers of experiential firms may be able to operationalize this self-attachment through promotional efforts aimed at engaging with the customer and stimulating the customer's idealized memories of the experience. It is the hope of the author that this research results in elevated interest in the topic of experience and gives insight as to areas that may be valuable for future experiential research.

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APPENDIX A
LIST OF HYPOTHESES

- H1: Perceived Fun will be a positive determinant of EPQ
- H2: Escapism will be a positive determinant of EPQ
- H3: Servicescape quality will be a positive determinant of EPQ
- H4: Social congruence will be a positive determinant of EPQ
- H5: Uniqueness will be a positive determinant of EPQ
- H6: EPQ will positively impact self-enhancing word-of-mouth
- H7: Self-enhancing word-of-mouth will positively impact evangelizing
- H8: EPQ will positively impact nostalgia
- H9: Nostalgia will positively impact repurchase intention
- H10: Nostalgia will negatively impact price consciousness
- H11: EPQ will positively impact fantasizing
- H12: Fantasizing will positively impact repurchase intention
- H13: Fantasizing will negatively impact price consciousness

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

For this study, I'm going to ask you to think of a time where you made an experiential purchase. This wouldn't be a tangible, material good that you could hold in your hands or a service that was performed, but rather a purchase that you made exclusively to have a good time and create memories. For example, theme park visits, vacations, beach trips, movies, cruises, camping, and the like. Something where the sensation of the experience and the memories created would be the primary reason for the purchase.

1. Think of a time where you made what you would call a high quality, highly memorable experiential purchase. Something that really sticks in your head. Do you have one?
2. Tell me your memories about that experience. Why was this particular experience so memorable? What made this experience stick in your head the way it has?
3. After it was over, what were your thoughts on the experience?
 - a. Do you think that you remember it differently than it actually was?
4. In general, what do you think makes for a memorable experience? What components need to be a part of it?
5. Do you want to go back and relive this experience? Talk about that. Why or why not? What was it about the experience that you wanted to relive?
 - a. Would you want to have the exact same experience or would you change it in any way?
 - b. Would you be willing to spend more or less money on it this time? Why?
6. Did you feel the need to tell someone about this experience? (Have you ever had an experience like that, where you felt the need to share?) Tell me about that. Why was telling others about this experience important to you?
 - a. Do you frequently want to tell others about your experiences, or was it just this one?
 - i. What made you want to talk about this particular experience?

Thank you! Please choose a name (optional)

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

Interview 1: Sunny

Interview #1

Pseudonym: Sunny

Age: 35

Gender: F

Interview Time: 10:31

Experience: Walt Disney World Vacation

S: I guess because I did family trips, and then when I went with my husband, it was just totally different. It was just fun.

I: But what made it fun?

S: I don't know the whole thing. We just had such a good time; it was relaxing but crazy at the same time. We got to enjoy all the little different venues that are at Disney World.

I: So, just going to all these different things and experiencing them individually?

S: I think it was the fact that I was experiencing them with my husband.

I: So it was whom you were with?

S: And I had been there many times before with my family, and that wasn't always the greatest of times. And so, it was a different experience going with my husband. It was different. It was like I was going for the first time. It was all-new. We went for a week and we turned off our cell phones and turned off the Internet and just enjoyed the time.

I: So it was that relaxation and the changing of the experience that made it so memorable?

S: The change of pace, yes. Absolutely.

I: So after it was over, what were your thoughts about it?

S: I want to go back. (laughs)

I: Right. That was immediately what you thought?

S: Absolutely, we couldn't wait to go back. We did go back just last year. You reminisce about it. Like remember when we rode Spaceship Earth. I remember when we swam in our bowling ball shaped pool.

I: Do you think you remember it differently than it actually was?

S: Oh, absolutely.

I: So, talk about that.

S: My husband is not a fan of the busses at Disney world and I am. I think it's fun to be smashed on there with all those people. He remembers it differently. I think I remember it as being a fun time, a happy time like "yeah! We're going to the park" and then he explains to me that is not how it was it was sweaty and busy and awful.

I: So the busses, you think you remember those differently?

S: Oh yeah.

I: How about the encompassing experience? The whole thing?

S: Probably. You might tune out the screaming parents, the hot lines of people. But the whole experience of just being there, they say it's magical and it is magical. You tune out the whole world and just see Disney World.

I: So in general what do you think makes for a memorable experience? What components need to be a part of it?

S: It has to be something that you enjoy. It can't just be going to Walmart. That isn't a great time. It has to be with someone that you want to spend time with. You can go somewhere, like I take a family vacation with my family to the beach and I love the beach, but that trip is not necessarily an experience that I remember fondly because of who you are with. You have to be with, whether it's your husband, or your wife or maybe friends, but the people are a big part of that.

And I think the location plays a big part of it too. If you go on vacation to a place where you don't care anything about it and are just there, it won't be as memorable to you. It won't be something that you want to do again and you won't think highly of it. The timing, I would say, too, because if you are rushed the whole time you won't enjoy it.

I: You have already addressed this, but do you want to go back and relive this experience?

S: Oh, yeah. That was a fun one. That was more than a week. We turned our phones off and just relaxed.

I: Why? Why do you want to go back? What was it about this experience that you want to relive?

S: Just the whole thing. It was relaxing and enjoyable and it was new in a sense because I had never done that with my husband.

I: Would you want to relive it the exact same way or would you want to change it up?

S: I don't think that it needs to be relived in the same exact way. Maybe change the time. The date. Because it was summer and it was hot. Maybe go during the spring when it is cooler and not so crowded. But we could go back for a week and maybe stay on the resort itself. I wouldn't want to rent a car because I like the busses. I think I would actually do it the same. I like the hotel we stayed at because it was silly and not snooty. I would do it the same. Maybe ride Spaceship Earth one more time.

I: And Spaceship Earth is a big part of the experience?

S: Yes.

I: So, if that is not included in it? Like if you went there and it was shut down?

S: I would be real sad. I would probably mope the whole day.

I: So when you do go back, would you be willing to spend more money?

S: Oh yes. Sure.

I: Why?

S: Because you want to go back. If it costs more than it costs more. It doesn't matter. Maybe you have to cut back on souvenirs to do the trip. Maybe have one less dinner in a fancy place. If it costs more then it just costs more.

I: So when you came back, did you feel that you had to share this experience with other people, did you want to talk about it?

S: I wanted to, but people didn't really care. Nobody cared. I do tell other people now. Because if you love Disney World then you love Disney World and you want to go back. You can really only explain it to people that like Disney World. Others just don't care and they look at you like you are nuts because they don't understand. And, it was just a fun, relaxing vacation. We enjoyed everything and soaked it all in.

I: So, you would only talk about it with other Disney people?

S: Yeah, you kind of have to because people that haven't been there and don't know or care don't want to hear your story. I mean, I'll tell anybody just talking about it casual

conversation, but I am not just going to run up to a stranger and say “Hey! Go to Disney World!” but if we are talking about vacations I’ll bring it up, but I don’t bring it up out of the blue.

I: Do you frequently want to tell others about experiences?

S: Yeah, for sure. Absolutely.

I: What is it that you want to share?

S: Maybe if it's a good movie you want to recommend it to people. Or, if it's camping. All of that. We had a real good time. Maybe in a sense it's like bragging. Telling everyone hey, look what we did.

If it's not good or something you don't enjoy you may want to share the negative experiences about it. Like this movie was terrible, or this restaurant was awful. But for this trip, I had fun. I wanted to tell people about it.

Interview 2: Art

Interview #2

Pseudonym: Art

Age: 27

Gender: M

Interview Time: 7:47

Experience: African Safari

A: Well, I've had a lot of high quality experiences over the years, but I think that the first one to come to mind and the most recent would be this past summer, I was in South Africa and I went on a safari. That would be the one that jumps out at me.

I: Okay. Great. So tell me your memories about this experience. What made that safari in South Africa so memorable? Why has that stuck in your head the way that it has?

A: Well, I just saw a piece of the earth and landscape that I've never been able to see before. I've been to Zoos and I've seen these animals caged up and just to see them roaming in their natural habitat was just incredible for me. So I'd say the landscape and the animals.

I: So when you think back about it, that thing that gets you excited about it is that you had never seen these animals before, or at least you had never seen them in this way before.

A: Yeah. Absolutely. I am seeing it in the way it was meant to be seen, in my own opinion.

I: So after it was over, maybe on the plane ride home, or in the weeks following the experience. What were your thoughts about it after it was done?

A: I thought that it was one of the greatest days of my life. It was one of the best opportunities that I have ever had.

I: Do you think that you remember it differently than it actually was?

A: Um. I probably don't think about all the dirt that goes flying up, all the dust, or the hours spent without seeing any animals. I just think fondly of the moments. You know, the particular moments. And those are the memories that I really remember.

I: So you accentuate the positive and ignore the negative when thinking about it?

A: Absolutely.

I: So in general, maybe not just with this particular experience but across all experiences, what components do you think go into a high-quality, highly memorable experience?

A: Uh. (pause)

I: So what needs to be there in order for it to really stick in your head?

A: Will uniqueness is probably the first thing. Something that doesn't happen on a daily basis would be the highest quality. Also, I really value a sense of adventure.

I: So what is it about the adventure?

A: Well. It kind of follows the uniqueness. I like being able to do things that not a lot of people get to experience. I feel that kinds of shapes me in a way that sets me apart from other people.

I: So, what else would you say? In terms of all experiences?

A: I would say culture and flavor plays huge parts of it. Whether I'm going to Jackson, Mississippi or I'm traveling half way across the world to like Italy or something, I'm always looking to experience the culture that I am in, or the place that I'm at through the cuisine that they offer. So, I'd say that food would be a big part.

What else? I'd say activity level. I like things that have a high level of activity. More interaction. I think you have things that, like you mentioned earlier sitting in a movie theatre or something, those things just aren't quite as memorable to me. Actually a lot of people quote movies and I have a real hard time. They'll be like "have you seen that movie" and I have a hard time because it's just not something that sticks out in my mind.

I: So, a movie like that, that isn't as active, you don't take away that same type of feeling like you had on the safari?

A: No. Now way.

I: So, do you want go back and relive this experience? Do you want to do it again?

A: For sure. I'd suffered through the 20-hour plane ride, all the cultural differences, suffer through the fear of being mugged in South Africa. All of it. Because the experience was worth it.

I: What was it about this particular experience that you would want to do again?

A: Um, if I could just do the entire experience again. At one point, about an hour into the drive, I pulled up on to a slope and within view of my camera lens there was three zebras, two giraffes, a couple of elephants. And those are just the kind of things that you just recreate here in America.

I: Is there anything that you would do differently? Would you change anything about it?

A: Make it longer honestly. I was only a day, and, I would probably, I've heard that you can actually camp and hike through the game park for like a week. I would want to do something like that.

I: Is there anything else that you would change about it?

A: Well no. We went in South Africa's wintertime. So it wasn't as hot. If you went right now it would be scorching hot. So, I think we picked the perfect temperature and everything. So, no, I think it was just right.

I: Going back, would you be willing to spend more money? Would you want to spend less money?

A: I'd spend more money.

I: Why?

A: I would spend more because I think that there are other experiences within that realm of going on safari. Like I talked about, hiking through for a week that would cost more. So I'd spend more money.

I: Did you feel the need to tell others about this experience?

A: No, I feel that it is kind of a unique case in the sense that, I've had the opportunity to experience a lot of cool and great things in my life that a lot of people haven't, so I'd really hate to come of as braggadocios. I don't want to flaunt things like that.

I: Have you ever had an experience like that? Where you felt the need to tell others about it?

A: Well I did live in Western Europe, I lived in Italy for a while and I had so many things that I wanted to tell people. But at the same time, a lot of the people that I would be

telling these people to might be disheartened about their current state in life and I wouldn't want to drive that any deeper into them.

I: Just one more question, if you had met someone that had gone on this type of safari, you'd talk to them about it?

A: For sure. Obviously. Because we have that shared experience and I'm not going to be bragging to them or one-upping them. Who likes a one upper?

Interview 3: Michael

Interview #3

Pseudonym: Michael

Age: 41

Gender: M

Interview Time: 11:29

Experience: Walt Disney World Vacation

M: Yes, a trip to Disneyworld with my wife and my daughter. Why has it stuck in my head the way it has? The overwhelming feeling that everything had been considered. When we had to wait in line, the lines were like a snake formation so you were not feeling like “I wish I had got in that other one” and there were video cartoons for my daughter to watch while we were waiting. So, basically if the adult didn’t look at his watch, the wait really wasn’t that bad, even if it was long.

Also, another situation was, where there was not a snake line, but you were waiting, Disney personnel were employed and they weren’t selling but actually giving away these spray bottles. We weren’t one of the families that got a spray bottle, but there was an overwhelming sensation that hey, we have thought of everything. Every “i” had been dotted and every “t” had been crossed.

I: Why was that so important to you in this particular experience?

M: Because it was my wife and daughter. Because, if you are taking care of my kid, then you are golden and you are making things easier.

I: So, the number one memory that you have about this is the efficiency?

M: The consideration. They probably could have made more money on us per head if they had not done any of these things but they did them anyway. And as I result I will bring up Disney as one on the places that we go with family.

I: After it was over, when it was all done, what were your thoughts on the experience?

M: Yeah, long drive home. My thoughts on the experience were, first, appreciation of the experience. My daughter was elated, my wife was exhausted. My wife’s grandparents were exhausted, but they had been well taken care of. And the thing was, like we were talking about, what we liked about it, but there was planning what we were going to do next time. There was almost a sensed that the experience had been so positive the default was what we would do next time.

I: So, there was an immediate thought about what was going to happen next time?

M: Yes.

I: Do you think you remember it differently that how it actually was?

M: Uh. No. I don’t. Because the points, the negative points, are in mind too but the negative points...I grew up not far from another amusement park called Busch Gardens. Okay? And basically having that frame of reference kind of give me a reality ground of what to expect and so on. So I don’t feel that I am candy coating the experience because I remember it all. For example, there were restaurants that we couldn't get into because we would have apparently made reservations before my daughter was born. But at the same time, that was also kind of a consideration set, they were taking that priority for repeat customers. So next time, we will make a reservation. In ten years when we go back.

I: Was this your first trip to Disney?

M: This was my first trip as an adult my previous trip had been when I was in the second grade. A good while. That one I doubt my memories on! (laughs)

I: In general, not necessarily only this particular experience but across all experiences what do you think needs to be a part of a memorable experience? What components need to be a part of it?

M: I think a memorable experience is when your expectations, when it meets and exceeds your expectations. I walked in expecting Busch Gardens and I got Walt Disney World. And Disney World exceeded all expectations.

I: Do you think that is needed in all experiences?

M: Exceeding expectations? Yes.

I: What kinds of aspects go into exceeding expectation do you think?

M: Elements of fairness. Saying “Hey, that makes sense”. The reservations thing, being turned away at a restaurant that my daughter would have like to have gone was frustrating, but there was fairness, there was a reason why. The element of consideration. In situations that would have horrible and horrendous in the sweltering sun in Busch Gardens, in Disney World they take care of it.

I: They are thinking about you?

M: Yes. I hoped that basically that they had the sense to plan ahead. The irony is that I really wanted as little frustration as possible. The absence of frustration I think makes for a great experience.

My wife would say something that I would not. The price needs to be low. Disney costs about five times what Busch Gardens did, but for ten times the experience.

I: So, it worth it because of what you are getting back?

M: Yes.

I: Would you want to go back and relive this? Would you want to do this again?

M: Yes.

I: Talk about that. What is it about the experience that you want to do again?

M: In addition to really enjoying the fairness and consideration, I know what to do the next time right. I know how to make the reservations for the German restaurant so we can get into there if we want to. I know how to get into the princess lunch. That was the thing that was the frustration. I know the differences between the different hotels. I know which places I'd like to get into. For instance, the Grand Floridian if I am really and truly made of money. I guess my thing is, with the next experience, not just relive it, but I know how to improve it and I have that expectations of consistency and fairness.

I: So you would want to change it?

M: Yes. Right. A different hotel.

I: Would you be willing to spend more money on it this time?

M: Yes.

I: Why?

M: I would be willing to spend more money on it. I am willing to pay more just because that is something that is intrinsic of quality. Quality relates to price and as quality improves so does the price in most cases.

I: So, when you came back did you feel the need to tell anyone about it?

M: Yes.

I: Tell me about that.

M: The circumstances where I felt like I wanted to talk about it was defending the price tag. I was in situations where people were talking about Disney costing so much and so on and so forth. Yeah, but at Busch Gardens we would have been in three lines and we wouldn't know if we were in the right one. We would have been without TV monitors to keep my daughter entertained. They wouldn't have handed out spray cans for free in the crowd, and we didn't even get one of those. They handed it to couple that thought we looked hot enough and asked us if we wanted to use it. I found myself talking about it largely in defense of it.

I: Do you frequently talk about your experiences or was it just this particular one?

M: Probably frequently, especially if it is a community that I am involved with.

I: Explain that.

M: So as being someone involved with marketing you find yourself taking about marketing issues, and experiences come into that.

Interview 4: Susie

Interview #4

Pseudonym: Susie

Age: 24

Gender: F

Interview Time: 8:43

Experience: Brazilian Soccer Trip

S: Okay, so the experience that I automatically think of is we did a soccer trip to Brazil where we played in this soccer tournament. There were one hundred of us that flew to Brazil to play in their soccer tournament and it was unlike anything else that I had ever experienced before. Brazilian soccer is just completely different than United States soccer and everything that we did down there was all out of the Brazilian culture and we got to go to the different islands and it was just a real unique experience. I've been on trips my whole life, we did a yearly trip with my family and nothing that I ever did on Florida or California would even compare to this. So, it was like a family thing, my whole family went so it was like a family experience that I remember. I remember going sand surfing and these kinds of things.

I: Did you play soccer down there?

S: Yeah. We played in a tournament. It was kind of, soccer is what I always do, it was what I loved to do so it was kind of that.

I: How old were you?

S: In high school, I was a freshman in high school. We went for a whole ten days.

I: So the really memorable part of this is?

S: The unique factor.

I: So the unique factor? This is something that I've never done?

S: Yeah, and something that I'll probably never get to experience again.

I: When it was over, maybe on the way home, or the first couple of weeks after, what were your thoughts on the experience?

S: It was something that I knew that I would remember for the rest of my life. It was like an out-of-body experience because we did so many things in a ten-day time frame that it was kind of overwhelming. Like, I kind of forgot things that we had just done four days prior, because it was just so compacted. Kind of like the last few memories. I had like seven of my friends that went to that same high school went with me, so I guess just the bonding experience that I got to have with them. And also, my grandparents because they were older so I kind of knew that this was one of the last trips that I would take with them and get to do with them. And the culture of the place was kind of the main thing just because I was younger and I hadn't experienced that.

I: Do you think you remember it differently than it actually was?

S: Yeah. I think I thought it was just so much better because I was younger and I didn't really understand a lot of thing. Like children would come up and beg to my parents and stuff, but when you're young you are just like "look at all these colors" and that kind of thing, so I feel like I blocked out a lot of the sad parts of it just because of my age and because I was in high school.

I: Right. So when you think about it now?

S: I don't think about that part at all. I think about the malls and the soccer stadiums that we went to.

I: In general, what do you think makes for a memorable experience? What makes for a quality experience? What components need to be a part of it for it to stick in your head?

S: I think it needs to, I guess it just exceeded what I was expecting going in. I guess that I always just thought that it was going to be like a beach trip that I had been on one hundred times. You know, I wanted it to be sunny and it was just a total different experience than what my expectations were going in.

I: Do you think this holds for all experiences?

S: All experiences? What it has to have? It would have to be fun. It would have to be something that I really enjoyed doing. It would have to be something unique. I think that is what makes me remember something. It has to have a unique quality. I also like a social quality. It also has to be something where you can relate to other people. Because if I have to be secluded then I'm not going to like that at all. I'm more of an extravert, so I have to have social interaction. It has to be fun and it has to be unique.

I: So, you would say fun, unique and social?

S: Yes

I: So thinking back to the soccer experience? Is something that you would want to go back and relive? Would you want to do it again?

S: Yeah. I just don't know if I could ever do it the same way that I did it before.

I: Would there be something that you would want to change? Would you want to change it if you could do it knowing what you know now?

S: No. I would like to go back and do it again to see how different my experience would be now that I'm a little bit older and I know a little bit more. So, I'd definitely 100% do it again. It was raining season, which I kind of forgot until I just talked it about it more, but of the ten days, it rained nine. But we still did everything; we still went to the beach and went sand surfing and that kind of stuff. But, I would probably pick a different time period to go.

I: Do you think you would be willing to spend more money on it this time?

S: Yes. I would spend more money to go back.

I: Why?

S: Now it's just a different place, with the world cup going there and the Olympics, just seeing the soccer arenas. The reason I went there was for soccer and now it would just be outstanding. When I went it was just kind of run down, and it was kind of beat up, but now it is just outstanding.

And now, they take more teams. We were the first woman's team to go. And we had to have people with guns with us at all time because they had a lot of young girls that were with us, but now he is taking like 25 teams since one. He takes them a couple of times a year. So it would be a completely different experience now I think. We went to some restaurants that were questionable for thirteen to seventeen-year old girls to eat at. So, I would definitely do it again. I would want to do some of the main things again, like I would want to visit all of the same stadiums again.

I: Does it make you sad knowing that you won't be able to experience it again through the same youthful eyes again?

S: Yes. Definitely. I think it would totally change. Everything that I totally got out of it was positive, like everyone is happy down there, and they play music and that sort of thing. But when I talk to my mom about it, she has a totally different view. She thinks it was scary that we had guys with machine guns and that we weren't allowed to be left alone. And like, we weren't allowed to leave our resort. Like when the bus came down we would get on the bus immediately. But, I didn't notice that kind of thing we were like watching movies and listening to music. So, I felt like I was just kind of sucked into the experience.

I: So, when you came back, did you want to talk about it with anyone? Did you feel the need to share the experience?

S: Oh, definitely. I took like a 1,000 pictures, and this was before Facebook, so we took them to school and showed everybody. We were those nerdy tourists that got like hair braids and stuff so we were like "check us out." And I still share it. Like on Facebook when it asks for three facts that people don't know about you, when you say that you played in a soccer tournament in Brazil, people are like "yeah, right." It's kind of one my unique things.

I: Is that something that you frequently do? You frequently talk about experiences like that?

S: I am more of an experience person. I like experiences more than I like tangible things, I would rather experience something than buy something. But, this was something, like I said I had been on trips like fifty times and this is definitely my favorite on that sticks out. Just because like I said it was so unique.

Interview 5: Joanie

Interview #5

Pseudonym: Joanie

Age: 24

Gender: F

Interview Time: 4:36

Experience: Beach Trip

J: It was on the beach. I could see the beach from my room, and I'm a beach person. I like the beach in general. And, it wasn't in summer time, so that made it even more memorable because we're at the beach and it looked beautiful, but it wasn't typical for that time of the year. And, it was a lot of fun, I was there with friends and it was a good time.

I: So the friends added to it?

J: Yes.

I: So after it was over, and you were thinking about it. What were your thoughts about it?

J: That I really need to someday get back to Hilton Head again.

I: Do you think you remember it differently than it actually was?

J: Um, No I don't think so. I don't think so.

I: Not just for this particular experience, but this one could certainly be a part of it, but in general, what do you think makes up a memorable experience? What components need to be a part of it?

J: Being with people that you like. I think that is probably the most important. And good customer service from the people involved. Poor customer service can ruin a good time.

I: So, this experience at Hilton Head is this something that you would want to go back and relive?

J: Yes.

I: So talk about that. What is it about this experience that makes you want to do that? To relive it?

J: Well, it was probably a combination of all of the places to visit in that specific area along with where the hotel was located. You know like great food and a lot of great places right there.

I: So, you didn't get to visit the places that you wanted to?

J: I'm not sure that there is a whole lot that I missed out on, but I would definitely revisit that area.

I: Would you do it the same way, or would you change anything about it?

J: I was initially there for a conference, so I am sure that the way I did it would change the experience.

I: So, what would you want to make different?

J: I'd probably do some research on some of the tourist sites that I didn't get to see, but I'm not really sure what those exactly were. But, I'd probably do some research to see what more there is to do in the area.

I: Do you think you'd spend more money this time around?

J: No.

I: You think that it's just about right what you spent?

J: Yes.

I: And did you feel the need to tell other people about this experience?

J: Oh yeah.

I: So why was that? What was it about this experience that made you want to share it?

J: Because it was awesome and I was on a beach when no one else was, so I had to tell all of Facebook that I was on the beach.

I: Is that something that you frequently feel the need to do? Tell others about your experiences?

J: Good experiences. And really bad ones, yes.

I: So if it's really good or really bad, then you really want to share it with people.

J: Yes.

Interview 7: Mary

Interview #6

Pseudonym: Mary

Age: 30

Gender: F

Interview Time: 8:00

Experience: Engagement Weekend in Asheville, NC

M: Okay. So. When I got engaged, the day I got engaged, I got engaged outside on the river, we drove to a nearby city, we went to Asheville and we had dinner reservations at the Grovepark Inn, which is a very fancy restaurant and inn at Asheville that overlooks the mountains.

And so, for the moment we got there everyone treated us very special. We came in, we walked up and they already knew that we had gotten engaged, that was part of the reservation they asked if we had done anything special, if there was any special reason that we were coming, so they already knew, they asked about my ring, they asked about the story from the moment that we walked up to the hostess desk. They sat us at this perfect little table and the edge of the veranda, where we had a great view. It was the perfect time of day. It was sunset. It was perfect weather. The food was exception. The service was great. They offered us complimentary champagne and desserts.

I: Because you had gotten engaged?

M: Yes, because we had got engaged and it was a special occasion.

I: Was this your first time ever going there?

M: It was out first time ever going. And so it was vary, it was something that we had always talked about thought about doing. We had gone to Asheville a lot, but we had never gone. It was a surprise and it was a very, very, special experience.

I: So after it was over, and you were thinking back on it. What were your thoughts on it?

M: Oh, just that it was great. There really was no element that wasn't... that didn't seem perfect. The food was great, it was perfectly cooked, and the service was amazing. It just makes you feel happy.

I: Do you think that you remember it differently than how it actually was?

M: I am sure that I remember it with a little more of a rosy tint because of the emotional element. Like it was perfect and magical. But, then again, we have been back and we have always had that kind of experience. So, maybe not. Building on those experiences, I think back to the first one on it's pretty magical. But the funny thing is that I had a horrible headache. I was nervous and that was my body's response.

I: You remember having the headache?

M: I remember having the headache, but it does not at all impede the experience because everything was just so perfect.

I: So in general, what do you think makes for a memorable experience?

M: Um, to make it memorable I think it has to have an aspect of being unexpected. It has to be something that doesn't happen every day, so it has to be unique. I do think that it is important in order for it to be completely memorable that you are around people that you like to some extent. (laughs)

I: Why is that, why do you think that is important?

M: Because it's fun to share things like that. You know, I was trying to think of experiences that I have had by myself and there aren't many that are incredibly memorable, but when you have someone that share it with it is more... it stands out more. And I think that as long as there is not anything jarringly wrong, like if we had had a bad server, if the food had not come out well, or if we had not liked the food, I think that it would have been a good experience, but because everything was cohesive. And even, I guess, if there had been something little that was wrong there probably would have been, but as long as there was nothing glaringly bad that it was a good memorable experience.

I: You said you have been back there?

M: Yes.

I: So what is about it that made you want to go back?

M: I mean seriously, everything is amazing. It is very much to our taste. It is a big old lodge style inn with views of the mountains. The food is great, it's not cheap and we don't eat out like that often. We don't do fine dining, but this is fine dining

I: So it is like you are treating yourself?

M: We are treating ourselves, but we also know that it is a good value because it was an experience. Like, I don't think that I would ever pay that much money to eat in a normal restaurant, but knowing that you are going to have the views, and you are going to have this atmosphere, and you are going to have this service, then it makes it worthwhile to go back.

I: When you did go back, did you want to do it the exact same way as the first time or did you want to change it up?

M: This is fun, we've actually been back a couple of times, but we chose to have our wedding luncheon there because we wanted to share it with our friends and our family. But we did it in the same location, because we love the location. We wanted to include other people because we wanted to share what we had done and what we had enjoyed. We have been back in the same, exact same place where we sat on the terrace by ourselves, but we especially wanted to relive it with our friends and family so we had our wedding reception there.

I: Would you be willing to spend more money on this in the future?

M: Yes. Because even though it is expensive, I feel as though the experience is worth it. And I think that for the dinner and every time we go back I would probably pay double and still be happy just because they have never disappointed us.

I: You know it's going to be a sure thing?

M: Yes. Now if we ever go back and it doesn't work out, then we'll see but every time we've been back so far it had been a wonderful experience.

I: You took other people there for your wedding, but outside of that did you feel that you had to share this experience with people?

M: Oh, yes.

I: And why is that?

M: For one thing, a lot of people that we know had either seen or heard of this place, the Greypark Inn, so for those people that had seen and heard of it, you really want to tell them that it really is as amazing as you think it is going to be. So, you want to be able to tell them about something that they wonder about. But then also, it was just so special

that you want to share part of the specialness, and recommend. If you are that impressed you really want to recommend it to someone.

I: Is that something that you frequently do? Do you frequently want to share your experiences with others?

M: No.

I: What was it about this particular one?

M: Just because it exceeded expectations on every level. The food was good, there was a good quantity of food, good service, good atmosphere, and everything exceeded expectations. There was just nothing at all wrong with it.

Interview 7: Ray

Interview #7

Pseudonym: Ray

Age: 47

Gender: M

Interview Time: 10:03

Experience: Scuba Diving Trip in Hawaii

R: A couple of things. The experience I'm thinking of was when my family took a big vacation to Hawaii. Most of the family went to go over there. We rented this big house, and you know it was right on the ocean. It was awesome.

The event that I am most thinking about is this dive trip that my dad and I did. Which has a couple of reasons why it is so memorable. First is that it was the first ocean dive that I had done. Now, I had gotten certified back in high school but I never did anything with it. At the time my dad and I had always talked about going on some trip and stuff, but we never did it. So this was the first time I got to do a diving trip with my dad, which I had been waiting for since I was a little kid and high school or whatever. So that part of it was cool. Getting to go out on the boat in the ocean with the Dive master. It was just exciting because it was something that I got to do with my dad that I never got to do, it was my first time I got to do an ocean dive. And of course you're in Hawaii and it's beautiful and the water is the kind where you can see for hundreds of feet. It was real cool. And, you know, one of the first dives we did was about 100 feet deep and you could see the bottom from the boat and the navy had sunk a bunch of stuff there, sort of this artificial reef. And you could see it! It was like 135 feet and I was like no way you could see that far down. And then we go down and we're kind of looking around all this stuff. And the dive master is just sort of fishing around back there and out comes this 4-5 foot long black-tip reef shark. I was like (laughing) I was just like freaking cool! There is this live shark just a few feet from me!

I: That's great. So after it was over, say on the plane trip home or when you were thinking about it after the trip, what were your thoughts thinking back in on the experience.

R: Just like they are today. It was just so cool. I mean, that was just the first part apart about it. We also went to this other reef where there was this octopus to he pulled out and wrapped it around my hand. It was just all of this cool stuff that I had never done but always wanted to do.

Thinking back on it now, I just get excited talking about it because it was just something so cool. I'm just like...I wish this were something I could afford to do all the time. I think that is the main thing that I'm always thinking about because I've been diving once since then and that was, you know, almost 10 years ago.

I: How did that second time compare to the first?

R: It was equally cool. It was just a year after and it was down in Mexico off of Cozumel. I was staying down there for a bank trip and I had a day off while I was down there. I just went by myself; I didn't know anybody there. And that was equally cool. There were no sharks but I saw barracudas, sea turtles and a couple of other cool things.

I: So the trip with the shark, do you think about it now do you think that you remember it differently than it actually was?

R: Um. There are probably parts of it that weren't...I remember parts of that when I am forced to think about it. It was just so cool. I don't know. Maybe. I was so excited because it was my first ocean dive so you breathe a lot heavier and faster so your air tank goes down a lot quicker. Everyone else had to 30 minutes left and I'm thinking "I got to go, I'm outta here!"

I don't know. Thinking back. (pause) Not that I'm aware of. Not really. I kind of idealize it, but I was just so excited because it was so cool.

I: Right, so in general, what do you think makes up a memorable experience? What components need to be a part of it? Just in general?

R: Yeah. For my I think it has to be, for me certainly in thinking of that experience, I think that experience was unique because it was the first time I got to do it. I mean how many times do you get to swim with a shark and have an octopus wrapped around your arm? So there was a lot of uniqueness to the particular experience, like I said it was something, it was kind of like a promise kept after a really long time. Because my dad and I had always talked about doing this but we never just had to opportunity to do it and that was cool.

I: So, something unique? Something out of the ordinary?

R: It was real unique. It was personally unique it was the first time for me in a lot of respects doing a lot of this stuff, but it was also just a unique situation. It was a unique place, a unique setting.

I: It was the real deal?

R: Yeah, yeah. For sure.

I: So in terms of all experiences, you'd say uniqueness is the primary component?

R: (pause) I don't know if it's the primary one. But certainly I think it's an important one.

I: It's just got to be there?

R: It's got to be something unique or why would you remember it?

I: Would you want to go back and relive this experience?

R: Oh yeah!

I: So talk about that, what was it about this that you would want to redo? What make you want to relive it?

R: I think for me, just because I've always kind of had the thing for sharks, I think they are cool, so the diving with the sharks and that kind of thing. Just the experience of scuba diving and being able to breathe underwater was just really cool. But, that was really just kind of a special thing and Hawaii is just such a beautiful place, I mean Mexico is neat too, but in my mind that Hawaii trip just stands out. And again, there was just so much uniqueness to it. A year later it was still really cool when I went to Mexico, but some of that was "yeah, okay I did this last year and I saw the sea turtles." But what made the Mexico thing was that there was a barracuda that I didn't get to see one of those before.

I: So would you want to change anything about the experience if you did it again? Is there something that you would want to do differently?

R: Well, really I think I would just do more of it. You know, we only had one day that we did that dive. I would dive everyday if I could change or redo it, I'd make it so it was like a weeklong thing and do several dives.

I: Regardless of inflation, do you think you would be willing to spend more money on it now?

R: Yeah, and that's the thing because it's not a cheap hobby or cheap thing to do anyways. And that's why I haven't done it in ten years because it cost to get to these places so. It's certainly kind of one of those things that when I have money to do things, to plan and annual trip, I could be like "I'm going to drop five grand on this dive trip." Maybe every other year or something like that. But I'd definitely do it. And, to plan would be to spend more and do more the next time.

I: So when you came back, do you feel the need to share the experience? Talk about it with others?

R: Oh yeah.

I: Okay, so why? Why was that an important thing for you?

R: Just because it was so unique. I mean I got to swim with a shark. It's kind of a neat experience. It's kind of bragging I guess? I mean "so you went skiing? Well, I swam with a shark. I had an octopus wrapped around my arm. What did you do?" You know, it's kind of one of those real unique kind of things

I: Do you want to tell people about experiences often?

R: Probably. I probably tell people more about other stuff than they want to hear. But, I remember wanted to tell others about that story just because it was so cool to me personally.

Interview 8: Bill

Interview #8

Pseudonym: Bill

Age: 25

Gender: M

Interview Time: 10:10

Experience: Tom Waits Concert

B: Well, probably the reason that it comes up is because, as hipster as it sounds, one of the things that I really liked about going to see Tom Waits in El Paso was that this was about 2003, so it was kind of before he was really around. I mean, he had been around for like 30 years but he's only recently been on the cover of Rolling Stone like last year and what not. So being able to see him when he was doing one of his class tours, before he brought in the whole band and was still doing solo work was really nice.

So what really sticks out the most was the road trip involved, the concert itself was nice but it wasn't really even the main attraction, I was going, I was going with a girl and it was one of my first really out-of-town dates, so we packed in the car and way drove to El Paso and she wasn't good at driving in the city, so I had to drive, and once we got to El Paso we stayed at a nice hotel, I mean nice for us, it was a Hilton or something, so nice but not super nice, and we went to go see Tom Waits, which was awesome.

He opened up, I still remember it, and exactly how he opened up. I'm not sure if you familiar with Tom Waits, but he's not much for talking. A lot of people up with "hey thanks for having us" but he opens up without saying anything and without introducing himself and says "So why don't shrimp give much to charity? Because they're shellfish" and then starts singing! He just has the corniest joke ever and then there is this awesome concert. So I guess that answers the questions about why it was memorable.

I: Did the environment, like you mentioned the hotel, did the environment and the concert hall did that play any role in it?

B: It did. I mean it was nice going because it was a brand new concert hall. The mayor of El Paso showed up because I think it was the first concert. Which was weird because Tom Waits is like your first big headliner? (Laughs) For this new concert hall? So the mayor came by and shook hands with Tom Waits, which was kind of weird, because it was sort of this crotchety looking guy, it was a really nice concert hall, but it was different. The concert hall was nice and it was nice that the city got involved. The hotel was nice, the restaurants were nice. Being in El Paso was cool because we popped into Juarez for a little bit. So that definitely helped it. I think if it were just a concert like down the street, like if it was in Albuquerque where I was living, then I probably wouldn't think of it as the best concert.

I: So after it was over, what kind of thoughts did you have looking back on it?

B: (pause) So after it was done?

I: Yeah after it was done. Do you think you remember it any differently than it actually was?

B: Quite possibly, looking back on it a lot of what was happening was sort of a certain time of your life and you have a road trip to take and you have concert tickets and it's a

spur of the moment type think. As I look back and I don't know if it was really that good of music. I'm still a Tim Waits fan; I still like most of his stuff. It was a cool experience and how I was feeling at that point is probably different. I guess you're right. As soon as it was done, I can't really tell much about the concert itself but mostly after and before.

I: So you think that you sort of inflate the experience in your head when you think about it?

B: Possibly. But I would imagine any time you have a really good experience and you're looking back on it that is going to be the case.

I: In general, for experiences, what component do you think have to be present in order for it to be a really good memorable experience? What has to be there?

B: For me, when I think of my really good memorable experience, I think you have to have somewhere there to share it with. You have to have someone there to bounce those memories off of. If I had seen it by myself would I have thought, "Wow this is really good" if there was no one to say "Oh I know!" and keep talking about it? But if I had just taken that road trip by myself and I was the only one to have seen that concert, you don't get the chance to reminisce with other people. When there is another person there you get to bounce back and reminisce about the experience and every time we get together we talk about Tom Waits and that it was awesome. So, it keeps coming up. Maybe the other concert I went to that year was better, but I went to that one by myself, so it's not like it still comes up, so I think people need to be there.

I: So would you want to go back and do it again?

B: Absolutely.

I: So talk about that, why?

B: I would love to not only go back and relive it, I'd like to see Tom Waits again solely because of the fact that, I saw him in El Paso so I'd like to see what changed and what was different, but even going back to that same experience, wow, I'd like to... I don't even really remember what songs he was playing so I'd like to go in there and see a little bit more and have a new appreciation and realizing that in three years this person is going to be huge. This person is going to sign with a major deal. And like I said he's been around. He did the theme song for The Wire, and he's been around since the 70's. He's been so active in music, but to see him actually blow up was really kind of cool.

I: So going back again...

B: I'd like to put a little more emphasis on the music and seeing it all. It wasn't a packed show. People were talking about it. I remember that we left a little early and I didn't buy a shirt. I would have liked to buy one of those.

I: So, regardless of any type of inflation, if you could go back again would you be willing to spend more money?

B: I'd buy a t-shirt!

I: You would buy a t-shirt?

B: I'd buy a t-shirt. I think in the scope of things they were pretty cheap concert tickets. They were like forty bucks each. But, yeah, if I was going back again, like if it was now, and I was going back as me now, and Tom Waits was coming through, I would probably spend more money on a concert ticket now

I: Why do you think you would pay more?

B: Ah, well because I think I'd love to see that again. I'd really like to see that good showmanship. He is just kind of bizarre and out there. And frankly I think its worth to amount of money to do that again.

I: You've talked about sharing this experience with the people that you went there with, so when you came back did you feel the need to share the experience with other people?

B: Oh yeah. People like Tom Waits, and whenever I put the album on the stereo or something while we are hanging out, I'll tell them that we saw him in El Paso. And now when people ask me if I like a Tom Waits song, I tell them "Yes, and I saw him in El Paso in 2003!" (laughs).

I: It's like a badge of honor?

B: Right! I saw him as a teenager.

I: Is that something you frequently want to do, talk to others about it?

B: I think so, yeah. I still listen to Tom Waits a lot, I still have a Tom Waits playlist and when people come over I put it on in the background, you know Tom Waits comes up and sometimes people mention it and then I tell them about how I was in El Paso and it was cool, I saw him get a key to the city. It was really cool.

Interview 9: Holden

Interview #9

Pseudonym: Holden

Age: 26

Gender: M

Interview Time: 11:29

Experience: Music Festival in Atlanta

H: It would be a music festival, the entire music festival experience in Atlanta.

I: Okay. So tell me your memories about that experience. Why was this experience particularly memorable? Way has it stuck in your head the way it has?

H: Well I saw a lot of good music, which was great. It rained the whole time, which was unexpected. Really a whole bunch of unexpected things, I went into it expecting to see bands that I liked perform real well, but it was actually the opposite of that. The bands I wanted to see performed kind of badly and The Red Hot Chili Peppers were there and I didn't care for them much at all before, but they put on a heck of a show. I was really impressed.

I: So who were you with?

H: I went with a local friend and one of my best girl friends in Atlanta.

I: Do you think that if you had not gone with them it would have been a different experience there in Atlanta?

H: Well, yeah. Obviously the people that you are with help contribute to the experience and I think that they had similar expectations. Throughout the concert, we could sort of both explain how our expectations we either met or not met. Usually, it sort of lined up since my friends are similar to me. We had similar expectations.

I: So now that it is over and you look back on the experience, do you think that you remember it any differently than it actually was?

H: Well, the further apart I get from it the better I feel about it. Close to it I could remember all the nitpicky things that I hated, like for example being in the crowd with everybody. There were these people that were elbowing us and everyone was trying to push forward like "hey, my boyfriend is up there." But that's too bad because there are like 50,000 people here. As time goes on I can forget about that and dwell on the side of it that is the positive part. Like seeing a band that I thought would be terrible actually play really well.

I: So the further away you get from it the more you think you remember less about the bad stuff?

H: Yes. I can sort of appreciate the time spent with the actual people there like my friends. People that you see every day, like if you are a friend you see them every day. But then you sort of get into a routine, I mean life happens and relationships separate. But it is nice to look back and think about that it was fun to spend it with them.

I: So in general, and this experience can be a part of it, but just in general what do you think makes a memorable experience? What elements have to be there?

H: I think unique as in it has to be different than what you would expect It can't be something routine. And mine was that. It can't be something that happens all the time.

You know, I probably don't have any memorable experiences playing basketball because I play basketball almost every day. But I go to a music festival one every 26 years. I think also the people that you are with. I have gone to movies by myself and just, I know that I did it but I don't remember it being really spectacular. I mean I have gone to movies like with a date that I really like and those really stick out in my mind. I sat through Le Miz, which I really don't like, I hate, hate that movie. But I remember it and it was a positive experience because I got to be with that person.

I: So, just her being there made it memorable?

H: Yes.

I: So would you ever watch that movie again?

H: No. I would watch movies with her. But that was kind of a first date jitters, out of the ordinary experience.

I: So, you said uniqueness and being with somebody.

H: Yes, non-routine and different from expectations.

I: So did the venue in Atlanta have anything to do with it?

H: I think that you can make an argument for the weather. It was outside, which I expected, but I wasn't expecting it to rain. And that is one thing that you sort of anticipate dampening it. Getting rained on. But, I think it made it better because we had this terrible thing happen, I mean people don't really like getting rained on, but we got to share it together and have this positive experience. I think that overcoming the adversity of the weather made it better.

I: But the actual venue of the place did that matter?

H: The park? I don't think so. I think six of one, half dozen of another. I think that is the first music festival that I had been to, but I had been to countless concerts and each concert venue is pretty much the same. You have a stage and you have a bunch of people crammed into each other being rude.

I: So is this music festival something that you would want to go back and do again, would you want to relive this?

H: Sure, yeah.

I: So talk about that. Why is that?

H: Well it was a positive experience.

I: Well would you want to change something up would you want to do it the same way?

H: That is an interesting question. Yes, I would like to change something about it, and I don't know if this plays into how memorable it is, but we did show up kind of late. We missed some good acts that played in the morning time.

I: You said that you really wanted to see certain people, were these acts that you really wanted to see?

H: One of them was a band I really wanted to see. One of them was a band that I didn't care to see at that time, but since then I realize that I actually like them a lot. So it's not really a part of that experience, but prior to the experience I really wish that I had gotten more exposure.

I: So if you were to go back...

H: If I were to go back and talk to me the day before, would I change anything? Probably not.

I: But now, sitting here and you were able to do this again.

H: No. I don't think so. I think it worked out fine I have no complaints.

I: Would you spend more money on it this time?

H: No. I'd spend the same.

I: Why not? Let's say there is a music festival in Atlanta.

H: Well, I wouldn't want to pay the same or more to experience something that I already had.

I: But if it was altered a little bit?

H: Yes, perhaps.

I: So did you want to talk to others about this experience?

H: I did.

I: So explain that. What was it about it that you wanted to talk to others about?

H: I wanted people to realize what a positive experience I had and that they could possibly have a similar experience if they got involved in something like that in the future. Almost work of mouth advertising for music festivals.

I: Would you say that you had this experience or that it was so great that they should go do that? Was it more about you or more about sharing the word?

H: I think it was more about sharing the word. I had already experienced it, so from a self-centered aspect, I had already won. Now it about helping everyone else win.

I: Is that something that you do a lot? Do you want to share experience a lot?

H: Yes. Absolutely. I'm that guy that if I watch a good movie I will go and tell everyone about it.

I: Do you do that with negative experience?

H: Yes. To help people avoid the same mistakes that I did. But a neutral experience, if I had gone to an okay movie I will forget it the next day. I would not tell people that they should check out a movie that is a five out ten.

I: Would you say that you are a concert person?

H: I try to go to one or two a year. I had never been to a music festival before.

I: You would do it again?

H: Yeah, but it is kind of draining being out there so long.

I: But what does that mean being a concert person?

H: I think it means that you like to go to concerts and participate in the community that comes with that.

Interview 10: Gloria

Interview #10

Pseudonym: Gloria

Age: 30

Gender: F

Interview Time: 17:59

Experience: Elton John Concert in Savannah

G: It was a weekend trip to Savannah and we went to go see Elton in concert. The reason we went to Savannah was to see Elton. The whole weekend was good.

I: That must have been a great concert.

G: It was awesome.

I: So tell me your memories about that experience, what is it about that experience that sticks in your head? What was it about that experience that makes it so memorable?

G: Well, I always wanted to see Elton in concert. And, a couple of things, my girlfriend and I both realized real late in our relationship that we both really liked Elton, so I have a lot of memories of that time in the relationship that are tied to Elton, like our first date and everything was happy. So I guess that Elton represents happy times with her. And then I bought the ticket for her birthday. It was surprise. Elton tickets were very expensive and she was excited and she didn't get excited about very much at all, and so it just had stuff like good vibes for me. It meant a lot to us and she was just super excited about it.

And it was in Savannah, which I had never been to before and I always wanted to go there because it was just such a cool town, so that was good.

But the actual experience, we were little drunk, which I think you are supposed to be at a concert, and the venue was large. It was the Savannah civic center so it was large, but it wasn't huge. Maybe 4500 people, maybe 5,000, but it was just like a three-hour sing along. He played every song that you want to hear except of one, but whatever. Every Elton song that you wanted to hear and the entire crowd were singing with him. It is just 4500 Elton fans all singing along. It was just different to me than other concerts because it wasn't just super wild and you don't have drums and guitars going crazy, you really want to hear Elton singing and the piano. What is good about a rock concert when you can't hear anything about the band? You know what I mean?

I: Right. So it was not just a concert where you knew all of the songs, but everyone else there knew all the songs too.

G: Yeah. And most people say this about all concerts but there was this real sense of community and we had all come together for a huge sing along and Elton just rocked. Everyone is singing and Elton was very interactive with us and he just can't hit the high notes like he used to, so when it got to be time for him to hit the high notes the crowd would just take it over for him. There was just serious fun. My girlfriend was in a good mood that night and she was having a good time. There was this cute little family sitting next to us. A guy who was clearly my age had clearly bought his mom a ticket and they were just having a blast and they would get up and dance together. Like how you should

dance with your mom. She was just in heaven and he was so cute with her. Everyone was just in such a good mood and singing.

Elton was adorable. When he was done singing a song he would get up and like clap for the crown, like praising us. He would face all four directions and praise us. He had this look on his face after every song that was like “did I do good?” it was like a wanting to please you kind of face. It was very adorable. Everything about it was super cool and fun, and the music was great.

I: So when you are thinking back about that. Do you think that your memories about it are the same as how it actually was? Do you think that you remember it differently?

G: I think that everything I told you, I can still see it. I can still see the mom and son dancing, I can look over and still see the look on my friends face, and I can see Elton’s expression that was so cute. I can still see it. So, I don’t think that I have changed how it was in my mind.

I: So when you remember it, or even know when you are just talking about it now, it brings you that same sense of happiness you think?

G: Yeah.

I: So in general what components go into a memorable experience? What did you think has to be there, for it to be highly memorable.

G: I think that a lot of it is the dynamic of the people you are with and who you are around. Like, I would go and see an Elton concert no matter what. Like I went to a concert with my mom and her friends we went to go see Aerosmith and Lenny Kravitz, and it was a great concert, but I don’t think about that the same way I think about that Elton Concert. Everyone had bought into that concert being awesome. My girlfriend, who I was immediately with, even Elton, everything seemed to have bought into the experience.

I: It was contagious?

G: Yeah, like we are all just going to get together and sing Elton songs for three hours and we are going to have a great time and everybody seemed to be on that same page. Including Elton. It was the first time at a concert that I really thought the performer was really interested in what the audience thought. And it wasn’t anything that he said, it was that look on his face after every single song. It was this look of wanting approval. I thought of Elton as this diva that was super confident and he just didn’t act like that at all. I don’t know. And even afterwards we walked back to the hotel, and I had Elton songs playing on my phone and we were walking back to the hotel. I would never do that otherwise, but it seemed like everyone in Savannah just understood that Elton was in town. We were in elevators with people that were at the show and playing music on my phone. And my friend and I and this random couple were just all singing along with it on our way back to the room. It was just this community kind of spirit around the whole thing.

I: Would you want to go back and do this again?

G: Yeah, I would totally go back and see Elton again. I don’t know if it would have to be in savannah.

I: Would you want to do it differently? Change it up?

G: I kind of would want to do it the exact same way. Obviously I wouldn't go with the same person again, but besides that I would want everything else to be the same because it was such a good experience that if it wasn't the same I would feel let down somehow. And I had seen Elton before, I saw him when he toured with Billy Joel a while back and that was fun, but it wasn't like this. In terms of recreating this experience, I would want to probably see it again somewhere off the beaten track like Savannah. A place that if a big name goes there then everybody knows about it. A smaller venue. And I would want to go again with someone that loved Elton as much as I did. I wouldn't go with the same person again, but she and I shared this love of Elton. And that was a part of it too, where she was just as excited as I was, as opposed as someone who is just going with me to follow me, or just not into it or singing along.

I: How much do you think the venue itself played in the experience being what it was?

G: It had a lot to do with it I think, because it was the civic center and it was in this setting that was more intimate. It actually felt more intimate than it really was. We could get to the bathroom and back and get a beer and come back in half a song.

I: So it almost facilitated the social part of it? Because it was so intimate in there?

G: Yeah. It was a small venue. It was very convenient. We could get to the bar and the bathroom real easily without missing a song. Everything about it felt very communal.

I: Do you think if you were to do this again you would spend more money on, you would spend less money on this, about the same?

G: I would be willing to spend more money on it just because it was that fun. It wasn't cheap the first time around, but I would be willing to spend more money on it if I knew it would be like that again.

I: Did you feel the need to tell others about it when you got back?

G: Yes. The only thing that hindered me from telling people is the fact that not everybody thinks that Elton is cool. Not everyone loves Elton, so you kind of had to gauge that, so they wouldn't just totally make fun of me.

I: Do you think that was as much about the experience being great, or do you want everyone to know you had doesn't that?

G: I think it was about the experience being great because I don't care if people know what I do. It wasn't a bragging sort of thing. Again, not everyone thinks that Elton is cool. The fact that he is not cool to everybody my age probably has something to do with it too. It felt like we were part of something that not everybody understood. He is super famous, but just not to people our age.

I: And that added to it? The fact that not everybody got it? That added to it?

G: Yeah. There is something about doing something that everyone does that is just not that much fun to me. Like, oh yeah everyone in the world is going to see some band, who cares? It's fleeting and it's going to be super popular and I don't care. But Elton was been around forever. And he's not trendy, and that could have been part of it too, no one there was under the illusion that Elton was trendy so no one was trying to be cool. We all sort of embraced the fact that we are here just dorking out to the music that has been around for 40 years and we are just going to let it all hang out.

Interview 11: Paul

Interview #11

Pseudonym: Paul

Age: 30

Gender: M

Interview Time: 15:53

Experience: Honeymoon in Maui

P: Yeah, the one that popped into my head immediately was our honeymoon a few years ago. We went to Hawaii. And, you know, for our honeymoon it was where we wanted to go. There would have been a lot of other places that would have been more cost effective, but we wanted to use that moment to go someplace that we both really wanted to go, that neither of us had been to before, and we wanted to make it really good because as soon as we got back we were both going to college together. I mean literally, the next day.

I: So it was like an escape from all of that?

P: Yeah. It was like the big, last hurrah. So that kind of all went into justifying us spending more money for a better honeymoon.

I: Right.

P: So that's what we did. And it was amazing.

I: So what are your memories about it? What makes this experience stand out in your head?

P: Well at that time this was the farthest that I had been away from Louisiana. Easily. I mean other than that, I had never traveled outside the United States. And my wife had only been to Mexico before, so it would be the farthest trip for her too. I was a long plane ride to go somewhere far away and really cool. I always thought that Hawaii would be a cool place to go, so that played into it. And we started looking in to the things that we could do there. Sara and I both like to be outdoors and stuff so there were a lot of cool hiking trails that we could do outside. The hotel that we were staying at was in this really cool location that wasn't all commercialized.

I: Was this on Oahu?

P: No, it was on Maui. But, yeah. Obviously not as commercialized as Honolulu, but this little stretch of the beach was a family owned hotel, and that really added to the experience. The hotel room that we had you could open up the balcony and the beach if right there. I mean that was amazing just to hear the waves in the morning, you know? So, all of that really played into it. And even within the trip itself we kind of debated back and forth did we want to see Pearl Harbor or not? And that would require a flight there and a flight back, but that was another thing where the experience would justify taking a day out of Maui to go to Oahu, we would get to see Honolulu I guess and we would get to do the tour because we really wanted to see Pearl Harbor when we were out there. So that was another kind of mini excursion.

I: Like another get away?

P: Yeah.

I: Did you do the road to Hana?

P: We did. Yeah.

I: That pretty insane isn't it?

P: Yeah, you've done it?

I: Yeah.

P: Yeah, we woke up super early, which wasn't hard because of like the time change we were waking up at like 5 in the morning. That's like waking up at 10 in the morning over here. Yeah, so we woke up, I think we woke up even earlier, and we hit the road at like 5:15. And it was crazy.

I: I remember thinking that it was great, but I don't know if I'd ever do that again.

P: Yeah, we got to the end and we were like just both like exhausted. We said at the time that this was like the first real test of our marriage.

I: On the honeymoon?

P: Yeah. (laughs) making hairpin turns and stuff.

I: So what about the hotel. When you think back did the physical environment, the hotel itself plays anything into making this a highly memorable experience?

P: Yeah it did. The staff there really went the extra mile versus other hotels that I've stayed at in other places, I mean they really express the fact that it's family owned by the people that set up the hotel. They have all of these different things that they do a little differently because like down the road is a Sheraton. I didn't go inside, but it probably didn't have as authentic an experience as this one. They really catered to that aspect. They even gave everybody these leis that were hand made with cocoanuts. And they had this big show at the end where you leave the hotel and they give you one of these leis. So, they really did try to go the extra mile, so that played into the experience as well. I mean we didn't even know that you would be getting that when we went there.

I: And it was right on the beach?

P: Yes. And that was really the driving factor. We wanted somewhere that was on the beach, which isn't hard. All the hotels are on the beach there, but there were several and we had to pick which one we wanted and that seemed real good, it got good reviews. And that was really what we were going for; we wanted a more authentic experience.

I: So when you're talking about it, or thinking back on it, do you think you remember it any differently than it actually was?

P: You mean like better or worse?

I: Yes.

P: (pause) I probably remember the road to Hana differently (laughs) there were so many moments there where (screams)

I: Some waterfalls and one lane. It's scary.

P: Yeah. There were times where we almost hit people because you can't see who is coming and you kind of creep around. My wife is like gripping the car, and of her fingers hurt. There were so many things where we stopped and took in, so that made it all worth it. So I think looking back on it, the first thing I think about are these little hikes that we took along the way and this waterfall that we saw, and I remember that we walked through these people's private property without them knowing and we found this cool trail. I think about that, but the other stuff, the reality is that it was kind of a stressful experience, all that driving.

I: But you filter some of that out when you recall it?

P: Yeah. I would say so. I think so. And all of the plane rides we had to take. Another thing is that we actually got delayed on our first flight out. We were going from New Orleans to Atlanta and Atlanta to Los Angeles. So we went from New Orleans to Atlanta no problem. And we got on the plane for Los Angeles, and they made everybody get off the plane. So we knew that we weren't going to make our plane connection, so we had to spend the night in Atlanta that night, and that was the night we were supposed to be in Hawaii. Big difference. Big Difference, so that is probably something else that at the time was like, "oh man this is not getting off to a good start". But that's not the first thing that I think about.

I: So thinking about experience, and obviously Hawaii can be a part of it, but just in general what do you think goes into making a quality experience? What goes into making a particular experience memorable?

P: I think if the experience matches up with your interests. If it's something that you are interested in. Like I said, my wife and I really like the outdoorsy stuff, we also really like that and the water a lot. So we kind of knew going into it that yeah, Hawaii would be a good trip for us.

But like other things too, like I like music a lot so I've gone to a ton of concerts, so if you already know that you like the music and the band you are going to see, you are already excited about going. Even if the band isn't as good as you thought it would be, you still got to hear the songs live, you might be a little disappointed, but someone that didn't like that music might think that that concert, the same concert was awful. It was the worst thing ever.

I: So it helps you appreciate it more because you have a respect and appreciation of it all?

P: Yeah. I think that goes into it and I also think that people you are with play a role in it as well. You can think of experiences where it's not the more desirable place to be, like soldiers that go to combat together, that's like the worst place in the world that you could possibly be but they form this bond, you know this connection that they have. And even through they've gone through this awful thing they still have some fond memories because of the people that they were with as they were going through that.

I: Do you think things like that, like the Hana road that was kind of stressful, do you think that makes it an even better experience because you two experienced that together?

P: Oh yeah, definitely. Because we got to the end of it and we like "we survived it, together!" (laughs) The part that makes Hana worth it is all of these little mini excursions that you take along the road, little hikes and stuff, and if you don't have anybody to share that with, I mean unless you are like a nature photographer where you just go out by yourself, I would think that seeing all this beautiful nature it would be nice to have someone there to appreciate with you.

I: So would you want to go back and do this again? Would you want to relive this experience?

P: Oh yeah.

I: So, why is that?

P: We really had a good time out there we enjoyed it. We made a lot of good memories there, had a lot of cool things that we did, and also knowing that it was kind of the tip of the iceberg in terms of really seeing all that Hawaii had to offer. We didn't see the big

island at all and there were a couple of other things that we would have done but couldn't do just because we were limited on time.

I: So if you were to go back there are there things you would want to change? Things you would want to do differently?

P: I think I would probably want to do different things, because I've already done them once. There are things that I would want to do again. I would want to check out Honolulu again, because we were only there for like 8 hours and half that time we were at Pearl Harbor, so it would be cool to see the city there. So yeah, I would do some things the same and some things different. We say it all the time how we've got to get back .We got to get back.

I: Would you spend more money this time do you think? Regardless of infatuation.

P: Yeah. Potentially. Yeah, if we had the time to potentially spend a couple of week out there I would totally spend more. If there were more time to actually get more experiences in, I would definitely spend more money.

I: So when you came back from this trip, did you feel the need to talk about it? To tell anyone about the experience?

P: Yeah.

I: So talk about that, what was it about this, what did you want to share? What did you want to tell people?

P: Well people wanted to know in general. Just about no one that we knew had been to Hawaii, so they wanted to hear about it. But we wanted to talk about it too. Probably the Hana trip was the most exciting for us just because there was the risk involved in using this treacherous road, but all the cool things that we saw we got pictures of everything so we were able to shoot pictures of all this nature and scenery, so yeah we wanted to tell people about that. Pearl Harbor was pretty amazing. And that is probably most people when you say to think of something from Hawaii, more people would say Pearl Harbor. So I think that is something else the most people are interested in just because of the history there. So we wanted to tell them about that too because we really enjoyed seeing that.

I: Do you do that a lot? Do you want to tell people about experience often? Were there aspects about this one that made it even more so? It was your honeymoon and you've said that people were expecting stories.

P: Yes. Kind of. So, I mean a lot of people knew that we were going there during this time. It is not like just a regular old summer vacation where maybe your friends and family know but a whole bunch of people that know. But you, I like to share experience with others. I don't want to do it in a way that is like "listen to my awesome life" but yeah, especially in a way like if I found out you were going to Hawaii, I would tell you about what I experienced so you know what is cool and what to see and I would be excited to hear about it from your right back. And that is kind of, that gets into the community aspect of it.

I: So you said that you were an outdoors person, so if you found out that I was an outdoors person too, would you be more open to sharing?

P: Yeah. Like if we got on the topic of doing to kind of thing, I would tell you about Hawaii. Like we also just went camping in Tennessee. I thought about that one as an

experience, but that wasn't a large amount of money that we spent there. That was more just gas up the car and grab a tent.

I: But that is generally where you gravitate? Some sort of outdoors component?

P: Yeah it would have to. We would want to have some component of outdoors. It doesn't necessarily be totally outdoors, but we like to, I think that is part of experiencing some place that you go is like taking in the climate into consideration.

Interview 12: Kim

Interview #12

Pseudonym: Kim

Age: 34

Gender: F

Interview Time: 11:57

Experience: Disney Cruise

K: Because I didn't think it would happen, and we got a really great deal and it was a last minute purchase.

I: So what was the experience?

K: The second Disney cruise I took in a year.

I: So talk about that. Why didn't you think it would happen?

K: Because we had just gone three on this previous and we loved it. It was our first experience on that cruise. And then I didn't think it would happen for another year of two and then when we got the email for a great deal, we were like, hey we can do this. So we took some time off and all of that and we had less than a month to go, but we were happy just because it was so unexpected and normally for vacations you plan it a year of two ahead of time if it is a large trip, and this was just so last minute and we really wanted to go back to Disney's private island and that trip we got to go twice.

I: What is about the private island? What is it about it that you like so much?

K: It's secluded and all-inclusive and the weather is great and the island is beautiful. It is very tropical and the island is literally just like the pictures.

I: Why do you go with Disney cruises? Do you like them more than other cruises would you say?

K: Correct. Because I have young children and they offer me the most benefits for my family. For young children, they have the longest day care. It starts at nine in the morning, which is perfect. It is very family-oriented, there is not a bunch of drunks, there aren't too many single party people on board and that is great for a family environment.

I: When you are thinking back on it, do you think that you remember it now differently than it actually was?

K: No. Because I think it was magical and even when we were there we knew that it was magical. So, it's just as magical as I believe in my mind that it truly was.

I: Do you think that sometimes it is possible to forget about certain aspects of the experience?

K: Nope. I was a perfect trip. I was a really great trip.

I: So in general, this experience being a part of it, but just in general what do you think makes up for a memorable experience? What has to a part of it?

K: It has to be with people you enjoy. It has to be the appropriate moment. So it can't be anywhere new a family crisis or things like that.

I: So you have to remove normal life events from it?

K: Exactly. And you have to have to be willing to be patient. For instance if there is a trip that you have at the spur of the moment and you decide to go, that is not necessarily as

memorable as a trip where you plan it and have it to look forward to. That anticipation is important.

I: The build up?

K: Yes. Exactly. And doing something that the majority of your group is involved with and doing things that the majority of your group agrees to. So really having one bad apple can ruin the whole experience. So, how you relate to the people.

I: So the aspect of who you are with can make the experience better or it can make it worse?

K: Yes. It can control the whole trip.

I: So what makes for a bad experience? What would make an experience bad in your mind?

K: Bad weather. Going with someone you dislike. Even if you like them but you truly just don't have the same temperament, it really makes for a horrible trip. And feeling ripped off when you are on vacation.

I: Meaning that it's just not worth the money it's just not worth the value?

K: Exactly, it doesn't really matter if you are spending a little or a lot, it is really about the value. If you spend a little you really anticipate have less amenities and less service, but when you spend a lot and you have exactly the same service when you hadn't spent as much money on, then it is highly disappointing. It's all about value rather than cost.

I: So going back to the cruise ship, was the actual ship itself, did that make a difference, like the room on the ship or the crew?

K: I don't know. Because we, that one was actually upgraded and we had a great room. So it does make it a little better. But, even if we had had a smaller room we would have still enjoyed it. We did have a premium, five-bedroom suite with a concierge. So it definitely did make it better, but even compared to our first trip which was a smaller room, it didn't make that much of a difference on the ship. I think that the activities they offer and the level of cleanliness is what makes the ship nice, rather than the room. The suite that we had the second time might have made it more memorable, but the first room we had was adequate. But if we were on an older ship or a ship that needed refurbishing, that would have made a huge difference.

I: Is this something that you would want to go back and relive? Would you want to do this again?

K: Yes.

I: Okay so what was it about it that makes you want to do it again?

K: Because it made the whole family happy.

I: Would you want to do it the same way or would you change anything about it?

K: No. I would do it the exact same way. Because it was perfect.

I: Would you be willing to spend more money on it this time?

K: Yes.

I: Why is that?

K: Because the experience was everything that we wanted and we thought it was a good value. And even if we had spent a little bit more, we still would have had a great experience and there are huge expectations that would need to be met for it to live up to that experience.

I: So you would say that it is worth more money to say for sure that the value is going to be there?

K: Yes. Correct.

I: So, you went on a Disney cruise and you said it was magical, would you consider yourself a Disney person?

K: Yes.

I: So, what does that mean? What does it mean when I say that you are a Disney person?

K: That mean that I like the branding and when I hear about it, my interest is piqued. I want to see what they are offering. I tend to notice whenever Disney is mentioned. So, if I am walking by and a Disney commercial is on, I am going to glance at it more. From all of my experience, I instantly trust that brand more and I feel familiar with the brand and that the brand is going to deliver quality and consistent service and value and meet my expectations.

I: When you came back from this trip, did you want to tell other people about it?

K: Yes. I didn't really care, as much about telling other people about it, it is just more that they should go. I kind of want to tell them about them going and I believe they should go. Versus where I want to tell them everything about my trip.

I: Is that how you are with most experiences that you go on?

K: Yes.

I: Would you be more apt to tell somebody about this Disney cruise if you considered them to be a Disney person as well?

K: Correct.

I: So why is that?

K: Because then you have an instant bond. You both have something to talk about, you don't feel like you're talking down to them or having to educate them about it because they already interested so you aren't being bragging or being boastful, you are just taking about something that you both enjoy.

Interview 13: Sasha

Interview #13

Pseudonym: Sasha

Age: 29

Gender: F

Interview Time: 10:34

Experience: European Trip

S: This one is so memorable because it was my first time to Europe, and I married my husband, and I got engaged.

I: So this was your first time you had been there?

S: Yes.

I: So when you think about it what kind of memories do you have of that?

S: Excitement, because it was new and then adventure, because you are somewhere that you have never been. We did a lot of exploring and checking out new things. It's also memorable because my husband and I had been dating for a long time and I was waiting for him to ask me to marry him and he did, so that started a new adventure.

I: Did you get engaged there in Europe?

S: Yes.

I: On that trip?

S: Yes.

I: Do you think it would have been memorable without that happening?

S: I think I would remember it a lot, I think that there are two different sets of emotions that are associated with it. First is that you are going on a great vacation and seeing something new and then you have this whole other nostalgic and romantic emotion tied into it.

I: So after it was over and you thought back on it, what kind of thoughts did you have about the experience?

S: That I wanted to go back to it. It is just memorable and just that we would always remember it because it was a great experience. Great time, we were very happy and it was just enlightening to see parts of the world that I hadn't been exposed to before. It made me feel even more cultured.

I: Do you think you remember it any differently than it actually was?

S: Oh I'm sure! (laughs)

I: Talk about that, describe that.

S: It was really cold, and we were in France and parts of it were the wintertime, and it was just much colder. And parts of it weren't necessarily dirty, but it was like small town USA. So you have this romantic idea in your head about it and you usually remember the high points, not that anything bad happened, but there was trash in the street and cold weather and things like that.

I: So when you think about it and you recall it, that doesn't pop up?

S: No, not in that experience.

I: So in general, across all experiences, what needs to be there for it to be memorable? What components need to be there?

S: I think the timetable. Maybe like it is something that you have been waiting on and it finally happens, then it is going to stand out more, because you have been patient and you might have been working hard towards a goal or something. You have accomplished it. The fact that you put in the time and the effort and the patience and now you are being reward for that. I think that has a part to play in it.

I: What else?

S: I think the people that you are surrounded by and are associated with. I think the people that you are with make it a more memorable experience. I think it is either one extreme or another, I think that it is either going to be a great time, but if it is also absolutely horrible that will make it memorable. If it doesn't have that it is not going to stand out as much.

I: So what if you had gone to Europe with different people that didn't like Europe, do you think that would have affected it?

S: Yes. We went with me sister and my brother-in-law so we obviously get along and we like each other and we have the same personality and stuff so that makes a big difference when you are going somewhere new or doing something new with somebody. When you are different from someone and you are trying to have the same life experience I think it makes it a lot different.

I: So you say that you wanted to go back and relive this?

S: Yes.

I: So talk about that.

S: Maybe not relive the exact experience, but go back and do more. Do the experience on a different kind of level.

I: So what would you want to change about it?

S: I don't know. I think that I would be a little more carefree. You go the first time Europe and not that I was scared or anything, but I just didn't know what to expect. So when you are a little more familiar with it, you think, "Oh, I've done this before."

I: A little more confident you think maybe?

S: Yes.

I: Would you be willing to spend more on it this time?

S: I think depending on what they were going to give me, yes.

I: Do you think that your first experience influenced that?

S: Yes.

I: Why is that?

S: Because I feel like it was money well spent last time so I'd be willing to shell out the same if not more. I'd spend more money on maybe having more things to do that I was interested in.

I: When you came back, do you want to tell other people about this experience? Did you want to share it with others?

S: Yes.

I: So why is that? Why is that important to you?

S: I think the main part of it was that we had just gotten engaged and we wanted to share that with everybody.

I: Right.

S: But I love talking to people about being in Paris and telling people what it was like.

I: When you tell others about it is it more about what you did, or do you tell it like it is something that they should do?

S: It is probably based on my personal experience, like what I did. I feel like I talk about that glowingly. I experienced it so I know what to do.

I: Do you frequently want to talk about your experiences? Is that something that you do a lot?

S: If it comes up in conversation. It's not like I want to show off or be pretensions.

I: So you don't want to seem like you are bragging?

S: Right. Exactly.

Interview 14: Robin

Interview #14

Pseudonym: Robin

Age: 47

Gender: F

Interview Time: 9:29

Experience: Mexican ATV Tour

R: For it would be when we went on vacation and we did a wedding cruise. But specifically, I am thinking of something that I probably never would have done, but a cruise director who was in charge of all the excursions and stuff, they had pictures of people doing it, so we did the ATV tour of Mexico. If you have never done that, it is something that I would never thought to do, but it is amazing. I had such a great time.

I: With that ATV tour, tell my memories about that experience. Why is that the one that comes to mind?

R: I think about what we did after the wedding on that cruise, and I think the group of people that went with us. We just had a great time, the pictures that we took. We were able to see things that the average person getting off the cruise ship and just went walking around wouldn't get to see. We went walking into the hills and saw the ocean. It was just a great time.

I: It wasn't just an ATV tour of the city, but you went to the rural part too?

R: Yes. Actually we went to Ensenada, which is obviously a tourist town for the cruise ships that dock there, but we went past that into areas that were real rural and different and far away. The view from the mountains lets you see the ocean down below which was really beautiful and then we stopped at a couple of places and did the photo op and what not. So I don't really know. It's hard to explain I guess, but the pictures were amazing.

I: So after it was done, maybe back on the cruise ship or any time after it was over, what were your thoughts on that experience?

R: Laughing a lot. Sharing something with people that I otherwise wouldn't have a lot in common with. I mean that core group of people that were with us aren't people that I would hang out with on a normal basis or get coffee with or anything. I remember being happy.

I: Do you think that you remember it differently that how it actually was?

R: That's a good question. Possibly. I mean I could be tainted by the fact that it was my honeymoon as well. I was coming off the high of getting married. But for some reason out of everything that we did besides the wedding itself this is what sticks out for me.

I: Right. Do you think that you possibly remember it better than it actually was, worse than it actually was?

R: I would say that I might remember it better. If I was to go back there again I don't think that I would have the same experience.

I: So you said that you did this with people that you never would be with otherwise?

R: Yes.

I: Do you think that the diversity of people added to it?

R: Yes. Absolutely. Because you don't know who is going to sign up for this excursion when you buy it. A few of us from the wedding party I knew, but there were several people that I did not know. There were older couples. There were some really granola, kind of hippie type of people, just people I would not normally be with

I: In general, what do you think makes for a memorable experience, what need to be a part of it?

R: I think in order to have a memorable experience it is the environment. In this experience the tour guides had you rolling the entire time, you were laughing. And just the environment, I mean the scenery was gorgeous, but a lot of it was just built and created by the two guys that took you around.

I: Did the niceness of the town or the ATV's itself have anything to do with it?

R: No. Not at all.

I: Not at all?

R: No. I don't think so because the town was kind of a dumpy place to begin with. The ATVs themselves don't matter. There were several types of ATVs, but it was primarily the people we were with and the environment created by these two guys, I mean these two guys were hilarious. They had this helmet microphone system where we all had helmets but you could talk to everybody, and they were telling jokes. The only thing that I can compare it to is the Jungle Cruise at Disneyland. It was that kind of time and they had that kind of personality.

I: They might have the same kind of scripts too.

R: Probably, yeah. This is the only time I had done it so I am not sure if they just say the same stuff every time. But it just happened to be the people that were there so I would say it was more natural.

I: So would you say that you would want to go back and relive this, would you want to do this again?

R: I probably would, just to see if it would be that same as the one I did before. I would probably do it if I were on the cruise again.

I: Would you want to have the same experience or would you want to change it in anyway?

R: I would want to have the same experience in terms of the fun that I had, but maybe different locations, different people that I'd be going with. Just to change it up a bit.

I: Would you be willing to spend more money on it this time?

R: Yeah. I actually would.

I: Why? Why do you think you would?

R: Because the money that I spent was worth every cent that I paid. To me it wasn't an expensive experience and that is one of the reasons that I picked it. I didn't want to spend a lot of money, but I didn't just want to walk around so we picked it. And it was just worth all of that and more.

I: So when it was done, did you share this with anybody? Did you feel the need to share it?

R: Yup. That night at dinner we told everybody at the table how much fun it was, and what we did, and a couple of us that went were showing pictures on our phones. We actually had the photographer that we brought with us for the wedding take pictures as

well. And he captured a lot of it was well so we were showing all the pictures and some of the people we saying that it looks like fun and that they wish they had gone.

I: Why was that important? Was it important to share it?

R: Because I had such a good time and I wanted other people to, I don't know, share in that. Maybe, obviously they weren't there but they could see the pictures and see what we were able to see. This was this one point where it was an outpost and there was a guy dressed like an Aztec Indian and we took pictures of him. I just wanted to share.

I: Is that something that you do a lot, do you frequently want to tell others about experiences?

R: Yes, of course. I think a lot of time you like talking about what you learned, or what you did. Like I am at Disneyland and I am with someone new I want to share a funny experience that I had there. Things like that. I like to share that.