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Memorable Dining Experiences: Formative Index And Model Development

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MEMORABLE DINING EXPERIENCES: FORMATIVE INDEX AND MODEL
DEVELOPMENT

by

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DEDICATION

This article is dedicated to my dear husband George Xie and my parents Guijun
Cao and Guihua Yang.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study is to understand the nature of memorable dining experiences (MDE), to conceptualize MDE, to develop a formative index to measure MDE, and to test a conceptual model to examine the antecedents and outcomes of MDE. Developed primarily from strategic experiential modules and from the cognitive appraisal theory, this study proposed that MDE consists of five dimensions: affect, sensory, social, intellectual, and behavioral.

This study applied a mixed method approach using a sequential exploratory design. Specifically, the in-depth interviews and a detailed literature review were used to generate the research instrument, and then the online survey was conducted to develop the formative index and test the hypotheses. With a series of statistical analysis using SEM-PLS, the results supported the five-dimension structure of the MDE formative index, with 37 indicators in total. The research hypotheses posit that three factors were significant antecedents of MDE: goal congruence, agency, and novelty. Additionally, MDE were found as strong predictors of consumers' behavioral intentions in the restaurant context.

This study contributed to the hospitality and tourism literature by developing a formative index to empirically measure the MDE concept. Moreover, three antecedents of MDE identified from the conceptual model supported the notion that MDE by nature is greatly affective. Last, the strong predictive power of MDE recognizes its importance in consumers' decision-making processes. This is important because when consumers are

considering dining options, they are more likely to recall their MDE and make decisions

accordingly.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB Memory .... Autobiographic Memory

CB-SEM..Covariance-based-Structural Equation Modeling

MDE...Memorable Dining Experience

MTurk ....Amazon Mechanical Turk

PLS... Partial Least Square

PLS-SEM .... Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling

SEM ....Structural Equation Modeling

SEMs .... Strategic Experiential Modules

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Statement

The concept of experience has been explored for more than five decades in marketing, tourism, and hospitality research (e.g., Cohen, 1979, Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Jennings et al., 2009; Lunny, Cater, & Ollenburg, 2009; Maslow, 1964; Schmitt, 1999; Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011). The consumer experience has become an important theme for current tourism and hospitality research (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). The literature so far has investigated tourist experiences (Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu, 2012), memorable tourism experiences (Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2012), conceptualization of food tourism experiences (Quan & Wang, 2004; Wijaya, King, Nguyen, & Morrison, 2013), hospitality consumer experiences (Knutson, Beck, Kim, & Cha, 2010; Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011), and brand experiences (Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014).

Memorable tourism experiences, a topic recently receiving much attention among scholars (Kim et al., 2012; Kim, 2010; Kim, 2013; Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Tung & Ritchie, 2011), can be defined as a tourism experience positively remembered and recalled after the event occurred (Kim et al., 2012). Different from research streams related to general experiences, memorable tourism experiences focus on the *memorable* aspect of the

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experiences to explore tourists' takeaways from their previous experiences (Kim et al., 2012). Individuals have their memorable moments embedded in their minds. They remember their first day at work, a honeymoon trip to the beach, a dining experience at a destination restaurant, or a farewell party at graduation. When people recall their previous experiences, some of the experiences immediately stand out, while others fade out quickly without much reflection. What makes an experience memorable in a dining context? This question motivates the present research.

Current findings along this research line are primarily based in a destination context, which aims to understand tourists' previous memorable travel experiences from a retrospective viewpoint. Thus far, there is a paucity of research about memorable experiences in other hospitality and tourism contexts, such as in restaurant settings. In the hospitality context, dining experiences represent an important component of consumers' experiences in both their daily lives and tourism contexts. As a relatively brief experience during the period of the whole trip, food consumption plays a critical role in shaping the overall tourism experience. Besides the routine meals a destination could offer, consumers can enjoy the opportunity to try novel and authentic food at destinations (Quan & Wang, 2004), and they may spend more time recollecting a positive experience than time spent in the actual experience itself (Rode, Rozin, & Durlach, 2007). This is especially true in the case of dining experiences, where the uniqueness and novelty of meals at special occasions could provide people with lasting memories (Rode et al., 2007).

Studies on dining experiences in hospitality research either focus on conceptual development of consumers' dining experiences (Mak et al., 2012; Quan & Wang, 2004),

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empirical investigations connecting consumers' motivations to restaurant attributes (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014), or perceptions of authentic dining experiences (Tsai & Lu, 2012) in restaurant settings. However, systematic and comprehensive examinations on dining experiences are lacking (Mak, Eves, & Chang, 2012). Only one study (Lashley, Morrison, & Randall, 2005) was found that tapped into the memorable dining experiences.

From an organizational perspective, unique and memorable experiences can create great value for companies (Gentile et al., 2007; Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014), given that consumers' memories of their life events have significant influences on their decision-making processes, behavioral intentions (Lacher & Mizerski, 1994; Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014), and word of mouth (Zauberman, Ratner, & Kim, 2009). Consequently, hospitality companies can gain competitive advantages by providing unique and engaging experiences to customers (Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014, Tsaur et al., 2007).

Consumers pursue memorable experiences that they can share with their friends and relatives (Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014). Understanding how consumers' dining experiences are constructed and remembered is critical, because once they complete consumption of the meal, consumers primarily access their experiences through memories and recollections (Miao, Lehto, & Wei, 2014; Quan & Wang, 2004). When consumers make future dining decisions, they tend to retrieve their memories of previous experiences. Thus, it is important to examine how memorable experiences can influence consumer behaviors at the post-consumption stage (Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014) to

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determine if these memorable experiences have an effect on behavioral intentions and future purchase decisions.

Despite the importance of providing such memorable experiences to customers, previous literature has not provided a clear definition of memorable dining experiences (from this point referred to as MDE). MDE is a special type of consumer experience, with a particular focus on the "memorable" component occurring in restaurant settings. MDE can be understood from definitions of related constructs; for instance, consumption experiences are described as containing a significant amount of subjective, hedonic, or symbolic features (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986). Similar to Kim et al.'s (2012) description of memorable tourism experiences, MDE is the experience having high vividness and details, which are caused by consumers' emotional reactions to events such as dining experiences (Lashley, et al., 2005). Based on these features and derived from Kim et al. (2012), MDE can be defined as consumers' subjective and holistic evaluations of dining experiences that are positively remembered and retrieved retrospectively.

Research on the antecedents that affect the customer experience is largely lacking (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). Specifically, none of the research has explored the antecedents that are likely to determine MDE due to its infancy in the literature. As in the development of the experience literature in general, identifying the antecedents of the consumer experience is important to explore the reasons how and why consumers remember their experiences in certain ways. With the subjective nature of experiences, traditional consumer behavior constructs, such as service quality in service marketing literature, may not fully capture consumer experiences (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). With more studies of experiences emphasizing the importance of affect and emotions on the

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formation of memory (Kim et al., 2012; Ma, Gao, Scott, & Ding, 2013), the current study posits that affect is an important dimension of MDE, and further suggests that one can successfully capture consumers' memorable experiences by identifying the affective nature of the MDE. Thus, built on the cognitive appraisal theory that emotions are derived from the aspects of goal congruence, personal importance, agency, and novelty, the current study proposes that these factors are also important antecedents of MDE.

Personal importance refers to the level of significance of the event on an individual's needs or goals (Scherer, 1999), and goal congruence denotes whether the outcome is as desirable as a consumer expected (Ma et al., 2013; Watson & Spence, 2007). Agency, in the context of this study, refers to who or what contributes to the particular occasion or event (Ortony et al., 1988; Roseman, 1991; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Watson & Spence, 2007). Because of different agents contributing to the event, consumers can have very different experiences and memories. Lastly, novelty denotes the levels of surprise and suddenness in an experience (Ma et al., 2013). In addition to the factors that predict emotions, situational factors that represent different dining occasions are likely to influence consumer experiences. For instance, a consumer may have a MDE for a special occasion or an event with a unique meaning. Therefore, the current study also postulates that symbolic meanings are antecedents of MDE (Lanier, Hampton, Lindgreen, Vanhamme, & Beverland, 2009; Sidney, 1959).

Because the concept of memorable dining experience remains relatively new, and because little is known on how it should be conceptualized and measured, this study aims to extend the current literature by investigating consumers' memorable dining

experiences, proposing, and testing a conceptual model that includes the MDE conceptualization, its antecedents, and the outcomes.

1.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to understand the nature of memorable dining experiences, 1) to conceptualize MDE, (2) to develop a formative index to measure memorable dining experiences, and (3) to test a conceptual model to examine the antecedents and outcomes of MDE experiences. To address the purpose of this study, the following research questions and hypotheses are presented below:

1. How is MDE conceptualized?

2. How should MDE be measured in the context of restaurant settings?

3. What are the antecedents of MDE?

4. To what extent does MDE influence consumers' revisit intentions and recommendation intentions (word of mouth)?

Based on the above research questions, a theoretical model is proposed to incorporate the antecedents and outcomes of MDE. First, this study employed the framework of consumer experience from Schmitt (1999) and Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) and states that MDE consists of five dimensions: sensory, affect, intellectual, behavioral, and social. Second, based on the literature review, personal importance, novelty, goal congruence, symbolic meanings, and agency are proposed to be antecedents of MDE. Last, consumers' revisit intentions and recommendation intentions are proposed to be the outcomes of MDE. Research hypotheses are presented as follows (shown visually in Figure 1.1):
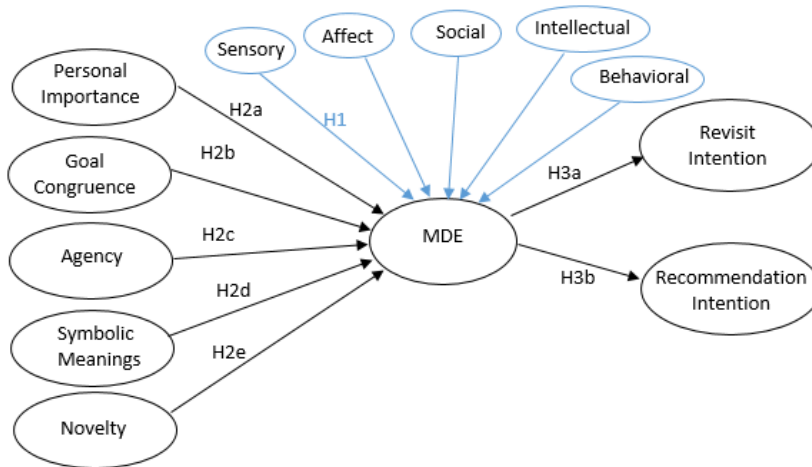
Figure 1.1 Proposed Model

Hypothesis 1: Memorable Dining Experiences (MDE) is explained through five

dimensions: sensory, affect, intellectual, behavioral, and social.

Hypothesis 2a: Personal importance of dining occasions positively influences

one's MDE.

Hypothesis 2b: Goal congruence of the dining occasion positively influences

one's MDE.

Hypothesis 2c: Agency positively influences one's MDE.

Hypothesis 2d: Symbolic meaning positively influences one's MDE.

Hypothesis 2e: Novelty positively influences one's MDE.

Hypothesis 3a: MDE positively influences consumers' revisit intentions.

Hypothesis 3b: MDE positively influences recommendation intentions.

1.3 Significance of Study

Examining the MDE concept in restaurant contexts can help in further

understanding the nuances in the restaurant industry, which is projected to reach more

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than $709 billion in sales during 2015 (National Restaurant Association, 2015a), or 4% of the U.S. gross domestic product. Understanding how consumers remember and retrieve particular dining experiences helps identify key factors that distinguish one service provider from another. This information can help restaurants gain competitive advantages via increased behavioral intentions and positive word of mouth of customers (Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014, Tsaur et al., 2007).

There are several studies attempting to investigate memorable experiences in tourism contexts (Kim et al., 2011; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Tung & Ritchie, 2011a, 2011b) and consumer experiences in hospitality contexts (Walls et al.,2011; Walls, 2013). However, empirical investigations of MDE in restaurant settings are lacking, and little is known about exactly how they should be measured. Comparing to the tourism contexts, experiences in restaurant settings are more often happened in consumers' daily lives, representing relatively higher frequency with a mix of ordinary and extraordinary experiences. In light of the current research gaps, this study attempts to understand the concept of MDE by examining its dimensionality, antecedents, and outcomes. Remembered experiences can help in consumers' decision-making processes, which can encourage behavioral intentions (Kim et al., 2012). As a result, understanding what MDE consists of and how experiences are remembered and shaped is particularly important for exploring their influences on consumers' future decisions. Restaurant owners and operators, as well as destination developers, should pay special attention to how consumers remember and use past experiences to make future consumption decisions.

This study contributes to the current body of literature in three ways. First, this study provides an instrument to measure MDE, which can be implemented in future

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studies. Moreover, restaurant practitioners can utilize this instrument to examine consumers' takeaways from the dining experiences and evaluate the restaurants' performance. Second, empirical testing of the proposed model offers insights into the antecedents and outcomes of MDE. Therefore, the current study not only systematically investigates the concept of MDE, but also contributes to the current research investigations of the antecedents and outcomes of MDE. Antecedents of MDE can help identify and predict how consumers' experiences are remembered. Lastly, the findings can contribute to both the hospitality literature and the hospitality industry. Specifically, the findings could make a contribution to the hospitality and tourism literature by presenting the formation of MDE and their underlying structures. Moreover, the findings can benefit the hospitality industry by understanding the nature of MDE from hospitality marketing and operational viewpoints and improving overall dining experiences to be more memorable and increase the chance of revisit intentions and positive word of mouth (recommendation intentions).

In sum, this study is important in understanding the MDE concept from consumers' perspectives that provide valuable insights to the restaurant industry. Moreover, the contributions of the current study are four-fold: the theoretical contribution of developing a tool to empirically measure MDE, the identification of the antecedents and outcomes of MDE, theoretical contribution of the MDE framework to the hospitality literature, and the practical implications for restaurant managers to help provide MDE for consumers.

1.4 Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation employs a six-chapter structure centered on the key research questions: What comprises MDE? What are the antecedents and consequences of MDE? Specifically, Chapter1 denotes an introduction of the current research, the purpose, the importance, and the overall scope of this dissertation. Chapter 2 first provides a comprehensive review of the literature, including information on the background information of the study, and consumer research in the hospitality and tourism industry. Then, a summary of definitions of experiences is offered to present the current stage of experience studies, and the conceptualization process is illustrated to guide the current study, with the antecedents and outcomes introduced last. Chapter 3 illustrates the conceptualization of the current study, divided into the sections of the MDE construct development, internal structure of MDE, hypothesis development, and the proposed overall model that will be tested in the current study.

Chapter 4 presents the research design of the current study, a mixed-method approach containing in-depth interviews and online surveys. The data collection procedures are also reported in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 reports the results and findings of the current study. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the current study findings, and general discussions are offered based on the findings related to previous studies. Practical and theoretical implications are highlighted and limitations are addressed. Directions for future studies are also noted in Chapter 6, along with the conclusion of the study.

1.5 Delimitations of the Research

The following delimitations are presented to set the overall scope of the current study. This study is delimited to American adult consumers of full-service restaurants,

thus consumers outside the U.S. and consumers from service settings other than full-service restaurants are excluded in the study sample. Moreover, this study only examines MDE that are positively remembered and retrieved by consumers. This study assumes that negative experiences would have completely different effects on behavioral intentions, which has been investigated separately in service recovery research. Therefore, negative experiences are excluded in the current study. Additionally, the focus of the current study is consumers' MDE in the past six months in full-service restaurant settings, so other types of restaurants, such as fast food restaurants, are excluded from the current study.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

To facilitate the understanding of the current study, the definitions of key terms are presented below:

- Consumer Experiences: "Treating consumption as a holistic experience, recognizing both the rational and emotional drivers of consumption" (Schmitt, 1999, p.60), including sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational dimensions (Schmitt, 1999).

- Full-Service Restaurants: Full-service restaurants include casual themed dining, upscale dining, and fine dining, at prices of $12 or above per person, with table services provided by servers (Parpal, 2014; Line, Runyan, Costen, Frash, & Antun, 2012).

- Memorable Dining Experiences (MDE): Consumers' subjective and holistic evaluation of a dining experience that is positively remembered and retrieved retrospectively (Derived from Kim et al., 2012).

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- Perceived Quality: "A consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority" (Zeithaml 1988, p. 3).

- Personal Importance: The significance of the event on an individual's needs or goals (Scherer, 1999, p.638).

- Novelty: The suddenness or unexpectedness of an experience accompanied with surprise (Ma et al., 2013).

- Goal Congruence: "The initial cognitive appraisal of whether the outcome of a situation is good or bad (positive or negative) with respect to personal well-being" (Watson & Spence, 2007, p.491), which is also referred to as motive consistency, and outcome desirability (Ma et al., 2013).

- Symbolic Meanings: A message represented in a sign or symbol in service encounters to deliver a particular perspective and meaning (Lanier & Hampton, 2009; Sidney, 1959).

- Agency: Who or what had control over the occurrence, which may be perceived by the individual to be oneself, someone else or circumstance (Ortony et al., 1988; Roseman, 1991; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Watson & Spence, 2007).

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the overall scope of this study. The chapter began with an introduction of experience studies in hospitality and tourism literature and an introduction of the foodservice industry to inform the readers of the need to study the concept of MDE. Based on this research background, specific research questions and hypotheses were presented in light of the current gaps in the literature to address the purpose of the current study. Furthermore, the significance of this study was addressed regarding how

exploring MDE can contribute to the literature and to practical applications by

developing a formative index to empirically measure MDE concept and the related

antecedents and outcomes. In addition, an overview was provided to introduce the overall

organization of this dissertation. Delimitations were then illustrated to set the overall

scope of the study. To engage readers, definitions of key terms of this study were

presented. Chapter 2 proceeds to discuss in-depth the concept of experience in hospitality

and tourism research, the conceptualization of MDE, and the related theories in

understanding MDE and the antecedents and outcomes of MDE in the overall model.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, background information on the U.S. foodservice industry is first introduced to provide an overview of dining experiences within the foodservice industry and justify the overall study context. To understand the concept of experiences, experience definitions in various contexts are then summarized, and MDE is defined based on these contexts. Then, the conceptualization of experiences in hospitality, marketing, and tourism literature is reviewed in light of the MDE framework. Previous studies on experiences in the hospitality and tourism and consumer behavior literature are reviewed to indicate the current stage of consumer experiences studies and identify the gaps in the literature. Theories used in understanding the MDE concept are reviewed, such as the strategic experiential modules, the cognitive appraisal theory, and the brief introduction of the PERMA model. With this information in mind, antecedents and outcomes of the concept of MDE are further reviewed to examine the underlying relationships among related constructs. To gain a better understanding of the study context, this chapter starts with the background information of U.S. foodservice industry to underline its importance and its relationship to the MDE.

2.2 Background Information on U.S. Foodservice Industry

The foodservice industry represents a large, economically powerful industry in the U.S. According to the National Restaurant Association (2015a), American restaurant industry sales are projected to reach $709.2 billion in 2015, demonstrating sales of $1.9 billion every day. Restaurant industry sales represent up to 4% of the U.S. gross domestic product, as stated by the National Restaurant Association (2015a). Furthermore, the restaurant industry creates up to 14 million jobs, representing the nation's second-largest private sector employer (National Restaurant Association, 2015b).

Full-service restaurant sales represent the largest segment of foodservice industry sales (Statista, 2015). Based on this data, the total sales of full-service restaurants are about to reach $220 billion in 2015, representing roughly one-third of the total sales of the foodservice industry. Parallel to the foodservice industry's sixth consecutive year of real growth, full-service restaurant segment sales have steadily increased each year, from $192 billion in 2009 to $220 billion in 2015 (National Restaurant Association, 2015b).

With steady growth of sales and the large numbers of job creation, it is evident that the importance of restaurant industry is increasing (Teng, 2011). It becomes critical to understand consumer experiences in restaurant settings, given that the products and services provided by the foodservice industry are very experience-oriented (Williams, 2006; Yuan & Wu, 2008). This is reflected by the paradigm shift from service marketing to experiential marketing, with the latter focusing on the experience creation process (Schmitt, 1999; Yuan & Wu, 2008). In response to this new era, restaurant businesses are not only selling products or services, but also memories and experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Yuan & Wu, 2008). Thus, creating memorable experiences is vital for the

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current foodservice industry in retaining existing customers and attracting new customers (Yelkur, 2000; Yuan & Wu, 2008).

In particular to the dining context, full-service restaurants include casual-themed dining, upscale dining, and fine dining, and all these types are at prices of $12 or above per person, with table services provided by servers (Parpal, 2014; Line, et al., 2012). Full-service restaurants go beyond mere meal provision to enhanced dining experiences through elements of hospitality, imagination, and satisfaction (Upadhyay, Singh, & Thomas, 2007).

The current study specifically chose the full-service restaurant setting because it can better represent consumer experience components such as service, consumer and employee interactions, and atmosphere. Other types of restaurants, such as fast food restaurants, focus more on factors such as low prices and fast service, which may not emphasize overall consumer experiences. After the introduction of the foodservice industry and full-service restaurants, the next section further discusses experience definitions, which helps to explain the general scope of experiences defined under various contexts.

2.3 Experience Definitions

Before introducing the concept of memorable dining experiences (MDE), there is a need to first understand experience as it is defined in the literature. The literature has provided a wide range of definitions as well as diverse applications of theories, representing a certain level of complexity in defining the term *experience* clearly and concisely (Walls et al., 2011). Research streams can be traced to the 1960s, when Thorne (1963) described the psychological state of *peak experiences* in the clinical context as

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individuals' most exciting, rich, and fulfilling experiences. Later, Maslow (1964) mentioned the term *peak experience* in the context of religious experiences. From a psychological perspective, he asserted that individuals exceed ordinary reality to pursue ultimate reality, which has a short duration with positive effects (Maslow, 1964). To this author's knowledge, these two studies are among the first in the psychology literature to describe the concept of an experience.

Earlier works use the term *experiences* to describe individuals' psychological states, whereas consumer experiences focus on both the feelings and the interactions between consumers and products or services they received from the service encounters (Carlson, 1997; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). The notion of consumer experience challenges the traditional views of the confirmation-disconfirmation paradigm rationale. Particularly, consumers actually do not evaluate their experiences simply with cognitive processes using objective judgments of the benefits and costs they received from their experiences, but rather they examine experiences holistically and subjectively (Klaus & Maklan, 2012). Therefore, the definition of consumer experiences is consistent with the previous definitions of peak experiences (Maslow, 1964; Thorne, 1963), which emphasized consumers' feelings and subjective evaluations from psychological perspectives.

The concept of experiences has received much attention in marketing literature since the 1990s, and numerous studies have defined the term *consumer experiences* (Carlson, 1997; Gupta & Vajic, 1999; Hogg & Banister, 2001; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Johnson & Lehmann, 1997; McLellan, 2000; Mitchell & Orwig, 2002; Mossberg, 2007; Oh, Marie, & Jeoung, 2007; O'Sullivan & Spangler, 1998; Otto & Ritchie, 1996;

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Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999). Among these definitions, Pine and Gilmore (1998) addressed the memorable feature of consumer experiences, which is described as a state when a company engages consumers using services as the stage and goods as tools to create a memorable event (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). To this end, experience is notably characterized as personal feelings related to emotional, physical, intellectual, or spiritual perspectives (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Aligned with this research attention in the marketing literature, the experience concept has been studied in the hospitality and tourism literature, with Cohen (1979) among the first who explicitly talked about the concept of tourist experiences. He proposed a typology of means to reflect individuals' quests for spiritual values and claimed that the motivations of tourist experiences can range from mere pleasure to the pursuit of meaning and authenticity (Cohen, 1979). The experience here is conceived as special and unique, which cannot be found in individuals' daily lives (Cohen, 1979). Based on the types of goods or services consumed, hospitality and tourism experiences can range from ordinary to extraordinary (Quan & Wang, 2004; Walls et al., 2011), depending on consumers' feelings of novelty related to the experience (Abrahams 1986; Arnould & Price, 1993; Privette 1983; Walls et al., 2011). For instance, a quick trip to a drive-through restaurant to grab a sandwich can be an ordinary and not very novel experience, whereas a white water rafting trip that is very exciting and intense may qualify as extraordinary experiences due to its novelty.

In addition to the notion that experiences can be ordinary or extraordinary, experience research in the tourism and hospitality fields also recognizes the importance of both cognitive and affective (emotional) components (Carlson, 1997; Oh et al., 2007;

Walls et al., 2011). Based on the encounters of different consumers, experiences may generate a unique combination of cognitive and affective components and are perceived quite differently by consumers (Walls et al., 2011).

With these characteristics in mind, hospitality experiences, in particular, focus on the guest (consumer) and host (service provider) interactions, which generally featured as more personal and memorable (Hemington, 2007). Within dining contexts, Jeong and Jang (2011) defined restaurant experiences as customers' knowledge or observations acquired from restaurant attributes such as food quality, service quality, atmosphere, and price fairness through the course of the dining experience. The knowledge or observations here emphasize consumers' intellectual benefits gained from the dining experiences through the interactions between consumers and service providers, including employees, the dining environment, and other guests.

Built on the hospitality and tourism experiences literature, recent studies further focused on a more specified concept: the memorable experience (Lashley, et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2010; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Memorable tourism experience is defined as "a tourism experience positively remembered and recalled after the event has occurred" (Kim et al., 2011, p. 13). Thus, in the tourism context, the memorable experience retrospectively highlights the memorable features of the experience.

In a similar vein, MDE focuses on the positive aspects of an experience that can occur and can be related to the product consumed, but acknowledges the subjective and holistic features of the experience. Dining experiences, by nature, have a more specific beginning and ending. In addition, dining experiences are more common that consumers

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Table 2.1 Summary of Experience Related Definitions

Author	Term Defined	Definition
Thorne (1963)	Peak experience	Peak experience refers to one of the high points of life, which can be described as exciting, rich, and a state of fulfillment of individuals.
Maslow (1964)	Peak experience	Peak experience is the experiences in which the individual exceeds ordinary reality and perceives an ideal state. It is short in duration and associated with positive affect.
Cohen (1979)	Tourism experience	There are five modes of tourist experiences: recreational mode, diversionary mode, experiential mode, experimental mode, and existential mode.
Tung & Ritchie (2011)	Tourism experience	Tourists' subjective assessment and enduring of events in response to their tourist activities happened before, during, and after the trip.
Hirschman & Holbrook (1982)	Consumer experience	The experience with products include multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive characteristics.
Carlson (1997)	Consumer experience	An experience refers to a state of flow with continuous thoughts and feelings throughout the consumers' state of consciousness.
Pine & Gilmore (1998)	Consumer experience	Experiences can be characterized as unique, memorable and sustainable over time, which consumers would like to revisit or build upon, and recommend through word of mouth.
Schmitt (1999)	Consumer experience	Experiences are generated through encountering, living through products, including dimensions of sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational.
Gupta & Vajic (1999)	Consumer experience	An experience is created through a customer's sensation and knowledge acquisition during the interaction processes between consumers and different elements of a context.
Lewis & Chambers (2000)	Consumer experience	The results the customer received from the environment, goods, and services.
McLellan (2000)	Consumer experience	Experience can be described as functional, purposeful, engaging, compelling, and memorable.
Berry et al.(2002)	Consumer experience	The consumer experience is to arrange all the clues that people identify in the buying process.
Oh et al. (2007)	Consumer experience	The enjoyable, engaging, memorable elements that consumers experienced during the events.
Denzin (1992)	Extraordinary experiences	Extraordinary experiences separate from consumers' daily routines when people redefine themselves, especially when people at turning points of their lives.
Arnould & Price (1993)	Extraordinary experiences	Extraordinary experience is a combination of consumers' immersion, personal control, pleasure and appreciation, a natural process of letting be, and a feeling of freshness, with high levels of emotional intensity.

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Author	Term Defined	Definition
Quan & Wang (2004)	Tourist experience	The tourist experience consists of two dimensions, namely, the dimension of the peak touristic experience and the dimension of the supporting consumer experience.
Uriely (2005)	Tourist experience	The tourist experience is currently portrayed as a diverse phenomenon that mostly created by the individual consumer.
Andersson (2007)	Tourist experience	The tourist experience is described as the moment when tourism consumption interacts with the tourism production.
Hemmington (2007)	Hospitality experience	Hospitality experience include five dimensions: the host-guest relationship, generosity, theatre and performance, lots of little surprises, and safety and security
Lashley (2008)	Memorable tourism experiences	Memorable tourism experiences created from the relationships between the host and guest; the emotions embedded in the experiences are essential to creating a memory.
Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick (2010)	Memorable tourism experience	Memorable tourism experience is a tourism experience positively remembered and recalled after the event has occurred.
Jeong & Jang (2011)	Restaurant experiences	Customers' restaurant experiences are "comprised of their knowledge or observation of restaurant attributes gained through the course of their dining experience" (p.358).
Developed from Kim Ritchie, & McCormick (2010)	Memorable dining experiences	Consumers' subjective and holistic evaluation of a dining experience that is positively remembered and retrieved retrospectively.

Partially adapted from Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, (2011, p.11).

dine out frequently in their daily lives; consumers can tell the most distinctive features of

their MDE by choosing from their relatively high number of experiences. In other words,

memorable dining experiences could more likely to capture the memorable features of the

experiences, which makes the study context suitable for the current research topic.

To this end, it is deemed appropriate to develop MDE to identify the features that

make experiences memorable. Table 2.1 summarizes the definitions of consumer

experience in the hospitality, tourism, and marketing literature. The definitions are

organized based on the categories of the terms and the chronological order in which these

terms first appeared. Based on the development of the terms in Table 2.1 and derived

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more specifically from the definition of memorable tourism experiences (Kim et al., 2011), MDE in this study is defined as consumers' subjective and holistic evaluation of a dining experience that is positively remembered and retrieved retrospectively.

To conclude, with the growing attention paid to the experience research, a handful of the experience definitions are summarized from the hospitality and tourism literature. This section reviewed the major definitions related to experiences and memorable tourism experiences, and based on those definitions, MDE was defined with the recognition of subjective and memorable features. With a clear definition, the conceptualization of MDE will be further discussed in the next section.

2.4 Conceptualization of MDE

2.4.1 Experiences Conceptualization

With such variations in the definitions of experiences, it is not surprising that there has been a lack of consistency in the conceptualization of experiences to address the different study context such as such as tourism, restaurants, and hotels. The following section provides a review of theoretical frameworks used in hospitality, tourism, and marketing literature in chronological order.

In the marketing literature, Pine and Gilmore (1998) proposed four realms of an experience, namely entertainment, education, esthetic, and escapist. Specifically, they used scales of two dimensions to evaluate these four realms: participation (active or passive), and connection (absorption or immersion) (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Entertainment, such as listening to a concert or watching a live show, involves less physical participation but more mental engagement. The education realm, on the other hand, refers to the mental state of the absorption of knowledge and new information, but

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at the same time, involves active participation. For example, the learning processes of a wine taster from amateur to an expert could bring a consumer fun and add excitement to the wine tasting experience. The esthetic realm is created through consumers' appreciation of products without much participation (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). For example, a tourist takes a visit to the museum of history, where the visitor can be immersed in the experience by just walking along the hallway. Finally, escapism contains more participation and immersion, which provides consumers with the feeling of temporarily escaping from daily routines. Pine and Gilmore's framework received great attention in marketing literature, and it has been adopted in hospitality and tourism studies (e.g., Chang & Lin, 2015; Manthiou et al., 2014; Oh et al., 2007).

Quan and Wang (2004) proposed a conceptual framework that considers both the social science perspective of peak experiences and the marketing or management perspective of supporting consumption experiences. Using food consumption in tourism as an example, they contended that tourism experiences can be either peak experiences or the supporting consumer experiences under different conditions (Quan & Wang, 2004). In particular, the peak experiences dimensions relate to travel motivation factors, such as escaping from daily routines and seeking activities not typically engaged in. The supporting consumer experiences, on the other hand, contain the essentials that most tourists need when traveling, such as eating and sleeping, which are not too much different from a consumer's daily life (Quan & Wang, 2004). These two dimensions, ordinary (supporting) and extraordinary (peak) experiences, are interchangeable under some conditions (Quan & Wang, 2004). Thus, food consumption in tourism experiences

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can be either ordinary or extraordinary, depending on the purpose of the consumption. In the current study context, MDE can be either ordinary or extraordinary.

Mkono, Markwell, and Wilson (2013) applied Quan and Wang's framework to the food experience context. They used qualitative research methods to study food experiences in tourism contexts. The results showed that the framework was generally valuable and useful for studying food experiences from two dimensions of peak experiences and supporting consumer experiences (Mkono et al., 2013). However, they also pointed out that food experiences can be either peak experiences or supporting experiences (Mkono et al., 2013). In other words, the role that food experience plays in overall tourism experiences was not clearly and specifically explained in this model. It is problematic to apply Quan and Wang's (2004) framework to quantitative studies when the distinction of the two dimensions is not clear.

In the hospitality literature, experiences were measured by empirical studies in hotel settings, such as Knutson, Beck, Kim, and Cha (2009). They collected 152 valid responses from hotel guests and developed a scale measuring hotel experiences. They further proposed an 18-item scale comprised of four dimensions: benefit (such as safety and products/services consistency), convenience, incentive (such as price promotions), and environment (Knutson et al., 2009). Using EFA, CFA tests, the results revealed that the scale, the hotel experience index, showed evidence of convergent, discriminant validity, and reliability (Knutson et al., 2009). Their study contributes to the literature by developing the Hotel Experience Index, which is a useful tool to empirically measure hotel experiences.

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In studying a broader concept of hospitality experiences, Knutson and her colleagues proposed a new theoretical model that added three factors to the original hotel experiences index: utility, accessibility, and brand trust (Knutson et al., 2010). They proposed that the seven-factor structure better reflects overall hospitality experiences (Knutson et al., 2010). Different from the hotel experience index (Knutson et al., 2009), the new framework was perceived as more comprehensive than the previous one. However, the new framework representing hospitality experiences is purely theoretical, and the authors did not provide specific explanations of these seven factors. Therefore, it is still unknown whether the seven-factor structure can be applied in hotel and restaurant contexts to measure hospitality experiences.

Similarly, Teng (2011) studied consumer experiences in restaurants and accommodation settings. Using the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews, he reported that five components were significant in creating hospitality experiences in commercial settings: interpersonal interaction, psychological connection, openness to different cultures, sensation satisfaction, and perceived value (Teng, 2011). The dynamic and complex nature of hospitality experiences was reflected through three perspectives: hospitality providers, consumers, and the interactions between them. Particularly, the hospitality providers offer service environments, atmosphere, and service delivery, which are important components in creating hospitality experiences. On the other hand, consumers come to the commercial settings (either the restaurant or the hotel in this study) with their own needs or expectations, which could possibly moderate their experiences. Finally, consumers interact with hospitality providers and other consumers, which could create benefits from emotional, social, and functional perspectives.

Through the interactions among service providers, customers, and other customers, emotional bonds were created between customers and service providers, which are noted as the affect component of experiences. Service providers create the experiences through enhancing both service environment and service delivery, which are noted as sensory components of experiences. During experiences, interactions with other consumers can create social benefits to enhance the overall experiences. The social benefits can be noted as the social components of the experiences. In short, Teng's model (2011) is mostly consistent with other conceptualizations of experiences (Schmitt, 1999; Brakus et al., 2009) that describe experiences as including sensory, affect, behavior, and social components.

Walls (2013) studied consumer experiences in hotel settings to investigate the dimensionality of consumer experiences and the relationship between consumer experience and consumers' perceived value. Two constructs, physical environment and human interaction, were proposed to constitute consumer experiences. Questionnaires were used to survey the consumers from three types of hotels: limited service, mid-scale, and luxury, and the results generally supported the proposed model that consumer experiences positively influence consumer perceived value (Walls, 2013). In addition, consumers perceived more value from the physical environment than from human interaction in the hotel setting (Walls, 2013). This was one of the first studies that empirically examined the concept of service experiences and their relationship to consumers' perceived value in the hospitality sector. Walls' (2003) study provided operational and managerial implications for the hospitality industry.

Similarly, Cetin and Dincer (2014) assessed the influence of customer experience on loyalty and word of mouth in hotel settings. They argued that the dimensions proposed by previous studies did not provide clear and mutually exclusive classifications (Cetin & Dincer, 2014). Additionally, this study suggests that hedonic, irrational, and emotional factors should be considered in customer experience studies when developing theoretical models (Bigne & Andreu, 2004; Cetin & Dincer, 2014). Consistent with Walls (2013)'s conceptualization, physical environment and social interaction were proposed to be two dimensions of hospitality experiences (Cetin & Dincer, 2014). However, it appears that both Walls (2013) and Cetin and Dincer (2014) oversimplified the concept of service experience in that only physical environment and human interaction were analyzed as broad components, making it difficult to capture the sophisticated nature of experiences.

In sum, different conceptualizations of experiences reveal a lack of consistency in the hospitality and tourism field. In restaurant contexts, the dining experience conceptualization is still in its infancy. For the purpose of the current study context, the following section reviews the studies of dining experiences.

2.4.2 Dining Experiences

Current studies on dining experiences focus either on theoretical frameworks or on the empirical tests without conceptual support. The research interests in tourism and hospitality fields primarily concern *experiences* in general; many well-recognized studies concentrate on conceptual structures only without empirical tests (i.e. Jennings et al., 2009; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Quan & Wang, 2004). Empirical studies (such as Cetin & Dincer, 2014; Jeong & Jang, 2011; Walls, 2013), on the other hand, emphasize consumers' feelings and emotions. They all make notable contributions to the literature,

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but some lack theoretical grounding. This implies some room for advancement of the experience literature to integrate conceptual frameworks and empirical implementations.

Touristic dining experiences have received increasing attention in the literature (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2009; Mkono et al., 2013; Molz, 2007; Wijaya et al., 2013). Dining experiences could provide both utilitarian and hedonic functions, where tourists dine at local destinations to fulfill their essential nutritional needs and experience local cultures. Wijaya, King, Nguyen, and Morrison (2013) proposed a conceptual model in understanding dining experiences in the destination context. Their study focus was on international visitors consuming local food in destination settings. Their framework was developed from the consumption system theory (CST) (Woodside & Dubelaar, 2002). This theory suggests that dining experiences in destination contexts are comprised of three phases: before, during, and after the experiences. Drawn from previous studies, such as Hsu, Cai, and Li (2009) and Sheng and Chen (2012), Wijaya et al.'s model asserts that tourists' expectations prior to dining experiences lead to their perceptions of the experience. Therefore, Wijaya et al. (2013) suggested a three-stage of before, during, and after measurement of experiences could provide a holistic picture of the experience concept as it relates to dining experiences (Wijaya et al., 2013).

From a conceptual perspective, Wijaya et al.'s (2013) framework is among the first to provide a comprehensive review to understand international visitor dining experiences and to address the sequential stages of dining experiences. From the research operational perspective, however, the three-stage of before, during, and after

measurement somewhat lacks feasibility, especially in non-experimental applications where respondents may not be able to be approached repeatedly.

In addition to dining experiences in destination contexts, other researchers are interested in identifying the causes that influence these experiences. Mak, Lumbers, Eves, and Chang (2012) proposed a theoretical framework for tourist food consumption. With a comprehensive review of the literature and an interdisciplinary perspective, they suggested that factors influencing tourists' food consumption include cultural/religious influences, socio-demographic factors, motivational factors, food-related personality traits (variety seeking and novelty seeking), and previous experience (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, et al., 2012). Their model provided insights for identifying the antecedents that have direct impacts on food consumption, specifically in destination settings.

It is worth noting that in the model developed by Mak, Lumbers, Eves, et al. (2012), the motivation factors for tourist dining experiences include five key components: symbolic, obligatory, contrast, extension, and pleasure. Specifically, the symbolic component refers to symbolic meanings that tourists could obtain from their touristic dining experiences, such as local culture, authenticity, and education. The obligatory component denotes the nutritional function that food plays; the contrast means the comparison between tourists' daily routine consumption and their touristic consumption. The concept of extension points to the similarities between daily routine consumption and touristic consumption, and pleasure refers to the hedonic component of the experiences (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, et al., 2012). There may be some problems in that these five components are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For instance, of the motivation factors, the variables contrast and extension are both used to describe consumers'

motivations to try either similar or different foods at destinations compared to their daily lives. Food-related personality traits, on the other hand, refer to novelty seeking and variety seeking, which are very similar to the variables of contrast and extension. This drawback has brought challenges in applying this framework to empirical studies.

Different from Mak, Lumbers, Eves, et al. (2012), where the proposed framework was purely theoretical, Jeong and Jang (2011) empirically studied dining experiences in restaurant settings to investigate the relationship between dining experiences and the word-of-mouth motivations of customers. They proposed that dining experiences include four components: food quality, service quality, atmosphere, and price fairness (Jeong & Jang, 2011). The word-of-mouth motivations, on the other hand, consist of three factors: showing concern for others, expressing positive feelings, and helping the restaurant company (Jeong & Jang, 2011). Each of the dining experience components was proposed to influence each of the word-of-mouth motivation factors. The results revealed that three components of dining experiences positively influence the word-of-mouth behaviors, which are food quality, service quality, and atmosphere. The price fairness did not significantly influence word-of-mouth behavior (Jeong & Jang, 2011).

The lack of understanding of the dining experiences concept calls for a need to summarize the current findings that can help guide further directions and research. In addition, the reviewed studies did not address the memorable nature of the experiences, which is another research direction that leads to a better understanding of the experience concept. This study aims to illuminate the missing pieces and build a closer connection between theories and practical implications. The following section discusses the research done in the area of memorable experiences.

2.4.3 Memorable Experiences

Recently, a more focused research stream has emerged, namely on *memorable experiences*, which is used to examine the memorable essence and components of experiences. In tourism contexts, memories can serve as a filtering mechanism that link tourists' experiences with positive or negative attitudes (Oh et al., 2007). Creating positive memories is critical for service business to differentiate themselves (Oh et al., 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998), which is also addressed in experience studies in the hospitality and tourism field (Oh et al., 2007; Morgan-Thomas, 2013). Understanding how memories are created is critical because it is the only way to access previous experiences after the experience took place (Cutler & Carmichael, 2011; Miao et al., 2014). With the growing attention paid to the memorable tourism experiences (Kim et al., 2012), it becomes possible to measure the experience concept and uncover the memorable nature of experiences.

For the characteristics of hospitality and tourism experiences, Lashley (2008) has pointed out the importance of emotional components in experiences, which truly build long-term customer relationships and loyalty. Through recognizing the emotional component, the hospitality business can survive in severe competition (Lashley, 2008). Moreover, the social component has also been emphasized in the hospitality and tourism experiences, which is evident in the interactions between employees and consumers. The social component is important because of the strong link between employee performance, customer satisfaction, and the employee satisfaction (Lashley, 2008). To create a memorable experience, one ideal way is to turn consumers into friends (Lashley, 2008).

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These characteristics are summarized from a number of memorable experiences studies, and the specific study findings are discussed in the following paragraph.

In tourism literature, research on memorable experience conceptualization is lacked (Ritchie & Hudson, 2009). Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2010) empirically studied the concept of memorable tourism experiences, and they developed a scale to investigate the components of memorable tourism experiences. They interviewed 62 participants and generated a final scale comprised of 24 items applicable to various destination areas. Seven domains were identified from their study, including hedonism, novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaningfulness, involvement, and knowledge, which provide valuable insights and directions for future tourists' memorable experience studies. However, it seemed that Kim et al.'s (2012) study was an empirical investigation without solid theoretical foundation, which may be problematic for developing a memorable tourism experience scale. In particular, it is not clear whether some of the domains are components or antecedents of memorable tourism experiences.

Following this research stream, two recent studies (Kim, 2013; Kim & Ritchie, 2014) further confirmed the scale validity (Kim et al., 2012) by testing the scale in an Eastern cultural context in addition to the original American cultural context. With the comparison between American and Taiwanese students, cross-validation was achieved showing that the memorable tourism experience scale can be employed under different cultures.

In a restaurant context, Lashley et al. (2005) were among the first to specifically study memorable dining experiences. They used 63 college students to recall and describe their memorable dining experiences. Using content analysis, the results revealed

several important dimensions of MDE, which are the occasion of the meal, the persons sharing the experience, the restaurant atmosphere, and the food and service provided (Lashley et al., 2005). More importantly, their findings highlighted that the emotional dimensions of dining experiences were much more important than the quality of the food (Lashley et al., 2005), emphasizing the emotional component in MDE. Although their study of MDE was largely exploratory and descriptive, it provided rich information to advance the knowledge about the nature and the major characteristics of MDE.

In sum, previous literature has exhibited different views on the conceptualization of experiences based on different research contexts. In the restaurant context, the dining experiences' essence and underlying structure is still unclear. The current study intends to develop an instrument that empirically measures MDE. The scale is largely derived from Schmitt (1999) and Brakus et al.'s (2009) conceptualization of brand experience and adapted to the dining context. Additionally, the features identified by Kim et al. (2010) that make an experience memorable are the particular focus for the current study. Specifically for construct conceptualization of MDE, please refer to Chapter 3 for details. With different conceptual frameworks in mind, the underlying theories that provide the foundations for these conceptualizations can enhance the understanding of MDE. The following section reviews the theories in the psychology and marketing literature that advance the foundational knowledge of MDE.

2.5 Theories Used in Understanding MDE

The purpose of this section is to capture the research findings on memory and memorable experiences that are deemed applicable to the MDE concept in dining contexts. Specifically, the Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs) is first introduced to

lay the theoretical foundations of the five-dimension structure of MDE. Then, the theoretical framework of memory formation process is demonstrated with particular focus on autobiographic memory (AB memory). Next, the cognitive appraisal theory is reviewed to facilitate the understanding of the antecedents of MDE.

2.5.1 Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs)

Strategic experiential modules (SEMs) is a framework originally proposed by Schmitt (1999) and conceptualized in five dimensions of consumer experiences: sensory (sense), affective (feel), creative cognitive (think), physical behaviors and lifestyles (act), and social associations to a reference group (relate) (Schmitt, 1999). The term *module* refers to certain confined functional domains of the mind and behavior, which is different based on structures and processes (Schmitt, 1999). In the current context, the modules specifically refer to specific dimensions of MDE. In particular, the *sense* dimension refers to the consumers' sensations through light, sound, taste, etc., and the *feel* dimension is defined as consumers' feelings and emotions in reaction to the experiences. The *think* dimension denotes consumers' cognitive thinking processes, and the *act* dimension refers to consumers' physical reactions. Nike's slogan of "just do it" is one example of the "act" marketing. Last, the *relate* dimension, according to Schmitt, contains all of the above four dimensions, but goes beyond one's personal feelings, connecting the individual to a corresponding group (Schmitt, 1999).

The SEMs framework contributes to the literature by addressing the importance of these five factors in creating consumer experiences in the marketing literature (Schmitt, 1999). Moreover, the SEMs framework provides theoretical foundations for the experience studies, which paves the way for future studies in different contexts. Along

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this line, Brakus et al. (2009) have employed this framework and empirically tested its validity and reliability in the brand experience context. The purpose of the Brakus et al.'s (2009) study was to develop a scale measuring brand experiences. Specifically, an item pool was generated based on a comprehensive literature review, and then experts in the field were invited to screen the items (Brakus et al., 2009). After the selection of five brands out of 21 brands that were rated most experiential, 267 consumers were asked to rate the five brands on their brand experiences. From a series of tests initiated, a 12-item scale was generated with four dimensions of brand experiences: sensory, intellectual, behavioral, and affect.

Interestingly, the results did not hold the original five-dimension structure of Schmitt (1999) in the brand experiences context, indicating consumers' brand experiences may not necessarily consist of the social components. Contrarily, dining experiences in restaurant contexts by nature serve social functions, without which the dining experience may not be meaningful or special. Thus, the current study follows Schmitt's (1999) original conceptualization, recognizing the importance of social components in the dining experiences.

The above discussion provides the theoretical foundations of SEMs framework (Schmitt, 1999) in the consumer experiences literature, and Brakus et al. (2009) further confirmed the usefulness of the SEMs framework applied in the brand experiences context, which helps to understand the "experiences" aspect of MDE. With this in mind, the next section further investigates the theoretical foundations of this *memorable* aspect by looking at memory formation processes.

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2.5.2 Theoretical Frameworks of Memory Formation Processes

There are several kinds of memories as memory classifications in the literature, such as semantic memory, which is the basic knowledge about the world, and episodic memory, which contains detailed sensory perceptual knowledge of the experiences (Conway, 2005). It is suggested that a special kind of memory, autobiographical memory (hereafter referred to AB memory) is used when people remember their experiences (Brewer 1986; Kim, 2010; Sujan, Bettman, & Baumgartner, 1993; Tul-ving, 1985). AB memory is mainly generated from an individual's recollection of previous experiences (Conway, 2005; Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000). AB memory is: 1) highly related to the self (storytelling); 2) highly related to personal goals and how active goals are achieved; and 3) emotional and affective in nature (Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

In psychology literature, prior studies (Conway, 2005; Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000) generally come to consensus that AB memory works under a dual-process model, which is both cognitive and affective (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000). Epstein (1994) combined the experiential system and the rational system into a two-system model. The experiential system is more vivid and subconscious, with memories recalled in terms of pictures and narratives. The rational system, on the other hand, exists more consciously in logical thinking to direct thoughts and behavior. Thus, the AB memory relies more on the experiential system that is more vivid and unconscious, and relies less on logical thinking.

Conway and Pleydell-Pearce (2000) proposed a framework of self-memory system to explain how AB memories are formed. According to the model, AB memory has three hierarchical levels of specificity: lifetime periods, general events, and event-

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specific knowledge. Lifetime periods usually have clear timelines with beginnings and endings, such as "when I was in high school" or "during the time when I was in the military." General events consist of repeated events (e.g. Christmas ski trips each year) as well as single events (e.g., a trip to Seattle). Moreover, these kinds of memories are formed around how individuals' active goals are achieved. For instance, one may remember a task or event by how hard it is to acquire a skill or how a successful interpersonal relationship was developed (Chadee & Cutler, 1996). Event-specific knowledge is highly detailed and highly vivid in regards to emotions, such as a particular dialogue where a tourist asks a resident for directions.

In addition to its hierarchical structure (from general to very specific), AB memory consists of two sets of themes: the work theme and the relationship theme (Chadee & Cutler, 1996). The work theme could be memories of daily routines, such as the last day at school, drinks on a Friday evening, and work in a certain office. The relationship theme, on the other hand, relates to other people, such as dancing with someone or taking a family vacation in a foreign country. Despite that the work theme that relates to the self, the relationship theme connects an individual to others, noted as the social factor of the experiences. From the structure of AB memory, the social factor is critical in creating overall experiences, supported by studies in marketing literature (Schmitt, 1999), hospitality literature (Walls et al., 2011; Wijaya et al., 2013), and tourism literature (Jennings et al., 2009).

Several factors such as age, gender, and personality have been identified as important moderators influencing memory formation. Age is a potential factor in that the most salient period of time for acquiring AB memory is between 10-30 years old

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(Conway & Rubin, 1993), and females are more likely to remember a past experience more vividly than males (Tung, 2011). Further, it is suggested that individuals' motives influence and guide memory formation (Wokie, 2008). For example, memories can be categorized as successful or unsuccessful feelings about one's performance. These findings also confirmed the close relationships of individuals' motivations and memories based on how motivations are achieved.

Compared to episodic memory, where referencing could be more general and pertains more to others than to oneself, AB memory is more specific and self-related to an individuals' own experiences (Chadee & Culter, 1996). Memories of both tourism experiences and dining experiences are remembered as personal experiences, which can be considered as one type of AB memory (Kim et al., 2010; Wijaya et al., 2013; Wokie, 2008). Similarly, the concept of MDE can be understood from the formation process of AB memory, which is mainly the knowledge about oneself (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). MDE, in particular, is a self-experience that occurred in the past, which can be considered a type of AB memory.

In conclusion, the SEMs framework provides theoretical foundations for the consumer experiences, which explained the *experiences* part of MDE. In addition, the AB memory explores the nature of memories from the psychology literature, which explained the *memorable* part of MDE. Put together, it helps to explain the five-dimension structure of MDE. The following section switches to the theoretical underpinnings of the antecedents and outcomes of MDE.

2.5.3 Cognitive Appraisal Theory

To date, since the concept of memorable experiences is relatively new in the literature, little has been explored on the factors that enhance experiences and make them more memorable. According to Kim (2014), experiences with emotions involved are more likely to be remembered. Thus, emotions are critical components to make the experiences memorable, and by capturing the emotions, one can successfully enhance the experience to be more memorable.

Emotion refers to the generation of intense feelings in response to a person, an object, or an event and originates specific response behaviors (Hosanay & Gilbert, 2010). Intensity and valence are two indicators to describe emotions. Emotional intensity refers to the level of arousal generated from the emotions, either high or low (Bagozzi, Baumgartner, & Pieters, 1998; Ma et al., 2013). Valence, on the other hand, is whether the emotion is positive or negative (Bagozzi et al., 1998). Using intensity and valence can quantify the level of emotions, but cannot explain the causes of the emotions (Ma et al., 2013).

The cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) (Lazarus, 1966, 1991; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) investigates the antecedents of emotions from psychological perspectives. Appraisal is defined as "the results of the information-processing tasks that indicate the implications of the situation for the interests and goals of the individual and therefore determine the form that emotional reaction takes in a given situation" (Johnson & Stewart, 2005, p. 5). This theory holds that "emotions are elicited and based on a person's subjective evaluation or appraisal of the personal significance of a situation, object, or event on a number of dimensions or criteria" (Scherer, 1999, p.637).

The CAT has recently received more attention in the literature to help researchers understand emotions from formation processes. According to this theory, emotional responses are built on both internal conditions such as personality, beliefs, and goals, and on external conditions such as product performance and response to others (Ma et al., 2013). Instead of simply classifying emotions into intensity and valence, the CAT perceives that an emotion is generated from individuals' subjective evaluations based on their motivations to have the experiences and from the personal importance of the experiences (Ma et al., 2013). This is consistent with the formation process of AB memory, which is personal and related to goal achievement. Therefore, this approach can be utilized to explain how emotions are provoked to influence the memory formation of experiences.

Besides the related theories reviewed above, a better understanding of the MDE concept could be gained through motivations that drive consumers' experiential behaviors. MDE is also related to consumers' pursuit for experiences such as meaning, happiness, and positive relationship, which are the components of well-being. Well-being describes an individual's state of both psychologically feeling good and physically functioning well (Huppert, 2014; Kern, Waters, Adler, &White, 2015). Based on the well-being theory proposed by Seligman (2012), well-being is a multi-dimensional concept that is measured by five elements: positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning, and achievement (PERMA) (Kern et al., 2015; Seligman, 2012).

PERMA model was derived from positive psychology, which aims to explore the concept of well-being (Seligman, 2012). Each of these five elements are defined and measured independently, indicating that individuals may seek some of the elements and

may not necessarily pursue all of them in the well-being assessment (Seligman, 2012). Specifically, positive emotion denotes the lowest reference point of happiness, which describes individuals' pleasant feelings (Seligman, 2012). The engagement, on the other hand, means a state of mind that one is absorbed by the task. Relationship refers to maintaining a positive relationship with other people, which is considered very important in keeping the state of well-being (Seligman, 2012). Meaning is individuals' beliefs that something is valuable and worthy of pursuing (Kern et al., 2015). Last, the achievement refers to a sense of accomplishment, and a feeling of being capable to do something (Kern et al., 2015). The PERMA model is related to the MDE concept not only because they share some common elements, but it also because it helps to understand the MDE concept from the motivational perspectives that drive these experiences, such as how and why these elements become memorable. Memories gained from the experiences are the valuable sources to make consumers both feeling good and function well, therefore enhancing consumers' well-being.

It is worth noting that some other theories also provide insights to the current study by introducing possible moderators, namely the strategic memory protection theory. Specifically, this theory suggests that under certain conditions of moderating effects, consumers may have two opposite directions of behavioral intentions, namely acquisition or avoidance. Therefore, individuals tend to revisit a place when they perceive it as merely pleasant and tend to avoid a place when revisiting may change the uniqueness of their previous experiences. This informs the current study by offering that the effect of memorable experiences may not always be straightforward, given different conditions and under different contexts. Due to the scope of the current study, the

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moderators between memorable experiences and behavioral intentions are not included in the current study, which can be addressed in future studies.

To conclude, this section reviews major psychology and marketing theories that provided the foundation for the conceptualization of MDE. In particular, the strategic experiential modules provide the theoretical basics of the five-dimension structure of the MDE framework. Psychological theoretical frameworks advanced the understanding of the memory formation process and its close relationship to emotions and motivations. The cognitive appraisal theory provides the theoretical foundations of the five antecedents of MDE. The next section discusses in detail the proposed antecedents of MDE.

2.6 Antecedents of MDE

According to Kim et al. (2012, p.13), the factors that increase the likelihood of an experience being remembered include three major domains: affective feelings, cognitive evaluations, and novelty. Derived from these three domains, the current study proposes five factors that enhance experiences to make them memorable: personal importance, goal congruence, agency, symbolic meanings, and novelty. The first three factors were based on the first domain of affective feelings and the cognitive appraisal theory. The fourth factor, symbolic meanings, was derived from the cognitive evaluation domain. According to Robinson (1979), the meanings extracted from an experience influence the experience to make it more memorable. Therefore, the current study further proposes that symbolic meanings are important antecedents that influence MDE. Finally, the novelty factor reflects unexpectedness and suddenness compared to one's expectations. This

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study proposes that experiences with novelty are more likely to be remembered by consumers. Each of these five factors is discussed in details as follows.

2.6.1 Personal Importance

As reviewed in 2.5.3, the cognitive appraisal theory provides the antecedents that cause emotions, including personal importance, goal congruence, agency, and certainty. Considering the restaurant context of the current study, the first three factors, personal importance, goal congruence, and agency are proposed as antecedents of MDE. Notably, in psychology literature, certainty is defined as "the perceived likelihood of a particular event occurring: past events are certain (I failed an exam), future events are uncertain (I may develop cancer from smoking)" (Watson & Spence, 2007, p.497). Because MDE is measured retrospectively after the experience has taken place, the certainty is held constant and therefore will not be examined in the current study.

Personal importance refers to how much the experience is relevant and important to an individual (Ma et al., 2013). Based on the cognitive appraisal theory, personal importance is a critical criterion that predicts emotions, that is, the level of relevance to an individual determines the level of intensity of the emotion. In the memory literature, Woike (1995) explicitly pointed out that personal importance and emotional intensity make experiences memorable. Therefore, individuals are more likely to remember experiences that are important and meaningful to them. Thus, personal importance is proposed to be an antecedent of MDE. The next section discusses another antecedent, goal congruence, which emphasizes the level of compatibility of an experience with expectations.

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2.6.2 Goal Congruence

Goal congruence, also called motive consistency (Roseman, Spindel, & Jose, 1990) or outcome desirability (Watson & Spence, 2007), is considered an important antecedent in understanding emotions (Ruth, Brunel, & Otnes, 2002; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Goal congruence not only investigates the emotion from a motivational perspective, but also refers to the pursuit of pleasantness. In other words, when individuals' experiences help them accomplish a goal, or the experience lines up with the goals of the person, it draws pleasurable emotions from the person. Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1982) found that consumers seek to achieve self-defined goals through consumptions, which often occur in dining experiences (Shukla, 2010). Therefore, goal congruence is proposed to be an antecedent of MDE. Agency will be discussed as the last proposed antecedent that derives from the cognitive appraisal theory.

2.6.3 Agency

Agency refers to who or what–whether self, others, or an object–contributes to an event (Watson & Spence, 2007). The cognitive appraisal theory holds that agency plays an important role in determining types of emotions, such as the feeling of embarrassment because one spilled his or her own drink versus the feeling of anger because a server spilled a drink. Based on different agencies, the level of intensity and the valence of emotions can be different to generate varying types of emotions. For instance, a service failure caused by the server at a dinner may result in anger, while a service failure caused by the customer may lead to guilt. Therefore, it is important to distinguish the components of agency and how they contribute to emotions. From a memory formation perspective, AB memory is closely connected to individuals' personal experiences

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centered on the working theme (self) and the relationship theme (self and others) (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000). It is proposed that the self and others are two agency factors that contribute most to memory formation. Therefore, agency is proposed to be an important antecedent of MDE, indicating that the source of contributions to the experiences (either self, others, or the object) can influence whether the experiences are memorable. In addition to the three antecedents that predict emotion, two additional factors are proposed as antecedents of MDE, symbolic meanings and novelty.

2.6.4 Symbolic Meanings

Symbolic meanings can be described as messages from signs or symbols in service offerings to deliver a particular perspective and meaning (Lanier & Hampton, 2009; Sidney, 1959). In consumer experiences, symbolic meaning is considered an essential basis that makes a service offering experiential and memorable through the effects of experiential stimuli (Lanier & Hampton, 2009). Consumers seek meaning through service experiences from their own perspectives (Lanier & Hampton, 2009). Alba and Williams (2013) gave examples of consumers' interpretations of consumption experiences. For instance, consumers' evaluations of the taste of food and wine are better when the products are associated with a high-end brand name, and people enjoy a piece of music more when they know the player is a well-known pianist, which may imply a higher level of quality.

As stated by Mak, Lumbers, and Eves (2012) in the context of food consumption at destination settings, symbolic meanings can be perceived as part of the important motivation factors related to tourist food consumption, which include the components of local culture, authentic experience, learning, and status (Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012).

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These are the motivational drivers that make consumers' experiences memorable and unique, indicating that symbolic meanings can be important antecedents that lead to memorable consumption experiences. Symbolic meanings embedded in experiences are also found to have an effect on consumers' actual enjoyment (Lanier & Hampton, 2009). For example, the excitement of a graduation dinner is not only due to the sensations originated from the meal, but from a variety of symbolic meanings such as a sense of accomplishment, an occasion of reunion with friends and family, and a farewell to one's student life.

Possible sources that evoke symbolic meanings are identified as events, occasions, places, or destinations (Williams & Vaske, 2003). Consumers define their own symbolic meanings through these sources to give meaning and purpose to their life (Hosanay, 2010). For example, in restaurant settings, symbolic meanings can augment the values beyond consumption, such as the occasions of graduations, weddings, or anniversaries (Gillespie & Morrison, 2001). In a study of the consumer behaviors on Valentine's Day in the U.S., Close and Zinkhan (2006) found that consumers acquire symbolic meanings through dining experiences since they reflect on a special occasion, which is considered a ritual that occurs periodically and repeatedly. Furthermore, meanings can be obtained from dining experiences, which can portray the importance of celebrations during special occasions (Jones, 2007). Through such sociable and memorable events, consumers can use symbolic meanings in their lives to associate with their MDE (Warde & Martens, 1998). Thus, it is proposed that symbolic meanings are an antecedent of MDE. The last proposed antecedent of MDE, novelty, is discussed in detail next.

2.6.5 Novelty

The novelty of experiences, which can be understood through the unexpectedness, the suddenness, or surprise in comparison with consumers' expectations (Ma et al., 2013; Scherer, 1993), also makes experiences more memorable. The connection between novelty and memory can be identified from two perspectives: emotions and motivations, which are two fundamentals for memory. Novelty can help individuals to arouse emotions, which contributes to memory formation. Novelty, on the other hand, can also be perceived as a motivation factor that drives the consumption of experiences, such as traveling to a new place or visiting a new restaurant (Dunman & Mattila, 2005; Farber & Hall, 2007). It is generally agreed upon that first-time experiences and experiences with novelty are commonly remembered at deeper levels than other experiences, especially between the ages of 10-30 (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000; Rubin, Rahhal, & Poon, 1998). Memories of novel experiences are also retrieved and recalled more frequently at this age range than memories of events occurring outside of that age period. Further, novel experiences can also be recalled more accurately (Kim & Ritchie, 2010). From the above discussion, it is concluded that there is a direct relationship between novelty of an experience and memory, and novelty is therefore proposed to be an antecedent of MDE.

2.6.6 Summary of Antecedents of MDE

In conclusion, the antecedents discussed above represent likely predictors that lead to MDE and are derived from three domains: affective feelings, cognitive evaluations, and novelty (Kim et al., 2012). Specifically, personal importance, goal congruence, and agency were from the domain of affective feelings, which was identified mainly from cognitive appraisal theory. That is to say, these three predictors of emotion

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were also proposed to be the antecedents of MDE. Furthermore, symbolic meanings were retrieved from the cognitive evaluations, which held that the meanings influence the experience and make the experience more memorable. Last, the novelty component denoted the surprises and suddenness that a consumer experienced, which held that experiences with a high level of novelty are more likely to be remembered. These five antecedents were identified to contribute to the "memorable" aspect of the experiences. Having reviewed potential antecedents of MDE, the next section discusses proposed outcomes of MDE.

2.7 Outcomes of MDE

2.7.1 Revisit Intentions and Recommendation Intentions

There has been a growing body of literature linking experiences to outcomes such as behavioral intentions (Barnes et al., 2014); in fact, previous experiences are perceived as strong predictors of a consumer's willingness to make a similar purchase in the future (Kim et al., 2012; Wirtz, Kruger, Scollon, & Diener, 2003). Several studies revealed that experiences positively influenced behavioral intentions (Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2012). In other words, consumers having positive experiences are more likely to revisit a place and recommend it to others (Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009).

Behavioral intentions can be measured through at least two indicators: intentions to revisit a place and intentions to recommend the place to others (Barnes et al., 2014; del Bosque & San Mart ń, 2008; Simpson & Siquaw, 2008). Revisit intentions are consumers' intentions to revisit a place, which could be a destination, a hotel, or a restaurant in hospitality and tourism settings. Recommendation intentions refer to

consumers' willingness to recommend a product or service to friends/relatives, which is also noted as word of mouth (WOM) (Chi & Qu, 2008; Oppermann, 2000). Recommendation intentions are perceived as reliable indicators of consumers' attitudes towards their experiences with products or services (Chi & Qu, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005); therefore, they are desirable sources to measure behavioral intentions.

A number of studies have investigated the relationships between experiences and revisit intentions and between experiences and recommendation intentions (Brakus et al., 2009; Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Manthiou, Lee, Tang, & Chiang, 2014; Morgan & Xu, 2009; Robinson & Clifford, 2012; Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu, 2012). For instance, Brakus et al. (2009) found that brand experience has a direct and positive effect on loyalty (including both revisit and recommendation intentions), indicating that consumers who are stimulated with senses and positive emotions and who engage in mind, body, and social interactions are more likely to seek such stimulation again. Kim and Ritchie (2014) have conducted a study on the relationship between memorable tourism experience factors and tourists' behavioral intentions. Among seven factors examined, five (hedonism, refreshment, novelty, local culture, and involvement) were found as significant predictors determining behavioral intentions and assuring the direct and positive relationship between experiences and behavioral intentions. Among five factors that significantly influenced behavioral intentions, hedonics demonstrated the strongest influence, indicating that tourists who seek hedonic experiences tend to revisit the destination (Kim & Ritchie, 2014).

Manthiou et al. (2014) used the four realms of experiences: education, entertainment, escapism, and esthetics (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) to study tourism

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experiences in the context of a student festival in the state of Iowa. They used the four realms of experiences as four dimensions of tourism experiences, which lead to vividness of memory (level of vividness that an attendee can remember the festival). These vivid memories then influence the festival attendee's loyalty (measured as behavioral intentions in the study). In other words, the results revealed that experiences significantly influence festival attendee's loyalty in the festival setting, and the influence is mediated by the vividness of memory.

Five dimensions of experiences, affect, sensory, social, intellectual, and behavioral (Schmitt, 1999), were applied with some modifications to the tourism context and categorized further into three dimensions: aesthetic, emotional, and operational experiences (Wang et al., 2012). Drawn from the results, aesthetic experiences and operational experiences were found to significantly influence post-trip behavioral intentions, which were measured through the three variables of revisit intentions, recommendation intentions, and alternative intentions (whether or not tourists would like to change their original plan to travel to this particular destination again). The third type of experience, the emotional experience, was found not to be a significant predictor of behavioral intentions (Wang et al., 2012).

Barnes et al. (2014) applied the framework of Brakus et al. (2009) to examine destination brand experiences. Four constructs of experiences—sensory, affect, behavioral, and intellectual—were found to be strong predictors of tourists' intentions to revisit and intentions to recommend for all three destinations in the Scandinavia area, one in Denmark and two in Sweden, and confirm the relationship between consumers' experiences and behavioral intentions (Barnes et al., 2014). Consistent with Wang et al.

(2012), Barnes et al. (2014) also examined the dimensions of experiences separately as independent constructs and did not examine the effect of overall brand experiences on behavioral intentions. However, individual dimensions of experiences are components, and the relationship between each dimension and behavioral intentions may not demonstrate the relationship between overall brand experiences and behavioral intentions. Despite this deficiency, however, Barnes et al. (2014) contributed to the tourism literature by applying the framework of Brakus et al. (2009) from the marketing literature, and confirmed the usefulness and validity of the framework in the tourism context.

In a hospitality context, Wong (2013) examined the relationship between service experiences and outcome constructs of customer satisfaction and loyalty in casino settings. A proposed model included four elements that comprise a service experience: service environment, employee service, service convenience, and hedonic service. Hedonic service was included because it tackles the need of customers to seek pleasure, fun, and excitement, particularly in settings such as casinos, theme parks, and fine dining establishments (Wong, 2013). The service experience, together with relationship equity (measured as relationship marketing, such as loyalty programs), were found to be significant contributors influencing loyalty in casino settings, with the full mediation of customer satisfaction. The strong relationship recognizes the importance of service experiences in shaping customers' satisfaction and customer loyalty which could lead to positive behavioral intention (Wong, 2013).

Similarly, Xu and Chan (2010) empirically evaluated service experiences and their relationship to customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Package tours from

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the U.S. to China were used in this study. Drawn from previous literature, they proposed that service experiences were comprised of four dimensions: recognition and escapism, peace of mind, hedonics, and involvement. The behavioral intentions in this study were measured as recommendation intentions (say positive things about the travel agent, recommend to others, and encourage others to use this travel agent) and revisit intentions (visit the travel agent again). Using a sample of 206 participants, the results found that service experience was a strong predictor of both customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, confirming direct and indirect influences of satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Xu & Chan, 2010).

The relationship between experiences and behavioral intentions can also be reinforced by other related constructs, such as attitudes, subjective norm, and behavioral control (Chang & Lin, 2015). Based on the theory of planned behavior, Chang and Lin (2015) proposed that experience dimensions of education, escapism, esthetics, and entertainment (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) positively influence experiential value and attitudes toward the behavior, which then influence behavioral intentions. Using a sample of 992 surveys, their findings revealed the positive relationships between experience dimensions and experiential value, and the relationship between experiential value and attitude (Chang & Lin, 2015). However, direct relationships between experience dimensions and behavioral intentions were not specifically examined in the study, which was insufficient to provide a whole picture for future researchers.

Most empirical studies in the tourism and hospitality fields examine the relationship between experience and behavioral intentions using survey-based design. For instance, Morgan and Xu (2009) studied students' previous memorable travel experiences

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and the effects on their future behavioral intentions. Their results showed that social interaction was the most shared theme among students when recalling their memorable experiences. Moreover, there was no direct link between the memorable experiences and behavioral intentions, indicating students consider novelty as their primary motivation for traveling, and memorable experiences may not necessarily lead to their revisit intentions (Morgan & Xu, 2009). Other factors that might prohibit students' revisit intentions, such as the distances to memorable destinations, may not be strong enough to drive additional visits (Morgan & Xu, 2009). With these reasons in mind, in their study it was determined that memorable tourism experiences may not necessarily lead to revisit intentions (Morgan & Xu, 2009).

In addition to the above reviewed studies that particularly investigated the relationship between experiences and behavioral intentions, other factors that may reflect specific dimensions of experiences has also been identified to influence behavioral intentions. For example, Chen, Yeh, and Huan (2015) investigated the relationship between a specific type of emotion, nostalgic emotion, and behavioral intentions in the restaurant settings. The study used a nostalgia-themed restaurant based in the Japanese colonial period of Taiwan between 1930 and 1945. They collected 302 useful responses, and the results showed that nostalgic emotions have both direct and indirect effect on behavioral intentions (measured by recommendation intentions and revisit intentions), with mediation of experiential values and the restaurant image.

Besides emotional feelings, social aspects have been examined as important factors influencing behavioral intentions in the restaurant context (Jang, Ro, & Kim, 2015). Four sub-constructs of social aspects were examined: social effects from service

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employees, social effects from other customers, social crowding (level of crowdedness of the restaurant), and the rapport in the restaurant (interactions between customers and employees). They used video clips to manipulate scenarios of a typical restaurant experience with a moderate level of emotions without any service failures and asked respondents to take a survey after the video. The results showed that the social aspects of dining experiences strongly influenced the restaurant image and consequently influenced consumers' behavioral intentions (Jang et al., 2015). This confirms the indirect relationship between social aspects and behavioral intentions. Most literature seems to support the positive and significant relationship between experiences in general and behavioral intentions. Consumers' behavioral intentions, with both revisit intentions and recommendation intentions are proposed to be the outcomes of MDE.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of the previous literature related to experience studies. The background information regarding the context of the study and the foodservice industry was first introduced, and the experience definitions from different contexts were summarized. Based on the review of experience definitions derived from Kim et al. (2012), MDE is defined as consumers' subjective and holistic evaluation of a dining experience that is positively remembered and retrieved retrospectively. With the definition of MDE in mind, the conceptualization of experiences is reviewed in detail on the dining experiences, memorable experiences, and MDE. Last, five factors, personal importance, novelty, goal congruence, symbolic meanings, and agency were reviewed and proposed as antecedents of MDE. Revisit intentions and recommendation intentions were reviewed as outcomes of MDE.

The next chapter will further illustrate the conceptual development of the current study. Specifically, Chapter 3 will demonstrate the conceptualization processes of MDE by presenting a five-dimension framework and the hypotheses development of the proposed antecedents and outcomes. Finally, the overall proposed model will be presented to integrate the MDE and the antecedents and outcomes.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, the proposed antecedents and outcomes of MDE were reviewed. These were personal importance, goal congruence, agency, symbolic meaning, and novelty as antecedents, and revisit intentions and recommendation intentions as outcomes. The current chapter will review in detail the proposed dimensions of MDE and the conceptual development of the proposed framework of MDE. As indicated in Chapter 2, studies on the dimensionality of experiences have not reached any consensus, and there have been limited studies thus far that have examined memorable dining experiences (MDE). The current chapter aims to provide the conceptualization processes to address the research questions mentioned in Chapter 1, which were:

1. How is MDE conceptualized?

2. How should MDE be measured in the context of restaurant settings?

3. What are the antecedents of MDE?

4. To what extent does MDE influence consumers' revisit intentions and recommendation intentions?

Specifically, this chapter discusses the steps taken to: 1) develop a valid and reliable measurement scale of MDE and 2) propose a theoretical framework to examine the

antecedents and outcomes of MDE. This chapter includes the conceptualization of MDE framework, research hypotheses, and proposed model/framework for MDE.

3.2 MDE Conceptualization

Although studies on the concept of MDE are lacking (with Lashley et al., 2005 as a notable exception), an examination of the literature revealed the common themes studied on consumer experiences. These studies include research on the affective components of an experience (Barnes et al. 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Dunman & Mattila 2005; Lee, Dattilo, & Howard 1994; Mannell & Kleiber 1997; Otto & Ritchie 1996; Kim, 2009, 2010) and the sensory aspects of an experience (Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2010; Kim & Ritchie, 2013). In addition, the social components of experience (Kim et al., 2012; Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009) and intellectual components of experience (Barnes et al., 2014; Blackshaw 2003; Brakus et al., 2009; Otto & Ritchie 1996; Kim, 2010) can also be found in the literature. Last, behavioral components are addressed as important elements of an experience (Barnes et al. 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Dunman & Mattila 2005; Lee, Dattilo, & Howard 1994; Mannell & Kleiber 1997; Otto & Ritchie 1996; Kim, 2009, 2010; Fazio 1990; Swinyard 1993; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Oh, et al., 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Kim, 2010). To summarize, these five components of experiences are consistent with Schmitt's (1999) five dimensions of consumer experiences derived from the Strategic Experiential Modules. They are hence proposed components of MDE. To provide a comprehensive review, each dimension of MDE is reviewed and discussed in detail in the following sections.

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3.2.1 Affect

Affect is an umbrella term, which can be further divided into mood and emotion (Alba & Williams, 2013; Brakus et al., 2010; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). Compared to mood, which is a general and mild state of feeling, emotion is more intensive and specific to a subject in response to a person or an environment (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). Emotion refers to "episodes of intense feelings that are associated with a specific reference … such as a person, an object, or an event and instigate specific response behaviors" (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010, p. 515). In the context of memorable experiences, the relationship between emotion and memory is complex. According to Anderson and Shimizu (2007), emotion is a direct indicator that determines the formation of memory. Experiences with strong emotions are easier to recall in more detail and with more vividness. Emotional experience is conceived as a key contributor to the likelihood that an event is remembered, meaning events containing emotional elements are more likely to be remembered than events without emotional input (Kensinger, 2004).

The impact of affect on memory is not symmetric: it has been suggested that the positive affect has more influence on memory than that of negative affect (Alba & Williams, 2013). That is, experiences with positive affect are more easily remembered, recalled, and retrieved. The current study analyzes the concept of MDE with a specific focus on the positive aspects, which could provide a better understanding of the key factors that make the experiences special and memorable.

As indicated, people's memories of previous personal experiences can be classified as AB memories (Brewer 1986; Sujan, Bettman, & Baumgartner, 1993). In the marketing literature, some advertisements use stimuli to arouse individuals' personal

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memories in order to retrieve their AB memory. Through the retrieval of such memories, consumers are more influenced by their feelings and emotions provoked by AB memories when making judgments and are less influenced by cognitive analysis of product information (Sujan, et al., 1993). Therefore, affective components embedded in AB memories are critical to strengthening the memory formulation processes.

During the processes of consumer experiences, various types of emotions and moods are involved in consumer memory formation, such as feelings of happiness, relaxation, nervousness, etc. (Kim, 2010). Brakus et al. (2009) explicitly used the affect dimension to measure brand experiences through consumers' emotions, feelings, and sentiments. In the context of the hotel industry, the interactions between front-line employees and consumers have strong influences on consumers' emotions (Mattila & Enz, 2002; Deng, Yeh, & Sung, 2013), which consequently impact consumers' purchase decisions (Barsky & Nash, 2002). In addition, research also supports the notion that emotion is an important component to formulate customer satisfaction (Bignéet al., 2005; Burns and Neisner, 2006; Deng et al., 2013; Lepp and Gibson, 2008). Further, emotion is also an important source of hedonic value and a strong component in consumers' decision processes for sustainable choices (Malone, McCabe, & Smith, 2014).

Some other studies used emotions or affect as mediators between consumers' service evaluations and their behavioral intentions (Jang & Namkung, 2010). They further contend that emotion should be categorized by valence (i.e., positive and negative emotions). This approach is problematic, since simply classifying emotion as positive or negative cannot fully capture the feelings under different contexts. For example, fear can

be considered as a negative emotion in the case of an unexpected fire alarm during a dinner, while an adequate level of fear while on a roller coaster ride can be regarded as a source for excitement. Therefore, the current study views emotion as a part of the affect dimension, recognizing the key role of emotion in the MDE concept.

3.2.2 Behavioral

The behavioral dimension proposed includes consumers' actions and behavioral experiences (Brakus et al., 2009), which are receiving more attention in hospitality literature (So, King, & Sparks, 2014). A number of previous studies have emphasized the behavioral factors contributing to overall consumer experiences. Xu and Chan (2010) listed consumer involvement as a component to measure service experience in the context of package tours in China. The findings confirmed the significance of involvement, through interactions between tour guides and tourists, in creating service experiences (Xu & Chan, 2010). Otto and Ritchie (1996) treated behavioral and social aspects as one dimension of service experiences. Three variables were used: meeting with other people, being part of the experience process, and having choices (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). Although the behavioral dimension was measured differently in these two studies, its importance is recognized in studying the consumer experience.

In the marketing literature, Brakus et al. (2009) explicitly measured the behavioral dimension in the context of brand experience using physical actions, neglecting mental engagement and involvement. Consumers not only physically move in reaction to various stimuli, but also mentally engage during a service experience. Consumer engagement occurs during the interactions between consumers and service providers in service settings (So et al., 2014). Based on this review, the current study contends that the

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behavioral dimension includes both physical actions and the mental engagement during the experiences. Moreover, the behavioral dimension is an important component of MDE, as it represents the consumers' level of involvement with the overall experiences.

3.2.3 Intellectual

The intellectual component of an experience refers to the cognitive and problem-solving processes aiming to engage customers through thinking and learning (Schmitt, 1999). Consumers' acquired knowledge can lead to a thought-provoking and long lasting memory, and they can gain pleasure from their expertise. For example, consumers who are wine experts enjoy more of the experiences as they immerse themselves by tasting, comparing, and evaluating different types of wines; therefore, they can receive greater value from the experiences than others who are not experts (Alba & Williams, 2013).

In a tourist destination context, tourists can acquire knowledge through learning the local history, experiencing different cultures and lifestyles, and acquiring the language of the destination (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). These learning processes can enhance consumers' feelings and provide a sense of achievement (Arnould & Price, 1993; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). In addition, tourists can make trips more unique and memorable through the learning process while traveling, especially for first-time visitors who perhaps experience higher levels of novelty and refreshment (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). In the full-service dining sector, consumers may have the richest experience when they visit for the first time, and when they may have more unexpected experiences with some degree of novelty (Blichfeldt, Chor, & Ballegaard, 2010). The learning process from those dining experiences can provide consumers with new knowledge and

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distinctive memories, which both enrich and develop the MDE. Thus, the intellectual dimension is proposed to be a component of MDE.

3.2.4 Sensory

The consumers' sensations have been examined as an important dimension of experiences in the literature (Agapito, Valle, Mendes 2014; Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003, 2010; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007; Quan & Wang, 2004; Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011). Previous studies contend that sensations can sustain and enrich consumers' overall experiences (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999). Different from the servicescape which focuses more on the service environment (Bitner, 1992), the sensory dimension emphasizes consumers' subjective evaluation based on five senses, including both the service environment and consumers' feelings. The five senses include visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile, which can be utilized by service providers to add aesthetic value to service products and distinguish themselves from other service providers (Schmitt, 1999). Empirical studies have acknowledged the role of the sensory dimension in engaging consumers and creating value to formulate consumer experiences (Agapito et al., 2014; Brakus, et al., 2009; Gentile et al., 2007). Consumers who engage with a higher level of senses can have experiences that are more memorable, and they are more effectively immersed in the experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

In a restaurant environment, for instance, customers experience the dining transactions through tastes of the food, sounds of the music, and sights of the décor to immerse themselves into the atmosphere and the physical aspects of the restaurant. In hospitality literature, the sensory dimension is described as using specific stimuli to

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measure customers' feelings in restaurant settings. Many of the previous studies have focused on the specific stimuli sources that can be used to influence consumers' perceptions, satisfaction, and consumer experiences, such as the service environment, atmosphere, and products (Alcántara-Alcover, Artacho-Ramírez, & Martínez-Guillamón, 2013; Bitner, 1992; Davis et al., 2008; DiPietro, & Campbell, 2014; DiPietro, & Partlow, 2014; Han et al., 2010; Jang & Namkung, 2009; Morrison & Beverland, 2003; Pullman & Gross, 2004). For instance, food quality is emphasized in the restaurant settings and is measured through factors such as taste, freshness, and food presentation, which utilized the senses of sight, smell, and olfactory (Johns & Tyas, 1996; Jang & Namkung, 2010; Kivela et al., 1999).

Based on the principles of hedonic consumption, it is not one stimuli triggering one type of experience; rather, it is the effect of multiple stimuli together creating a holistic experience (Brakus et al., 2009). As a result of this multi-sensory nature of experiences (Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2004), there is a need to consider the consumers' experiences holistically. To this end, it is deemed appropriate to use a holistic approach to capture consumers' sensory perceptions in measuring MDE. Recent attempts in measuring consumers' sensations utilized this holistic approach. For instance, Brakus et al. (2009) examined the sensory dimension as a component of measuring brand experience by asking consumers' opinions on whether the experience was interesting or appealing instead of using specific stimuli associated with the brands. In sum, consumers formulate MDE through the sensations of the experiences, which are considered as one dimension comprising MDE.

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3.2.5 Social

The social aspect of the consumer experience has been studied in hospitality
literature (Antun, Frash, Costen, & Runyan, 2010; Bufquin, Partlow, & DiPietro, 2015;
Lashley et al., 2005; Line, Runyan, Costen, & Antun, 2012; Pantelidis, 2010; Walter,
Edvardsson, & Ostrom, 2010). The social component of the experience emphasizes an
individuals' social relationships in society, which go beyond the individuals' personal
feelings for relating to a reference group (Schmitt, 1999). From the psychological
perspective, AB memory formation is a process of self-reference and the development of
relationship to others (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000). Consumers' experiences can be
discussed and shared with others, making their recollection more enjoyable and positive
even after the experience ends (Alba & Williams, 2013; Raghunathan & Corfman, 2006).
From the motivational perspective, consumers seek positive relationship with other
people as an element of pursuing individuals' well-being (Seligman, 2012), and
hospitality experiences can provide this opportunity and occasion that fulfill people's
social need. Filep and Pearce (2013) pointed out that hospitality and tourism experiences
are different from other types of product consumption in that they are unique and
unreplaceable. For example, people perhaps can agree to exchange a car for a better one,
but probably do not want to change their hospitality or tourism memories (Filep &
Pearce, 2013). This difference can explain why social is proposed to be an important
dimension of MDE despite the fact that Brakus et al. (2009) did not find any significance
of the social dimension in brand experiences.

Understanding the importance of the social aspect of the experience can start from
the term *homophily*, which describes the notion that individuals tend to communicate and

associate more with individuals who are like themselves (Line, et al., 2012; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001) based on similarities such as race, gender, and age. Through interactions with other people or with groups, individuals create social ties that result in intentions to have future interactions (Line et al., 2012).

Consumers' social connections through homophily could influence one's dining experience and could therefore change the atmosphere at the restaurant setting (Antun et al., 2010; Bufquin et al., 2015). Feelings of pleasure and comfort could be perceived as deriving from the restaurant atmosphere (Antun et al., 2010; Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003), and therefore influence the consumers' experiences. Antun et al. (2010) developed a scale, named DinEX, to incorporate the social domain and measure consumers' expectations in restaurant settings. A 5-dimension scale, including food, service, atmosphere, social, and health, was developed using 2,500 respondents derived from five samples. The social component was emphasized in forming consumers' expectations in restaurant settings (Antun et al., 2010). Along this line, Line et al. (2012) used the DinEX scale to study the social aspects of restaurant atmospheres using a sample of 1,220 restaurant customers. The results revealed that the social aspect is a component of atmosphere and can be treated as a construct consisting of homophily (Line et al., 2012).

In a study of memorable tourism experiences, social interaction was found to be a major aspect of memorable experiences among almost all the respondents (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013). Lashley et al. (2005) also focused on the social perspective to study the most memorable dining experiences among students and found that the most memorable dining experience is filled with social components, especially during consumers' important life events or occasions (Lashley et al., 2005).

Pantelidis (2010) analyzed online restaurant comments to examine meal experiences in full-service restaurants. It is interesting to note that even though food was found to be the most important component in meal experiences, remembering a great shared experience with friends and relatives is the main reason why people dine at upper level restaurants (Pantelidis, 2010). In addition, Walter et al. (2010), studying favorable and unfavorable consumers' service experiences in restaurants, integrated the social dimension and the behavioral dimension into *social interaction* and found that customers are more likely to have favorable experiences when they have positive social interactions, such as dialogue, with restaurant employees (Walter et al., 2010).

Previous studies acknowledge the importance of the social component in dining settings (Line et al., 2012), but not many studies have explicitly investigated the social aspect in experience studies. The social aspect is considered an important factor in restaurant settings because many restaurant customers dine out primarily for social reasons (Antun et al., 2010; Line et al., 2012). Therefore, the current study proposes that the social aspect of experiences is important as a component of MDE.

In conclusion, the strategic experiential modules (Schmitt, 1999) suggests a theoretical framework that consumer experiences are comprised of five dimensions: affect, sensory, social, intellectual, and behavioral. Derived from Schmitt (1999) and the brand experience scale (Brakus et al., 2009), five dimensions are proposed to formulate MDE, namely: affect, sensory, social, intellectual, and behavioral. In other words, as a special type of consumer experience, MDE can be measured through the evaluation of these five dimensions. The following section of the paper further discusses the conceptual structure of MDE.

3.3 Conceptual Framework of MDE

As shown in Figure 3.1, a formative model is proposed that five dimensions of affect, sensory, social, intellectual, and behavioral comprise the mde construct. in order to provide a detailed explanation of the formative model, the following section will introduce the formative model and the differences between the formative model and the reflective model.
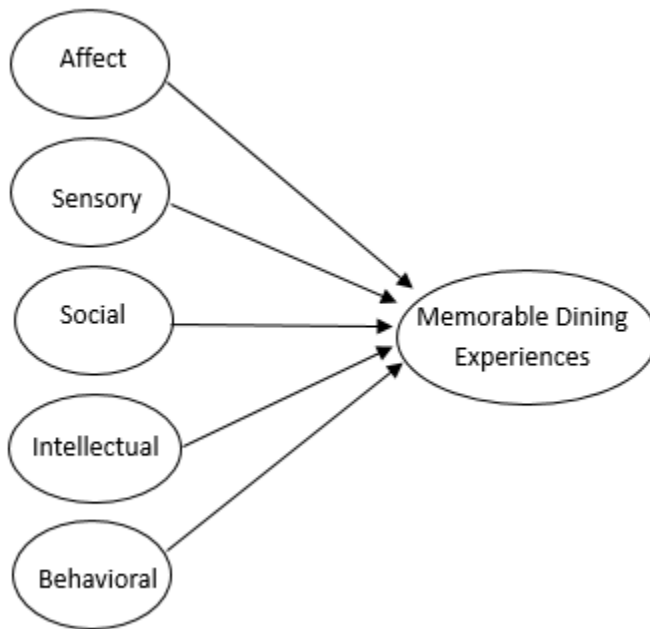
Figure 3.1 Conceptualization of Memorable Dining Experience

3.3.1 Formative vs. Reflective Model

One of the critical issues during the model construction processes is the distinction between reflective and formative measurement models. The reflective models have roots in the social sciences as a traditional measurement model (Hair et al., 2014). Reflective measurement assumes the causal relationship flows from the construct to the indicator (Hair et al., 2014). If the evaluation of the construct changes, all the values of

indicators change at the same time (Edwards & Bagozzi, 2000). As a result, all the indicators are supposed to be highly correlated with each other. Formative measurement, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that indicators cause a construct, which is referred to as formative index (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofter, 2001). The causal relationship of the formative model flows from the indicator to the construct. For example, the construct of life stress can entail job change, death of a loved one, birth of a child, and illness (indicators), but none of these indicators is the result of stress (the construct) (Bollen & Lennox, 1991; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Smith & McCarthy, 1995); therefore, stress is a formative construct. As a result, the two approaches of reflective and formative are substantially and psychometrically different representations of the relationship between constructs and underlying indicators (Bellen & Lennox, 1991). This study conceptualizes the formative measurement model of MDE, indicating that underlying indicators/dimensions collectively formulate MDE.

3.4 Hypothesis Development

As indicated, MDE is considered as a special type of consumer experience, focused on the *memorable* facet of experiences in restaurant settings. Based on the conceptualization of MDE, five dimensions are formative constructs of MDE: affect, sensory, social, intellectual, and behavioral. This conceptualization largely replicates the framework of Schmitt (1999) on brand experiences, but with substantial modifications to restaurant contexts.

Affect is a dimension that can be evaluated through mood and emotion. Emotion is perceived to be a key determinant of memory formation (Kensinger, 2004), indicating that events with emotional components are more likely to be remembered. Emotional

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experiences emphasize consumers' feelings with high intensity. The affect in experiences is a key component of the recall of memory (Anderson & Shimizu, 2007), thus affect can be conceived as an important dimension of MDE.

In addition to consumers' feelings and emotions, consumers also formulate MDE through the sensations of the external environment, namely through the sensory dimension. The sensory dimension refers to the consumers' subjective evaluations using the five senses: visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999). Sensory is an important dimension to understand the nature of consumer experiences in the context of hospitality and tourism (Agapito, Valle, Mendes 2014; Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003, 2010; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007; Quan & Wang, 2004; Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011). The sensory dimension in restaurant settings is usually reflected through lights, sounds, or food tastes, which are important components in forming MDE.

The social dimension goes beyond individual sensations and feelings to describe the reference groups of customers. Although Brakus et al. (2009) reported that the social dimension was not a significant factor in predicting brand experiences, the current study proposes that the social dimension is an important component in MDE. Further, the intellectual dimension, generated through consumers' learning processes, involves thinking and problem-solving. The current study proposes that the knowledge gained from dining experiences could make them more memorable. Consistent with previous literature by Schmitt (1999) and Brakus et al. (2009), the intellectual component is proposed as an important dimension of MDE. Additionally, the behavioral dimension includes consumers' physical involvement and mental engagement, which are important

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components of experiences (Schmitt, 1999). This study holds that consumers with high levels of engagement (mental and physical) are more likely to remember their dining experiences, thus the behavioral component is proposed to be a dimension of MDE.

Hypothesis 1: Memorable Dining Experiences (MDE) are explained through five dimensions: affect, sensory, social, intellectual, and behavioral.

Based on the above discussion, the MDE concept consists of five dimensions of affect, sensory, social, intellectual, and behavioral. Based on the theories reviewed in Chapter 2, five indicators are identified as antecedents of MDE: personal importance, novelty, goal congruence, agency, and symbolic meanings. This is based on the assumption that affect is an important component in shaping MDE, which can greatly influence how MDE is remembered. In other words, MDE can be effectively predicted by capturing the affect component.

Specifically, the personal importance of an experience denotes the level of relevance to an individual (Ma et al., 2013). In the context of MDE, personal importance refers to the personal relevance of a dining experience to a consumer. The more a consumer relates the dining experience, the more likely that the experience is remembered; therefore, the personal importance of a dining experience could help predict MDE. Similarly, goal congruence refers to whether the experience is consistent with an individual's values or ideals (Ma et al., 2013), which are considered the strongest predictors of emotions (Ruth, Brunel, & Otnes, 2002; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). In MDE, goal congruence is achieved when a consumer perceives the expected goals are met and the dining experience helps in meeting personal goals. By influencing the emotions, goal congruence is proposed to successfully capture consumers' MDE.

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Agency influences emotions and refers to who is responsible for the experiential outcome: self, others, or objects (Ma et al., 2013). According to the cognitive appraisal theory which considers agency as an antecedent of emotions, individuals perceive great differences based on who contributes to the consequence. For instance, an older consumer may consider a birthday dinner as memorable and unique when the restaurant staff remember her birthday and sing a song for her, but perceive a dinner as sweet and enjoyable when friends knew of the occasion in advance and sing a song during the dinner. The two experiences may result in different types of emotions and thus influence how a consumer remembers an experience. As a result, agency is proposed to be an antecedent that influences MDE.

Moreover, the arousal of emotions also depends on whether or not an individual expected the experiences. Novelty refers to the surprise, the unexpectedness, or the suddenness in contrast with a consumer's expectations (Ma et al., 2013; Scherer, 1993). Novelty directly relates to individuals' emotions and motivations, which are essentials for memory formation. Due to the unexpectedness, novelty can evoke consumers' emotions, contributing to the memory formation process. From a motivational perspective, consumers may perceive novelty as a key driver of a dining experience (Dunman & Mattila, 2005; Farber & Hall, 2007). Consumers may seek novelty as an important purpose of the dining experience and try something they have not experienced before. This motivation, noted as novelty seeking, is also a crucial component of the memory formation process. Hence, novelty influences consumers' memory through emotions and motivations, and experiences with novelty are more likely to be remembered. Novelty, therefore, is proposed to be an antecedent of MDE.

Consumers seek various meanings from tourism and hospitality experiences, such as utilitarian, hedonic, social, or consumption meanings (Hosaney & Gilbert, 2010). The difference between general experience and memorable experience is that memorable experience is a special type of experience, which by definition could be remembered for a long period with high vividness and details. On the other hand, how to make a particular experience memorable lies in the symbolic meanings added to the experience. Previous research has found that symbolic meaning plays an important role in shaping MDE (Lashley et al., 2005). Hence, in addition to the four antecedents related to emotions and motivations, symbolic meanings are also proposed to be an antecedent of MDE.

Hypothesis 2a: Personal importance of the dining occasion positively influences MDE.

Hypothesis 2b: Goal congruence of the dining occasion positively influences MDE.

Hypothesis 2c: Agency positively influences MDE.

Hypothesis 2d: Symbolic meaning positively influences MDE.

Hypothesis 2e: Novelty positively influences MDE.

As indicated in the literature review in Chapter 2, experiences are strong predictors of consumers' behavioral intentions, measurable by revisit intentions and recommendation intentions. Most literature supports the positive relationship between experiences and behavioral intentions (Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Manthiou, Lee, Tang, & Chiang, 2014; Robinson & Clifford, 2012; Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu, 2012). This is based on the notion that brand experience could generate pleasurable outcomes and influence consumers' decision-making processes (Barnes et al.,

2014; Brakus et al., 2009). However, no consensus has been reached on whether there are any relationship between experiences and behavioral intentions (Morgan & Xu, 2009; Zauberman et al., 2009). Still, most research holds that experiences positively influence behavioral intentions, including revisit intentions and recommendation intentions.

Hypothesis 3a: MDE positively influence consumers' revisit intentions.

Hypothesis 3b: MDE positively influence consumers' recommendation intentions.

3.5 Proposed Model

After reviewing hospitality, tourism, psychology, and consumer behavior literature, an integrated conceptual model is proposed, as shown in Figure 3.2. Specifically, this study attempts to address the memorable features of the consumer dining experience to investigate what makes an experience meaningful, unique, and memorable for consumers and to propose the antecedents and outcomes of MDE. Derived from Schmitt's (1999) conceptual model of consumer experiences, the current study proposes that MDE consists of five dimensions: affect sensory, social, intellectual, and behavioral. Based on the Cognitive Appraisal Theory on the antecedents of emotions, four indicators are proposed to be antecedents of MDE: personal importance, novelty, goal congruence, and agency. Furthermore, based on Lashley et al. (2005), symbolic meanings are additionally proposed to be the fifth antecedent that leads to MDE. Last, revisit intention and recommendation intention are proposed outcomes of MDE.
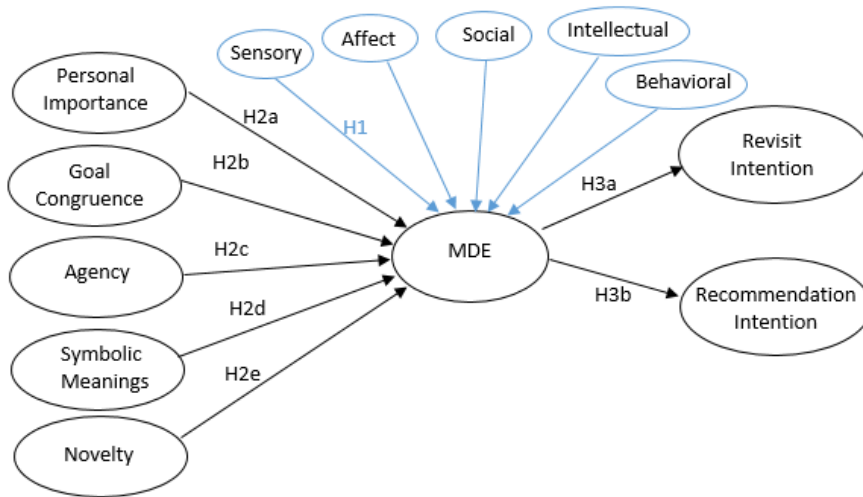
Figure 3.2 Proposed Model

3.6 Chapter Summary

The current chapter presented the conceptualization processes of the MDE and the integrated overall model. Specifically, four research questions were first proposed: how the MDE is conceptualized, how MDE is measured, what are the antecedents of MDE, and what are the outcomes of MDE. With these questions in mind, MDE was proposed to consist of five dimensions of affect, sensory, social, intellectual, and behavioral, primarily based on Schmitt (1999). Each of the dimensions was discussed in detail. The conceptual framework of MDE was proposed as a second-order formative model. Following that, the proposed research hypotheses were presented to address the current research questions. Last, the proposed overall model was demonstrated to examine the underlying relationships between MDE and their antecedents and outcomes. The proceeding chapter will further illustrate the methodology of this study, its research design, and specific scale development procedures.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Having presented the conceptualizations and the framework of the current study

in Chapter 3, this chapter further explains the research methods adopted in this study. The

research design is introduced in two phases: formative index construction and hypotheses

testing. The formative index construction procedures are illustrated in four steps: content

specification, indicator specification, indicator collinearity, and external validity. The

hypothesis testing focuses on the relationships of the overall model between antecedents

and MDE, and between MDE and outcomes.

4.2 Research Design

To address the research questions in Chapter 1, this study employed a mixed-

method approach involving both qualitative and quantitative research methods to

investigate the nature of MDE and its theoretical relationships with other constructs.

Specifically, this study adopted a sequential exploratory approach of mixed methods,

which aimed to develop and test a new instrument (Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson,

2003). This investigation started by conducting a qualitative phase of in-depth interviews,

followed by a quantitative phase of online survey. Figure 4.1 shows a flow chart outlining

the research processes. The two methods (qualitative and quantitative) were integrated

with the qualitative results used to understand the MDE concept and to generate part of the quantitative questionnaire items.
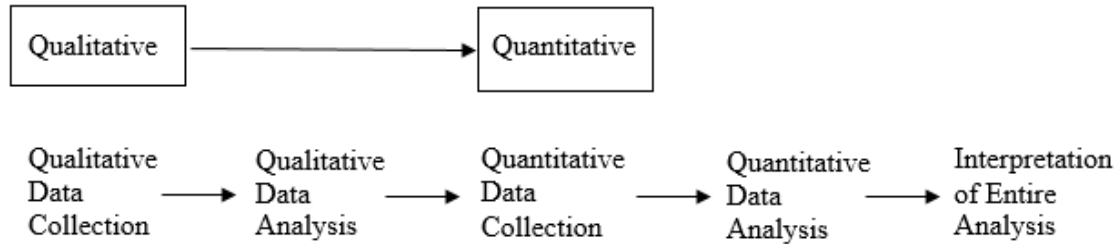

Figure 4.1 Sequential Exploratory Design (Adapted from Creswell et al., 2003, p.225)

Guided by this sequential exploratory design, the current study involved two separate phases of research method processes, formative index construction and model testing, for the data collection and data analysis. As shown in Figure 4.1, in-depth qualitative interviews were first conducted in order to understand the themes of MDE, then used to generate measurement items in the scale development process. With the indicators summarized from the literature review, an initial indicator pool was generated, which then went through the processes of index construction. The second stage of the research was the online panel, which was to test the proposed structure model. The specific steps and procedures are presented in Figure 4.2.

4.2.1 Phase 1: Formative Index Development

*4.2.1.1 In-depth Interviews*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted as the qualitative research component of the formative index development. This method encourages the interviewer to clearly define the questions, but at the same time allows the interviewee to add information and viewpoints that are not necessarily from the questions (Mayo, 2014). Semi-structured

interviews fit the needs of research topics at early stages where key issues are not yet

covered or explored by the researchers (Mayo, 2014).

Phase 1: Formative Index Construction

Formative Index Development

- Content specification
  - Literature Review
  - In-depth Interviews
- Indicators Specification
  - Indicator Pool Generation, Formative Index Construction and Revision
  - Expert Panel, Online Pilot Study
- Indicator Collinearity
  - VIF check on each indicator
- External Validity
  - Model Validation across Samples

Phase 2: Model Testing

Online Survey

- Use the data Sample 1
- Data analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)
- Hypothesis and Model Testing
- Report results on the structural model, hypothesis tests, etc.

Figure 4.2 Research Method Processes Flow Chart (Partially adapted from Diamantopoulos & Winklhofter, 2001)

Qualitative study methods are necessary to explore the detailed nature of

memorable experiences in the dining context to understand the special and memorable

features of experiences. In addition, semi-structured interviews are deemed appropriate

by previous literature studying memorable experiences (e.g. Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Corff,

2014), given the fact that memories can be retrieved vividly and richly through in-depth

discussion during interviews. In other words, with the progression of the interview, interviewers can use techniques to probe the fundamental reasons and factors that make the dining experience memorable.

4.2.1.2 Interview Instrument Design

The laddering technique (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988; Reynolds & Phillips, 2008; Jüttner, Schaffner, Windler, & Maklan, 2013) was used in the in-depth interview process to explore the major themes of MDE. Laddering technique, an interviewing approach to extract fundamental meanings from interviewees' perceptions and views, is built on the premise that respondents' experiences are initiated to fulfill consumers' higher-level outcomes to meet their fundamental values or goals (Jüttner et al., 2013; Tybout & Hauser, 1981). Specifically, in the current context, consumers' recall regarding their past dining experiences was described with the five dimensions of MDE. Using laddering technique, MDE were described through a range of stimuli, which then triggered cognitive or emotional responses (Berry et al., 2002; Jüttner et al., 2013) and, at the same time, extracted values or goals from the experiences.

The interview questions were partially adapted from experience literature (Brakus et al., 2009; Kim, 2009; Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Wijaya, 2013), and several probing questions were added to evoke conversations and to elicit respondents' detailed recall of their experiences. Questions were organized from concrete constructs, such as sensory, to abstract constructs, such as behavioral. This can be described as a "ladder of abstraction," with more abstract concepts on top and more concrete descriptions on the bottom (Jüttner et al., 2013, p. 743). After answering questions from each dimension, respondents were presented with a series of "why" questions, which sought to uncover the reasons behind

MDE. In sum, the in-depth interview was designed using the laddering technique to facilitate the construction of a formative index. The first step of the interviews is recruiting the respondents.

4.2.1.3 Recruiting Process

At each step of the recruiting process, individual respondents were asked open-ended questions about their MDE during the past six months, such as what made the experience special, the components of their MDE, and with whom they had the meal. The specific interview guideline is listed in Appendix (A). The specific recruiting criteria used to determine potential interview candidates are as follows:

1. American consumers currently living in the U.S. for 3 months or more;

2. Adults aged 18 or above;

3. Those having dined in a full-service restaurant in the past 6 months at least twice.

Before conducting each of the interviews, the above questions were asked to ensure the respondents' eligibility to participate in the interviews. Two participants in the interview process were screened out due to lack of dining experiences in full-service restaurants. Upon completion of each interview, the respondents received a $10 Starbucks gift card for participation. To understand consumers' MDE from diverse demographics, the researcher deliberately chose the respondents of various backgrounds with different dining experiences, and their background information was confirmed before the interview. This type of interviewing method, or purposive sampling, applies the researchers' own judgments and decisions based on their research interests and backgrounds of interviewees (Tongco, 2007). It is worthy to mention that qualitative

studies do not aim to understand a particular viewpoint to represent a certain population; the results or findings of the interviews are by no means generalizable to a larger population. Instead, conducting interviews collects information beyond the current literature and provides a deeper understanding of the MDE concept. With this in mind, the pilot study was first conducted to ensure the effective logistics and procedures of the interviews.

4.2.1.4 Interview Pilot Study

Two interviews were piloted to test the clarity and effectiveness of the interview questions. The interviews were digitally recorded and summarized. Upon completion of each interview, the respondents were asked for their feedback on the interview questions. Significant revisions were made based on both the interview results and the respondents' feedback on the interviews. Then, more probing questions were added to facilitate respondents' recall of their MDE; for example, the questions "When did this experience happen?" and "Was that the first time you have been to this restaurant?" were added to the sensory construct. The behavioral dimension questions were revised to better describe respondents' level of participation in their dining experiences. Based on respondents' feedback, the question "How was your reaction to the experience? Were you involved in the experience, for example, feel engaged in the experience, or were there any movements, or did you receive special attention from others" was changed into "Tell me about how involved or concentrated you were in the experience, for example, focusing on particular things in the experience, or your physical participation, or gaining special attention from others?". Finally, the questions about the memorable component were designed using different expressions, such as "things stand out," "unforgettable" and

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"memorable factors," to encourage respondents to answer from different perspectives about why these experiences were memorable. Additionally, the revised interview guidelines were finalized for formal interviews. Following the interviews, the data analysis was used in designing the survey instrument.

4.2.1.5 Survey Instrument Design

An online panel survey, a widely employed method in recent marketing and tourism studies (Li & Petrick, 2008), was applied in the current study. In addition to their recognized benefits, such as low costs and higher speed, online panel surveys could also track respondents' response time to ensure the quality of responses by eliminating answers completed in an extremely short time. Furthermore, online panel surveys can automatically screen invalid responses, such as incomplete responses and answers not following instructions (such as multiple checking when the requirement is to select only one). Amazon Mechanical Turk (also referred as Mturk) was employed to conduct this online panel survey to ensure the distribution population and desired coverage of the location, which is designed to be within the United States in the current study. The survey on Mturk only displays to qualified workers (Mturk members who fill out surveys) based on the setup of the research (i.e., the researcher sets the respondents should be adults who currently living in U.S.). Other screening questions were imbedded in the questionnaire, and the survey would direct to the end immediately after the respondent failed in the screening questions.

One of the disadvantages of the online survey is the non-probability sample, since an email list is not likely to represent the general population (Sue & Ritter, 2012). However, the non-probability sample is considered as useful and sufficient for

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exploratory research or as part of the approach (e.g. mixed method approach) (Li, Pan, Zhang, & Smith, 2009; Sue & Ritter, 2012). With all consideration, the online panel survey method can meet the purpose of the current study to examine customers' MDE by reaching out to a large audience and receiving the responses in a relatively short time.

4.2.2 Phase 2: Hypotheses Testing

After the construction of the formative index, the hypotheses' testing was conducted within the structural model to investigate the underlying relationships among constructs, such as antecedents and outcomes. This part of the data analysis used the data generated from the online panel. Specifically, the data collected from MTurk was imported into SPSS and analyzed using descriptive analysis and PLS-SEM. After the data cleaning process, the measurement model and structural model were assessed to address each of the research hypotheses. Detailed analysis and results are presented and discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3 Overview of Formative Index Construction Procedures

The purpose of using the formative index in this study was to gain a deeper understanding of what makes an experience memorable from a customer perspective and to create and validate a scale to measure the construct of MDE. As stated, previous studies did not empirically address the topic of MDE; therefore, no existing index is available to evaluate this concept. This study followed the procedures recommended by Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001) and Hair et al. (2014), which were deemed appropriate for exploratory research with the purpose of identifying the key drivers of MDE.

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Figure 4.3 lists the four major steps needed in the formative index procedures: construct specification, indicator specification, indicator collinearity, and external validity (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; Hair et al., 2014). Construct identification (Step 1) involves defining the key constructs of the scale, the measurement model of the constructs (e.g. formative or reflective), and the dimensionality of the constructs.

Content Specification
- Specify the domain of the constructs and define the constructs
- Determine the formative items/reflective indicators
- Determine the dimensionality of the construct

Indicator Specification
- Identify theoretical assumptions
- Generate an initial indicator pool and index purification
- Check the face validity through expert panel and layperson
- Pilot test, survey revision, final online panel data collection

Indicator Collinearity
- Check the multi-collinearity issues using VIF

External Validity
- Assess convergent validity of formative measurement models
- Check the criterion validity of nomological aspects
- Assess significance and relevance of indicators and finalize the index
- Replicate the model across different samples

Figure 4.3 Steps in Formative Index Construction (Summarized from Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; and Hair et al., 2014)

With clear definitions of the constructs, an initial indicator pool was generated from the literature review (Step 2). Then, in-depth interviews were conducted to facilitate

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the development of the indicator pool, and more indicators were added to the initial pool. As indicated previously, the understanding of the MDE concept is still in early stage, there is a need to use the interviews in order to gain a better understanding of the concept. This study employed the sequential exploratory approach, whereby the qualitative study results intended to help generate the quantitative research instrument. Therefore, in-depth interviews were conducted at the second step of the index construction. After the indicator pool was revised, an expert panel was consulted to gather the opinions from seven professors in the fields of tourism and hospitality research to ensure face validity. After addressing feedback from the expert panel, two individuals outside the hospitality and tourism fields were asked to review the survey as a non-expert validity check to ensure that the general consumers could understand the survey. Before the final data collection, an online pilot study was conducted to check the clarity of the questions and the initial results of the measurement model of the formative index. Based on the results of the pilot study, final revisions were made, and then the main study was conducted on MTurk. Step 3 involves data analysis of the online data, starting with the collinearity check using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The final step dealt with convergent validity, a criterion validity check to ensure the quality of the measurement model, and then the significance and relevance check at the indicator level to decide the final indicators to be retained in the index. After the generation of the formative index, validation procedures were examined to see whether the formative index holds across sub-samples.

4.3.1 Step 1: Content Specification

Defining the construct and content domain was the first step in formative index

construction to decide what should be included and excluded from the scope of the

construct (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). As indicated in Chapter 3, MDE was

conceptualized as a formative construct, for which content specification is especially

Table 4.1 Components of Memorable Dining Experiences

Constructs Measured	Definitions	References
Sensory	Aesthetic and sensory Bodily experience based on visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile experiences.	(Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2010; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Schmitt, 1999)
Affective	Affect is a state of feeling, which includes instances of moods and emotions. Feelings, sentiments, and emotions.	(Barnes et al. 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Dunman & Mattila 2005; Kim et al., 2010; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Lee, Dattilo, & Howard 1994; Mannell & Kleiber 1997; Otto & Ritchie 1996; Schmitt,1999)
Behavioral	Physical actions and behaviors, lifestyle, mental engagement and involvement.	(Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Bloch & Richins, 1983; Blodgett & Granbois, 1992; Celsi & Olson, 1988; Kim et al., 2010; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Oh, et al.,2007; Park & Hastak 1994; Sanbomatsu & Fazio 1990; Schmitt,1999; Swinyard, 1993; Pine & Gilmore, 1998)
Intellectual	Educational, thought, stimulation of curiosity and problem solving.	(Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Blackshaw, 2003; Kim et al., 2010; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Schmitt,1999)
Social	Social interactions with family, friends, significant others.	(Kim et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2012; Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Schmitt,1999)

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important. This is because, by definition, a formative construct is determined by the indicators, and content specification is inseparably related to indicator specification (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). The definitional scope of the construct is critical for formative models to ensure that all causal indicators are included, because exclusion of any indicator will result in exclusion of the construct itself (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). In the current study, the domain of MDE was specified as sensory, affective, behavioral, social, and intellectual. Studies of each dimension were summarized and presented in Table 4.1.

4.3.2 Step 2: Indicator Specification

After description and definition of the domain of MDE, a pool of indicators is required for indicator specification and expected to cover the entire scope of the defined dimensions (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). Initially, 83 indicators were generated and presented in Appendix G (p. 198). After further scrutiny, 17 items were deleted for redundancy, not representing the dimension accurately, or not relating highly to MDE. Therefore, 66 items measuring the MDE were kept for the next step of the expert panel.

4.3.2.1 Expert Panel

One of the critical issues for the formative index is content validity check of the indicators included in the indicator pool, which is used as a measuring indicator for an appropriate sample of the theoretical domain to represent the targeted construct (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Peter, 1981; Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). As mentioned in Section 4.3, an expert panel was conducted in April 2015 to ensure the face validity of the MDE index. Seven experts were invited to evaluate the index: two from

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foodservice, three specializing in tourism experience, and two from general tourism. They were asked to rate the 66 initial items from five dimensions based on two criteria: the representativeness of the MDE scale and the representativeness of the dimensions. On a scale of 1-5, with 1= not representative at all and 5= highly representative, if an indicator was rated 4 or 5 on the representativeness of MDE, the expert was then asked to evaluate which dimension the indicator represents. Their responses were then collected and analyzed and the means of each item's ratings were calculated (the average scores of seven experts on each item). Items rated 3 (neutral) or less, either on representativeness of the MDE index or representativeness of the dimension, were removed from the scale. Based on the expert panel comments and ratings, items were further condensed to a total of 46.

4.3.2.2 Pilot Study

The pilot study was launched using a convenient sample of undergraduate students from a large southeastern university in April 2015. The survey was launched using the online survey platform Qualtrics. The students were invited to participate through emails, and they were asked to complete the survey for extra credit in multiple classes. Screening questions were first asked to ensure respondents' eligibility to participate, such as respondents' age, whether they have had positive full-service dining experiences in the past 6 months, and whether they have participated in dining research in the past 6 months.

Among 331 attempts collected in the pilot study, 83 responses were screened out due to disqualifying answers to screening questions, and four were screened out due to incomplete answers. Finally, 224 surveys were kept for the pilot study with a response

rate of 72%, considered sufficient in this stage of the pilot study (Clark & Watson, 1995). According to Netemeyer et al. (2003), a sample from a population of interest is recommended to reflect a large population, but a convenient sample targeting college students is acceptable for pilot testing. After the pilot testing where the initial structure of the formative index was generated, the collinearity issues were checked on each indicator in the next section.

4.3.3 Step 3: Indicator Collinearity

Collinearity refers to high correlations between two indicators (Hair et al., 2014). For formative indicators, collinearity is undesirable based on the theoretical assumption that indicators have relatively low correlations and represent different aspects of a content domain (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). In other words, issues of collinearity indicate content specification of indicators was not achieved, and the indicators might explain the same aspects of the domain (Andreev et al., 2009). One way to check collinearity is to assess the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with a VIF value of five or higher indicating a problem of collinearity. To resolve this problem, the indicator with high VIF can be removed from the model. After checking indicator collinearity, the external validity is examined as the last step of formative index construction.

4.3.4 Step 4: External Validity

The fourth step of formative index construction is external validity, which refers to the convergent validity, and the criterion validity of the formative measurement model (Hair et al., 2014). The convergent validity refers to the fact that indicators under the same latent construct theoretically relate to each other, and empirical support shows that the indicators relate to each other (Andreev et al., 2009; Trochim, 2006). Different from

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the commonly used evaluation procedures of reflective measurement models, there is no consensus on the ways to assess convergent validity for formative models (Andreev, Heart, Maoz, & Pliskin, 2009). Evidence of convergent validity for formative indicators is generated based on whether the inter-indicator and indicator-construct have significant correlations (Andreev et al., 2009; Loch et al., 2003). Theoretically, formative indicators may have positive or negative correlations, or even no correlations at all (Bollen, 1989; Bollen & Lennox, 1991), which may cause problems for inter-indicator examinations. As a result of this controversy, most studies for formative indicators choose to eliminate convergent validity checks from their validity procedures (Andreev et al., 2009).

Despite the debate, there are several ways to check convergent validity for formative indicators. One approach is the indicator-construct correlation significance examination (path coefficient significance), considering that the inter-indicator correlation examination may have some problems (Hair et al., 2014). Another approach is called redundancy analysis, which is achieved through evaluating the level of correlations between formative measures of a construct and reflective measures of the same construct, with high correlations (R^2 value ≥ 0.64) of the two types of measures indicating a good level of convergent validity (Chin, 1998). However, in practice, this approach faces some challenges given that each construct needs reflective multi-item measures, which will inevitably extend the length of the survey (Hair et al., 2014). In short, there are some issues in measuring convergent validity for formative measurement models. However, there are several approaches available to find empirical support of convergent validity for formative indicators, such as redundancy analysis and the indicator-construct correlation significance examination.

The final issue for external validity is criterion validity, which aims to examine how well the index measures other related constructs, such as antecedents and outcomes (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). This step is especially important how the newly developed formative index functions with predictive power (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001).

In summary, the four steps above illustrated the procedures needed for constructing a formative index in the measurement model. As stated by MacCallum and Browne (1993, p.533), "in many cases, indicators could be viewed as causing rather than being caused by the latent variable measured by the indicators." Therefore, the proposed formative model structure was deemed appropriate to address the nature of the MDE concept.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology of the current study and illustrated the research design for formative index construction and hypotheses testing. Specifically, the current study used a mixed method approach, which is to use qualitative in-depth interview results to generate part of the quantitative survey instrument. Then, the four steps of the formative index processes were exhibited in detail using the pilot study results to develop the MDE formative index. The first step was content specification, which was to define each dimension and the content domain. The second step involved indicator specification, which was to identify the indicators under each dimension to measure the concept of MDE. The third step was indicator collinearity, which was to check to determine whether the indicators were highly correlated and free from collinearity issues. The last step was external validity, which was checked after the data

was collected and analyzed using convergent validity and criterion validity for formative models. Upon completion of all of these four steps, the formative model was developed. The next chapter will present the study findings of the in-depth interview and the online panel data. The formative index will also be finalized in the next chapter and the data analyses will be conducted to test the hypotheses of the overall model.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and findings of the formative index development
and hypotheses testing for the current study. The in-depth interviews inform the
preparation of the survey instrument, which is part of index development processes.
Using online panel results, data screening procedures are conducted as the first step of a
preliminary analysis. After the presentation of descriptive statistics, the measurement
model is assessed to examine the overall structure of the MDE concept. Finally, the
structural model is examined to test the proposed hypotheses.

5.2 Interview Results

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were applied to help define the conceptual
domain of the MDE construct. Moreover, as stated previously, because little is known
about the concept of MDE, a qualitative study method is necessary to explore the nature
of memorable experiences. In addition, semi-structured interviews are deemed
appropriate for research at an early stage to capture what constitutes MDE in addition to
definitions suggested by literature.

To gain a deeper understanding of the MDE concept, the interviews were
conducted to collect rich information. The specific recruiting criteria used to determine
potential interview candidates are as follows:

1. American consumers currently living in the U.S. for 3 months or more;

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2. Adults aged 18 or above;

3. Having dined in a full-service restaurant in the past 6 months, at least twice.

The respondents were selected with various backgrounds based on ethnicity, age, occupation, and dining frequency in full service settings. The interviews were continued until the content gradually reached saturation when not much information was added to the existing results. After 15 interviews, interviewees' responses started to repeat, and less new information was collected. Finally, 20 interviews were conducted and analyzed. Respondents were told to recall one positive, memorable dining experience in the past 6 months and answer the questions accordingly. Specific interview guidelines are listed in Appendix B. The lengths of interviews range from 15-30 minutes. The digital recordings of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher for further content analysis.

As shown in Table 5.1, there were 11 females and 9 males. Most respondents were Caucasian (15 or 75%), followed by African American (3 or 15%), and Asian (2 or 10%). The respondents' ages ranged from 19-68, with the median age of 41. Among these 20 respondents, 5 of them were frequent diners (8-12 times/month), 11 were moderate diners (6 of them were 2-3 times/month, and 5 of them were 4-5 times/month), and 4 non-frequent diners (once per month), all in full-service restaurant settings. The respondents discussed their MDE based on the five dimensions. The following sections summarize the main results of the interviews and important components that constitute MDE.

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Table 5.1 In-Depth Interview Respondent Information

Participant Number	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation	Age	Dine out Frequency
1	Male	Caucasian	Semi-retired	68	Once/Month
2	Male	Caucasian	Retired	67	Once/Month
3	Female	Caucasian	Non-Profit Executive	65	8-12/Month
4	Male	Caucasian	Retired	55	2-3/Month
5	Male	Caucasian	Graduate Student	34	2-3/Month
6	Female	Caucasian	Undergraduate Student	19	2-3/Month
7	Male	Caucasian	Engineer	31	8-12/Month
8	Female	Caucasian	College Administrator	49	4-5/Month
9	Male	Caucasian	Social Media strategist	24	4-5/Month
10	Male	Caucasian	Engineer	46	8-12/Month
11	Female	Caucasian	Administrative Assistant	63	2-3/Month
12	Female	Caucasian	Internship Director	60	8-12/Month
13	Female	Caucasian	Undergraduate Student	22	4-5/Month
14	Female	Caucasian	Graduate Student	27	4-5/Month
15	Female	African American	Social Worker	25	2-3/Month
16	Male	African American	Music Teacher	26	Once/Month
17	Male	Asian	Software Engineer	29	4-5/month
18	Female	Asian	Computer Science	52	Once/Month
19	Female	White	Administrative Coordinator	35	8-12/Month
20	Female	African American	Professional Counselor	50	2-3/Month

5.2.1 Affect

The affect dimension represents a state of feeling that includes instances of moods and emotions (Barnes et al. 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Dunman & Mattila 2005; Kim et al., 2010; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Lee, Dattilo, & Howard 1994; Mannell & Kleiber 1997; Otto & Ritchie 1996; Schmitt, 1999). Respondents generally used mild expressions to describe their feelings regarding MDE, which were enjoyable, happy, relaxed, satisfied,

comfortable, and excited, respectively. The most frequent adjective was "enjoyable," which represents customers' contentment with the experience. The second most frequent word was "happy," which also indicates consumers' positive feelings. Following were the words "relaxed" and "satisfied," which went a step further to describe consumers' motivations related to their MDE. For example, one respondent said, "*Very enjoyable, relaxing, that's the experience you want for your holiday*" (Respondent #4). Further, the words "comfortable" and "excited" represent the consumers' judgments of their cognitive and emotional responses to their experiences. That is to say, respondents used positive words to express their feelings related to their MDE, and they considered their MDE to be enjoyable and happy.

5.2.2 Behavioral

The behavioral dimension describes the actions and behaviors, which include both mental and physical engagement and involvement (Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Bloch & Richins, 1983; Blodgett & Granbois, 1992; Celsi & Olson, 1988; Kim et al., 2010; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Oh, et al.,2007; Park & Hastak 1994; Sanbomatsu & Fazio 1990; Schmitt, 1999; Swinyard, 1993; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The respondents described their behavioral involvement and participation mainly from the topics of the food, the company (conversation with them), the wait staff, and the restaurant environment. Specifically, half of the respondents mentioned that they focused more on the conversations with their company and enjoyed the time with them. One-third of the respondents paid attention to the service and wait staff, for example, "*the attention to detail, service, you know, someone being friendly but not too friendly*" (Respondent # 19). Several respondents also mentioned that they received special attention from the wait

staff or managers, which could be a factor that they remember. For example, one respondent said the manager came to the table during the dining experience and said happy birthday to her husband, which was special and unforgettable.

Other people in the restaurants also caught some of the customers' attention. A number of respondents exhibited curiosity with what others ordered, what others were doing, and whether they enjoyed their experiences. It is interesting to note that restaurant customers influence each other by paying attention to other customers around them. Unlike Pine and Gilmore's (1998) framework on experience, where entertainment is an important factor comprising experience, only one respondent mentioned that there was entertainment during MDE: there was a singer in the restaurant, and she came over to the table and sang while sitting with them. No other respondents reported that there was any entertainment component in MDE, indicating that entertainment could enhance and add to the overall experience, but do not necessarily comprise MDE. In sum, respondents had both mental and physical involvement in their MDE. They were paying attention to their surroundings in their dining experiences, such as observing service staff and other guests. They also engaged their experiences by participating in activities such as talking to their friends and receiving special attention from others.

5.2.3 Intellectual

About half of the respondents indicated that they learned something new from their MDE. For the most part, they have learned something new about the food they had at the dining experience, such as the way the food was cooked, where the ingredients were from. Different from the food factor in the sensory dimension, the food component in the intellectual dimension focuses on the background knowledge about food. The

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intellectual dimension denotes the thoughts and knowledge stimulated from curiosity and problem solving (Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Blackshaw, 2003; Kim et al., 2010; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Schmitt, 1999). For example, one respondent said, "*Sometimes we try different dishes, and learn about different recipes*" (Respondent # 20). Further, two respondents said they learned something new from the people with them, which was a good opportunity to share information and thoughts with friends at the dining experience. Another two respondents said that they learned the internal ambiance of the restaurant, which was different from what they expected and surpassed their expectations. Finally, if MDE occurred in destination settings, the respondents could also experience some local culture that may add to their knowledge. For example, two respondents recalled their MDE in Charleston, South Carolina, and one mentioned "*quality of what Charleston can offer to people as tourists*", and the other, "I *learned something about what Charleston can offer is food*" (Respondent #14). In sum, respondents learned from their MDE and remembered what they learned during the experiences. The knowledge gained from the MDE adds to the experience to make it more memorable; therefore, the intellectual dimension is an important component to make dining experiences more memorable.

5.2.4 Sensory

The sensory dimension denotes the bodily experience based on visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile components (Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2010; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Schmitt, 1999). The first theme to emerge during analysis of the sensory dimension was the environment of the restaurant, which incorporated ambiance, lights, decorations, and restaurant styles. However, it is worth

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noting that most respondents cannot recall whether there was any music in the restaurants, and a few did recall the music but cannot remember which genre of music. One respondent mentioned, "*They don't play loud music, which I appreciate... The reason is if the music is loud, I cannot hear what others are saying and I do not know if they can hear what I am saying...*" (Respondent #2). It can be summarized that even though the music can enhance a restaurant atmosphere, many customers who come to full-service restaurants prefer a relatively quiet place to dine.

All the respondents could clearly recall the food they ordered during their dining experiences. The respondents recalled a wide range of food they ordered, which represented their personal tastes, but almost all of them commented on the food in a very positive way such as "*very good,*" or "*fantastic*". This implies that food quality is an important factor for MDE. Most of the respondents expressed that food was the most important factor in their MDE.

Nearly all of the respondents stated that the service was good during their MDE, and also very important to them; for example, "*I think actually the service... the waitress... she was really important in that experience*" (Respondent #6). Service can be a deciding factor for customers' decision to visit: "*we had just one we go to because we like the service. But I think it just has a lot to do with the manager and the person cooking*" (Respondent #11). In sum, the atmosphere, the food, and the service were found to be the major aspects of the sensory dimension of MDE. Based on the sensory dimension, respondents expressed their feelings about the MDE, namely the affect dimension, in the following section.

5.2.5 Social

Respondents not only learned from the restaurant staff, but also from the individuals who dined with them. The next section discusses the social component of the MDE. The social dimension refers to social interactions with friends, family, and significant others (Kim et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2012; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Schmitt, 1999). All the respondents in the interviews recalled that they had their MDE with someone else, and none of them went alone. In addition, nearly all the respondents expressed that the social dimension was a very important part of their MDE. The interviewees generally perceived that the company with them enhanced the overall experience. The MDE did not critically change the relationships, but it made the dining experience more meaningful and memorable. For example, "*I think it was fine by myself, but having other people there you can talk to about the food, talk to about the environment, about anything in general about the restaurant definitely helps you improve the feeling about the restaurant. Dialogue always helps*" (Respondent # 09).

Several respondents ranked the social dimension as the most important factor of their MDE: "*I go there to be with people first of all, second of all for the food, and probably, the decoration, the atmosphere, is probably third in terms of importance*" (Respondent #02). Dining experience has its advantage as an ideal occasion to network with others; for instance, "*I think sharing food together helps build that friendship. There is something special about having a food related experience is different than any other because you can talk, you can laugh, you can joke, enjoy the food and enjoy their company. It definitely helped build that friendship*" (Respondent # 09). Being with someone and experiencing something together is another perspective that builds the

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relationship. "*It is something we remember (respondent and his girlfriend) together, because it is a memory shared. It is something that she wanted to do and we did. She said I want to do this. I said okay we will do that, because you want to do it*" (Respondent #7). People choose to have dinner as a way to socialize and get together with others, and this is embedded in their way of life: "*In every culture,…always look back from history, see people experience stuff over food, a common way everybody eats…That's a way we spend time together and enjoy each other's company*" (Respondent # 15). In sum, the respondents perceived the social dimension as an important component that heightened the MDE and made it more memorable. In addition to social interactions, respondents engaged in a variety of activities during the MDE, such as observing other guests and listening to live bands. The next section describes the findings of the behavioral dimension of MDE in the in-depth interviews.

To summarize the findings from the interviews, the word frequency was conducted using NVivo 10 and the results are presented in Table 5.2. The themes were ordered based on the word frequency results as well as the researcher's judgments. The findings were organized based on the following five dimensions of MDE.

Table 5.2 Themes of MDE from Five Dimensions

Summarized Themes	Examples
Affect	
1. Enjoyable	"I would say…peaceful...enjoyable…, but feel like I was…enjoying the culture of Charleston."
2. Happy	"I was surprised… and it was a really happy experience … It was a lot to take in."
3. Relaxing	"Very enjoyable, relaxing, that's the experience you want for your holiday."
4. Satisfied	"It was fun, it was laid back, it was surprisingly impressed. And satisfied, surpassed my expectations."
5. Comfortable	"Happy, satiated, satisfactory, and comfortable. I appreciated it."

Summarized Themes	Examples
6. Excited	"That was very stimulated in a positive way… It was very positive stimulation." "It was excited to say hi. It was good because we can catch up, talk with each other, and have good food."
Sensory	
1. Food	"It's fabulous. I like it. Grouper is a gulf Mexican fish. It is very sweet... And I love fried grouper. I grew up in Alabama and I ate groupers all the time."
2. Service	"I think actually the service… the waitress… she was really really important in that experience."
3. Atmosphere	"I like the atmosphere- quiet and casual atmosphere. But when you are on a holiday, then that's fine, isn't it?"
Social	
1. Talk	"It's an opportunity where we sit around and talk, just give each other one on one attention to sit in our busy days we are with other people."
1. Place	"It is a good place to catch up with everybody and eat." "…Feel like a place you can call home, because you can relax at your home…"
2. Get-together	"It's better when you with, you know, with the partner, or friends, you know, we all enjoyed together, we chat and talk about things."
Intellectual	
1. Learn about the food	"Sometimes we try different dishes, and learn about different receipts."
1. Learn about the wine	"I'm a wine drinker, …, so definitely next time if I have been there, I would like to take a look and order a glass of wine."
2. Learn from company	"We just focused on friends get together". "May be something about the company, not the restaurant".
Behavioral	
1. Food	"I definitely focused on the food, and the waitress, I like to cook by myself, I know how to cook well, so I think being mostly seen, they took pride in their food which was quite cool."
2. Conversation	"I was involved in the conversation with my husband…"
3. Waiter/waitress	"I probably watch the waitresses and waiters more."
4. Other people/friends	"It's interesting to see other people in the restaurant, to see what they are doing."

5.3 Pilot Study Results

Initial tests on the pilot data were conducted to assess measurement model indicator significance and relevance using Smart PLS 3. The measurement model was evaluated using the pilot data. First, the convergent validity was assessed on each dimension using the reflective indicators of overall experience. As indicated, convergent validity is to test whether the formative construct is correlated with a related reflective construct to show the degree of convergence in order that indicators representing the construct are closely related (Hair et al., 2014). In assessing the convergent validity, the formative model requires the global construct that summarizes each of the dimension in order to construct the formative index. This study used the global construct of overall experience (including four indicators) to evaluate the correlations between each dimension and the global construct (Hair et al., 2014). Specifically, the overall experiences include four indicators: "Overall, I had a memorable dining experience, "I speak to others of this dining experiences often", "I often recall and recollect this dining experience", and "I can still remember this dining experience vividly". The results showed the correlations between each dimensions and the overall experiences all met the satisfactory level of above 0.64. After this, the indicator collinearity was checked and the VIF for all indicators were below 5, suggesting that collinearity was not an issue (Hair et al., 2014).

The judgment for keeping or deleting indicators follows the criteria from Hair et al. (2014) and is exhibited in Figure 5.1 below. According to this flow chart, outer weights of each of the indicators was first checked to evaluate the relative contribution among indicators. Outer weight is referred as "the results of a multiple regression of a

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construct on its set of indicators. Weights are the primary criterion to assess each indicator's relative importance in a formative measurement model" (Hair et al., 2014, p.92).
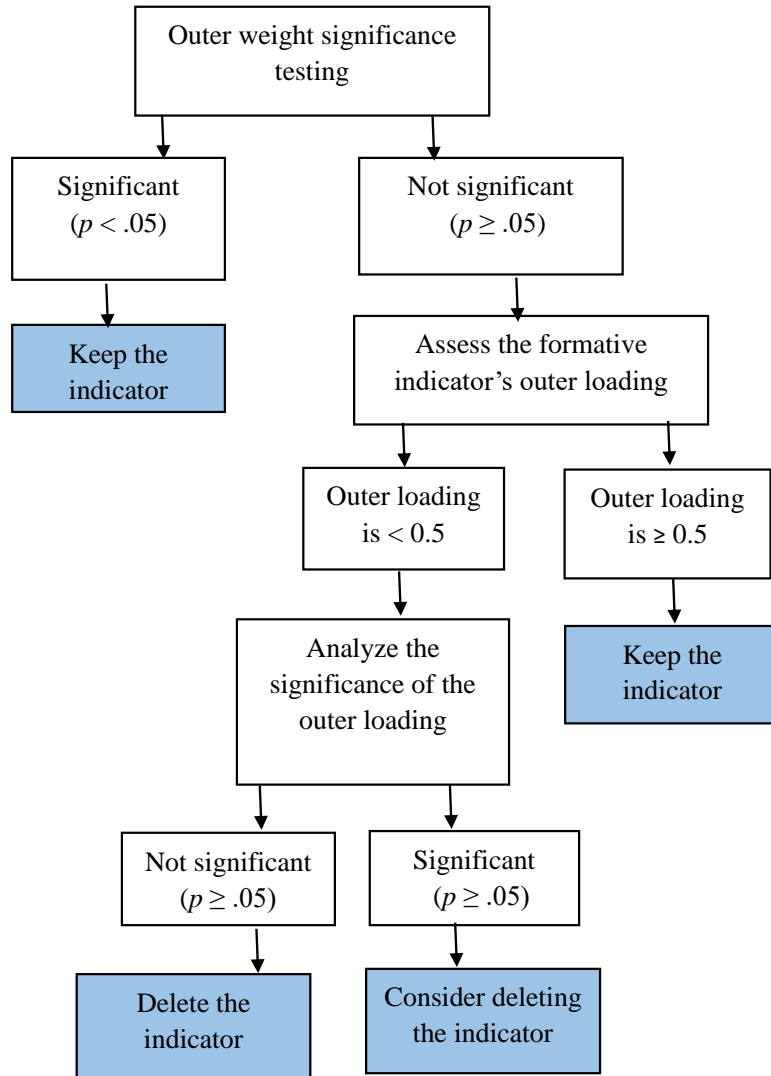
Figure 5.1 Evaluation Process for Keeping or Deleting Formative Indicators. (Adapted from Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt, 2014, p.131)

In other words, if the outer weight of an indicator is significant, this indicator is relatively significant comparing to other indicators in the model, and the indicator should be retained. For the remaining indicators that did not receive the significant level of outer weight, it does not mean that these indicators are not important in contributing to the construct, but relatively less important than other indicators (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, outer loading was assessed to see an indicator's absolute contribution to the construct (Hair et al., 2014). In other words, indicators are assessed independently to see whether they significantly contribute to the construct without considering other indicators. If the outer loading is equal to or greater than 0.5, then an indicator is considered to have absolutely contributed (or is absolutely important) to the construct (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, even though an indicator does not have significant outer weight but has significant outer loading, it should be retained for this reason.

Based on the criteria discussed, the measurement model of MDE results of the pilot study suggested that two indicators should be deleted: "the dining experience was not action oriented", and "this dining experience did not make me think." There were five more items that may be removed, and after further scrutiny, two indicators were removed from the index: "I felt revitalized in the dining experience", and "I enjoyed the activities."

Other modifications included the wordings of the questions, such as "the food was enjoyable" was revised into a more specific item "I liked the smell of the food". Finally, 42 indicators were kept for the collinearity and validity check of the formative index construction, and the formative model structure is shown in Figure 5.2 below. A combination of 42 indicators from five dimensions jointly constitutes the concept of MDE, which is structured as a second-order measurement model.
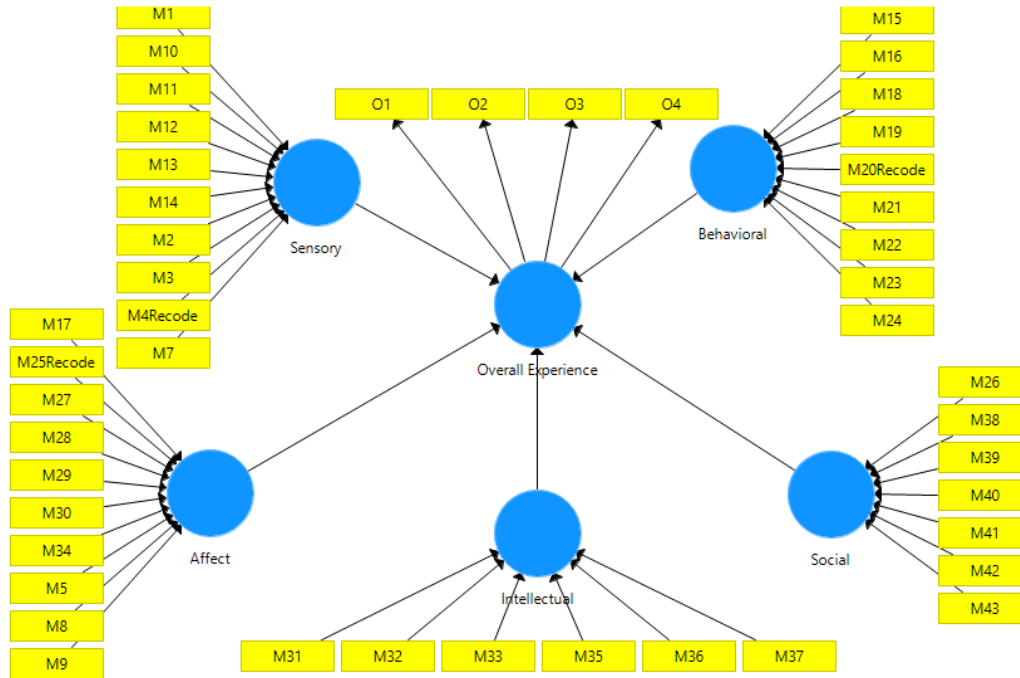
Figure 5.2 Measurement Model Structure of MDE

Moreover, three negatively worded indicators were recoded reversely: "the restaurant did not appeal to my senses,", "there were not many activities in the dining experience", and "I did not have strong emotions for this dining experience". After finalizing the 42 indicators as the formative index for the pilot study, the final online panel data collection was conducted to evaluate the formative index and test the hypotheses. Individual indicators shown in Figure 5.2 are listed in Table 5.4.

5.4 Online Panel Data Collection

5.4.1 Sample Size

To conduct the PLS-SEM, it is suggested a sample size of 10 times the largest number of formative indicators used to measure a single construct (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995; Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, the minimum sample size to conduct PLS-SEM was 420 for measurement and testing of the structural model for the current

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study. G*power analysis was applied to assess a more specific model setup using multiple regression modeling. The results suggested that the priori sample size required to conduct PLS-SEM for 42-item measurement model needs 530 observations or responses to achieve a statistical power of 95% for detecting R^2 values of at least 0.1 (i.e. with a 1% probability of error).

5.4.2 Data Collection Procedures

The final data was collected using an online panel on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) in July 2015. MTurk is an online platform for conducting research with the advantage of collecting high-quality data rapidly and inexpensively (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Compared with traditional online survey methods, MTurk has a relatively more diverse demographic population and is at least as reliable as the data collected from traditional methods, such as surveys via emails (Buhrmester et al., 2011).

The target population of the online survey was American adult consumers aged 18 or older who have had dining out experiences in the past six months in restaurant settings. Specifically, the dining experience settings required were in full-service restaurants, which include both casual dining restaurants and fine dining restaurants. Moreover, full-service restaurants refer to those at a price level of $12 per person or above (Line et al., 2012). Consistent with the pilot study, screening questions were first asked to ensure respondents' eligibility to participate, such as whether they have had positive full-service dining experiences in the past 6 months, and whether they have participated in dining research in the past 6 months. Since MTurk requires the respondents to be adult workers (MTurk members who fill in the surveys), no screening question on age was needed.

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Among 987 attempts, two respondents were screened out due to living in the U.S. for less than three months, 50 only had one dining experience and 9 did not have any dining experiences in the past six months, two did not have any positive dining experiences, and 27 had taken part in previous research relating to dining experiences. An attention check question was added at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure that respondents were cautious to complete the survey: "the dining experience was fabulous—this is a testing question, please choose 'Strongly Disagree'". This attention check was conducted relatively early in the survey is to ensure the respondents were paying attention, and also ensure certain level of fairness that they will not be screene out toward the end of the survey. Thirty-three respondents who checked other answers were screened out for not paying attention to the question description. Among all the attempts, 46 respondents did not complete the survey, and the dropout rate was 4.6% including the disqualified responses. Upon examination of each of the responses, a further 17 responses were removed with three checking all the questions with same answers, and 14 due to having International IP addresses. A final 801 valid responses were kept for statistical analysis, and each of the qualified respondents received $1 as compensation.

5.4.3 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were assessed using SPSS version 20. The demographic profile is presented in Table 5.1. The percentage of male and female respondents were approximately equal, with males 50.6% (405) and females 49.4% (396). The respondents' median age was 32, and most of the respondents fell into the age range between 18 and 47, with 18-27 (29.2%, 234), 28-37 (40.9%, 328), and 38-47 (15.4%, 123). Regarding marital status, 44.4% (356) of the respondents were single and 37.3%

Table 5.3 Demographic Profile of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	405	50.6
	Female	396	49.4
Age	18-27	234	29.2
	28-37	328	40.9
	38-47	123	15.4
	48-57	77	9.6
	58-67	34	4.2
	68 or above	5	0.6
Marital Status	Single/Never Married	356	44.4
	Married	299	37.3
	Separated/Divorced/Widowed	52	6.5
	Unmarried Partners	94	11.7
Education	Below high school	1	0.1
	High school	184	23
	Two year college degree	160	20
	Four year college degree	344	42.9
	Master's degree	94	11.7
	Doctoral degree/Professional degree (JD, etc.)	18	2.2
Ethnicity	Caucasian/White	605	75.5
	African American/Black	58	7.2
	Hispanic/Latino	44	5.5
	Asian	79	9.9
	Native American/Pacific Islander	6	0.7
	Others	9	1.1
Income	$19,999 and below	96	12
	$20,000-$39,999	216	27
	$40,000-$69,999	256	32
	$70,000-$99,999	130	16.2
	$100,000-$129,999	66	8.2
	$130,000 and above	37	4.6
Dining Frequencies	Less than once a month	109	13.6
	Once a month	197	24.6
	2-3 Times a month	289	36.1
	Once a week	147	18.4
	2-3 Times a week	54	6.7
	Daily	5	.6

(299) were married. Nearly half of the respondents completed a four-year college degree,

representing 42.9% (344) of the total respondents, followed by high school degree (23%,

184), and two year college degree (20%, 160). Only one (0.1%) respondent indicated

having an education level below high school, and about 11.7% (94) had master degree

and 2.2% (18) with Ph.D. or professional degree. Approximately three fourths of the respondents were Caucasian (75.5%, 655), followed by Asian (9.9%, 79), African American (7.2%, 58), and Hispanic (5.5%, 44). In terms of annual household income, about 12% (96) of the respondents reported that their annual household income in the year 2014 was $19,999 or below, 32% (256) of the respondents had an income between $40,000 and $69,999, and 27% (216) had their household income between $20,000 and $49,999. Additionally, 16.2% (130) of the respondents had household income between $70,000 and $99,999. Only 8.2% (66) of the respondents had household income between $100,000 and $129,000, and 4.6% (37) made $130,000 or more. Lastly, most of the respondents (36.1%, 289) reported that they dine out in full-service restaurants 2-3 times a week, followed by 24.6% (197) of the respondents who dine out once a month, indicating fairly active dining behaviors among the respondents. On the recall of the time that the MDE happened, most of the respondents (68.4%, 548) mentioned that the MDE happened within one month of completing the survey, representing the general effective time period on respondents' memory.

Descriptive statistics were assessed on the MDE indicators, including five dimensions of MDE, and the four indicators of overall experiences. Table 5.4 exhibited means and standard deviations of 42 indicators of each dimension and 4 indicators of

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Table 5.4 Descriptive Statistics of MDE Indicators

	Indicators	M	Std.	TV	VIF
	Sensory				
1	The restaurant's inside surroundings were pleasing to my eye.	5.83	.96	.33	3.03
2	The restaurant's interior architectural design was attractive.	5.70	1.04	.33	3.03
3	The restaurant's interior decorations and artifacts were attractive.	5.70	1.06	.31	3.27
4	The restaurant did not appeal to my senses.	5.79	1.17	.62	1.61
5	I liked the restaurant atmosphere.	5.96	.97	.32	3.16
6	I found this restaurant interesting to my senses.	5.77	1.05	.39	2.56
7	The restaurant made a strong impression on me.	5.59	1.15	.55	1.82
8	The presentation of the food was appealing to my senses.	6.07	1.0	.47	2.13
9	The taste of the food was appealing to my senses.	6.33	.92	.42	2.38
10	The smell of the food was appealing to my senses.	6.32	.84	.45	2.21
	Behavioral				
11	I ordered the food of my own choice in the dining experience, not from someone else's choice or staff's recommendation.	6.25	1.17	.86	1.16
12	I visited a restaurant that I really wanted to go.	5.95	1.15	.81	1.23
13	I was interested in the main activities of this dining experience, such as eating, socializing, and observing, etc.	5.98	.98	.70	1.42
14	I engaged in observing other guests and surroundings in the dining experience.	5.05	1.41	.87	1.15
15	There were not many activities in the dining experience.	4.35	1.51	.92	1.09
16	I focused on the conversation with my friends during the dining experience.	5.85	1.09	.82	1.23
17	I engaged in the entertaining activities in the dining experience, such as live band, live shows, singing, etc.	2.84	1.78	.86	1.16
18	I engaged in a conversation with the restaurant staff.	4.71	1.58	.73	1.37
19	I shared information about my dining experience with others after the experience occurred.	5.03	1.67	.73	1.37
	Affect				
20	I did not have strong emotions for this dining experience.	5.17	1.35	.85	1.18
21	The dining experience made me feel relaxed.	5.81	1.17	.50	1.99
22	The dining experience aroused positive feelings.	5.93	1.08	.25	4.04
23	The dining experience made me feel happy.	5.97	1.14	.22	4.46
24	The dining experience made me feel satisfied.	6.11	1.09	.31	3.26
25	I felt refreshed during the dining experience.	5.64	1.24	.38	2.64
26	It was pleasant just being there in the dining experience.	5.98	1.05	.31	3.24
27	The dining experience was fun.	5.91	1.09	.30	3.39
28	I felt cheerful during the dining experience.	5.92	1.06	.35	2.89

	Indicators	M	Std.	TV	VIF
29	I felt excited during the dining experience.	5.27	1.32	.51	1.96
	Intellectual				
30	I engaged in extensive thinking when I was in this dining experience.	3.92	1.65	.69	1.44
31	This dining experience stimulated my curiosity to know new things.	4.42	1.69	.49	2.03
32	The server explained menu item ingredients to me.	4.46	1.96	.40	2.49
33	The server explained how menu items were prepared or cooked.	4.34	1.96	.41	2.45
34	The dining experience gave me insight into a new culture.	3.59	1.87	.57	1.76
35	The dining experience made me more knowledgeable.	4.02	1.74	.42	2.38
	Social				
36	I met new friends during this dining experience.	2.42	1.59	.90	1.11
37	The restaurant felt like a "home away from home".	4.04	1.72	.47	2.14
38	I was made to feel like family at the restaurant.	4.61	1.60	.41	2.43
39	The restaurant staff took care of me.	5.69	1.25	.56	1.80
40	The conversations with friends or restaurant staff during the dining experience enhanced my experience.	5.61	1.32	.50	2.00
41	The dining experience promoted my connection with others.	5.30	1.42	.43	2.33
42	The dining experience made me think about my relationship with others.	4.61	1.68	.60	1.66
	Overall Experience				
43	Overall, I had a memorable dining experience.	6.08	1.01	0.61	1.64
44	I speak to others of this dining experience often.	4.35	1.64	0.54	1.86
45	I often recall and recollect this dining experience.	4.87	1.51	0.45	2.25
46	I can still remember this dining experience vividly.	5.93	1.09	0.54	1.84

Note. M= Means, Std. = Standard Deviations, TV= Tolerance Value, Overall data,

N=801

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overall experiences. The VIF on each of the indicators was listed to check the collinearity issues. All the VIF values were under 4, indicating that there was no collinearity issues detected.

5.5 Online Panel Results

5.5.1 Data Screening

Before analyzing the final data using SEM, data screening was performed as the first step of multivariate analysis to identify missing data, and examine the normality of the data. As indicated in Chapter 4, the final data was collected using MTurk's online panels, which was designed to proceed only when each of the questions was answered. As a forced response option was used in the survey, there was no missing data in the responses for the MDE items as well as items of antecedents and outcomes of MDE. Three negatively worded variables were recoded: "the restaurant did not appeal to my senses", "there were not many activities in the dining experience.", and "I did not have strong emotions for this dining experience". Furthermore, the distribution of each of the variables was checked using kurtosis, skewness statistics, and Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, and the results showed that most of the variables were not normally distributed, with skewness and kurtosis more than -1 to +1. More importantly, the current study used a formative model, which needs to be addressed in the analytical methods. With this information in mind, to analyze the research data, the current study employed Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is discussed in the next section.

5.5.2 PLS-SEM

PLS-SEM is a statistical research technique that has been receiving growing attention in marketing research (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009; Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012), which aims to maximize the explained variance of the target dependent variable (Hair et al., 2014). With the prediction objective, the PLS-SEM estimates the path coefficients to examine the path relationships in the model and minimize the errors or residual variance of the target dependent variable (Hair et al., 2014).

PLS-SEM is a variance based SEM, which is different from covariance based-SEM (CB-SEM) in several ways. First, PLS-SEM primarily focuses on identifying the most important factors that predict the target construct, whereas CB-SEM emphasizes more on theory-based model testing and model confirmation (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). Second, as mentioned previously, PLS-SEM can easily handle formative constructs, but CB-SEM requires construct specification modification and it is complicated to apply formative models. One pre-requisite for CB-SEM to analyze formative models is that the constructs should obtain both formative and reflective indicators (Hair et al., 2014), which limits the types of constructs that can be assessed using CB-SEM.

There are four key features to consider when deciding to apply PLS-SEM: the data, model properties, the PLS-SEM algorithm, and model evaluation (Hair et al., 2014, p.15). First, PLS-SEM has fewer restrictions on the data but can generate more robust results than that of CB-SEM (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). For example, the sample size requirement for PLS-SEM is generally smaller than that of CB-SEM (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995). Additionally, PLS-SEM can achieve a higher level of power with a

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small sample size and increase the level of accuracy and consistency with large sample sizes than CB-SEM (Hair et al., 2014). One of the important issues is that PLS-SEM does not assume normal distribution of the data while CB-SEM generally assumes normal distribution of the data (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011a; Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). This advantage helps the data analysis since most data of social science are not normally distributed (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000; Lowry & Gaskin, 2014).

Second, from a model characteristics perspective, PLS-SEM is flexible in handling formative or reflective models, and deals with models with great complexity. In relation to the current study, PLS can specifically deals with the formative models. This is evident from previous studies that adopted the PLS-SEM to construct formative index (Arnett, Laverie, & Meiers, 2003.; Fornell, Johnson., Anderson, Cha, & Bryant, 1996). Third, the constructs in the model are estimated as a linear combination of their indicators, which aims to minimize the unexplained variance and maximize the R^2 values (Hair et al., 2011a; Hair et al., 2014). Last, one of the limitations of PLS-SEM is that it does not contain global goodness-of-fit criterion (indicating that some of the goodness of fit measures are not appropriate in PLS-SEM) (Hair et al., 2014), which restricts the application of theory testing and theory confirmation. Therefore, the discussions above presented the reasons on the use of PLS-SEM in structural models and its comparison with the traditional method of Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM).

In sum, although there are several differences between two approaches, the results for PLS-SEM and CB-SEM actually do not differ much (Hair et al., 2014). PLS-SEM is considered to be an ideal alternative to CB-SEM when the research focuses more on exploration than confirmation and little knowledge has been gained on the measurement

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of constructs (Gefen et al., 2000; Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). Therefore, the current study employed PLS-SEM to incorporate the formative index construction and hypotheses testing. The following sections discuss the descriptive statistics and the results of the measurement model using PLS-SEM.

5.5.3 Measurement Model

The measurement model (Hair et al., 2014) was conducted using Smart PLS 3 to evaluate the relationships between the MDE indicators and the constructs (five dimensions). As presented in Chapter 3, the MDE construct was proposed to be a second-order formative model, meaning that the indicators within each first-order factor jointly form their respective dimension. The confirmatory tetrad analysis (CTA) for PLS-SEM test was applied to determine whether the data support the assumption of reflective model structure (Gudergan, Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2008). That is to say, if the CTA test rejects the null hypothesis, then the assumption of reflective structure is violated and the formative structure of the model should be utilized.

The CTA test was conducted on both the first-order level and the second-order level of MDE using the overall data. As shown in Appendix F, the results suggested that, on both the first-order level and the second-order level, the parameter value of zero was excluded from the Bonferroni-adjusted confidence interval in the null hypothesis. In particular, the first-order level CTA (two-tailed, 2,000 bootstrap samples) was first tested.

The results suggested that at least one of these tetrads under each dimension of MDE had the adjusted confidence interval excluding the parameter value of zero. Then the same procedure of CTA was repeated on the second-order level. The second-order CTA test results (the number of bootstrap samples is 500) again rejected the null

hypothesis and provided evidence to support a formative model. These results indicated that the original reflective structure assumption was violated in favor of the alternative formative model (Gudergan et al., 2008). Therefore, based on the results, a formative measurement model was evident on both the indicator-dimension, and dimension-construct levels, indicating a formative-formative model structure of the MDE construct.

After confirming the formative structure, measurement model procedures were initiated to finalize the MDE formative index. Based on the guidelines of the PLS-SEM, three steps were followed in evaluating the formative measurement models: convergent validity, collinearity among indicators, and significance and relevance of outer weights (Hair et al., 2014). Each criterion is further examined in the next section.

To ensure that the MDE framework is consistent across different samples, one of the approaches is to split the sample into two halves and separately test the measurement model (Shah & Goldstein, 2006). Such an approach is widely adopted in scale development studies (e.g., Kim et al., 2012; So et al., 2014) and therefore considered appropriate for this study. The data collected was randomly split in half, with the first half (Split Sample 1) 401 responses, and the second half (Split Sample 2) 400 responses. The measurement model of MDE was conducted using Split Sample 1, and MDE model validation across different samples was conducted using Split Sample 2 through replicating of the MDE measurement model generated from Split Sample 1. After confirming the MDE framework, the final structural model was then conducted using the overall sample (N=801). The following section described the measurement model procedures using Split Sample 1.

5.5.3.1 Convergent Validity

In assessing the convergent validity of the formative measurement model, the current study adopted the redundancy test (Chin, 1998) to show that the latent constructs are theoretically and empirically related. Redundancy test holds the premise that the model is included in the formative structure and also in the reflective structure in order to achieve the level of redundancy (Chin, 1998). The second-order MDE was used as a formatively measured construct. Using the Split Sample 1, the results showed that the path coefficients between MDE and overall experiences were 0.813, which met the minimum requirement of 0.8 in the redundancy analysis (Chin, 1998). Thus, the convergent validity was ensured on the measurement model of MDE.

5.5.3.2 Collinearity Issues Check

The second step of the formative measurement model deals with the collinearity check to ensure that indicators are not highly correlated. It is suggested that an indicator has collinearity problems if the tolerance value is lower than 0.2 or Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value higher than 5 (Hair et al., 2014). As mentioned previously and shown in Table 5.2, the VIF of all the indicators of the Overall Sample (N=801) was conducted and all the values were below 5, which were considered appropriate. To ensure convergent validity of the measurement model of Split Sample 1, the collinearity check was again conducted using SPSS version 20 on the Split Sample 1, and the results showed that all the indicators' tolerance values were higher than 0.2, and VIF were lower than 5. Therefore, no collinearity issue was identified for the measurement model.

5.5.3.3 Significance and Relevance of the Formative Indicators

The last step of the measurement model denotes the significance and relevance check of the formative indicators. Based on the criteria of Hair et al. (2014), all the indicators having significant outer weights should be retained, and indicators not having significant outer weights but having significant outer loadings should be retained as well. The second-order measurement model results showed that 19 out of 42 indicators had significant outer weights ($p<0.05$). This means that the 19 indicators having significant outer weights contribute to MDE comparing to the outer weights of the remaining 23 indicators. For the remaining 23 indicators which did not have significant outer weights, all of them had significant outer loadings ($p<0.05$), with 18 indicators having outer loadings 0.5 or above. This means that these 18 indicators have absolute importance in contributing to MDE. For the remaining 5 indicators, it is suggested that those indicators having outer loading lower than 0.5 but still at significant level ($p<0.05$) can be removed (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, on the basis of the results, 37 indicators were retained for the final formative index. The 5 indicators removed from the MDE framework were from the behavioral dimension and social dimension. Specifically, four indicators were from behavioral dimension: "I ordered the food of my own choice", "I engaged in observing other guests and surroundings in the dining experience", "there were not many activities in the dining experience", "I focused on the conversation with my friends during the dining experience". One indicator was from social: "I met new friends during this dining experience".

After the evaluation on the indicators on the first-order level, the path coefficients were examined between each dimension to the MDE on the second-order level. As shown

in Table 5.3, the results indicated that all the path coefficients were significant at the level of 0.001. Therefore, all the five dimensions significantly contributed to MDE and were retained for subsequent analysis.

Table 5.5 Results for Measurement Model (Split Sample 1)

	PC	STERR	T Stat	Sig.	f^2
Affect -> MDE	0.244	0.078	3.140	0.002	1.191
Behavioral -> MDE	0.452	0.064	7.073	0.000	5.011
Intellectual-> MDE	0.104	0.052	2.019	0.044	0.348
Sensory -> MDE	0.158	0.072	2.190	0.029	0.575
Social -> MDE	0.218	0.063	3.439	0.001	1.218

Note. PC = Path Coefficients; STERR = Standard Error; T-Stat = T Statistic.

The final measurement model was displayed in Figure 5.2, including 37 indicators from 5 dimensions and 4 indicators from overall experience. The values between dimensions to the MDE were the paths coefficients. The R^2 value was 0.689, representing moderate predictive accuracy of MDE (R^2 value between 0.5 and 0.75 is considered as moderate) (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Henseler et al., 2009).

5.5.3.4 Criterion Validity

After the measurement model was finalized, the criterion validity of the formative index of MDE was assessed by linking the index to other related constructs to test the predictive power (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). As such, for the purpose of this step, the construct of behavioral intention was used as the outcome variables of the MDE construct. The result showed that path coefficient from MDE to behavioral intentions using Split Sample 1, bootstrapping 5000 was 0.813, indicating strong predictive power of the MDE. The criterion validity was ensured for the MDE formative index.

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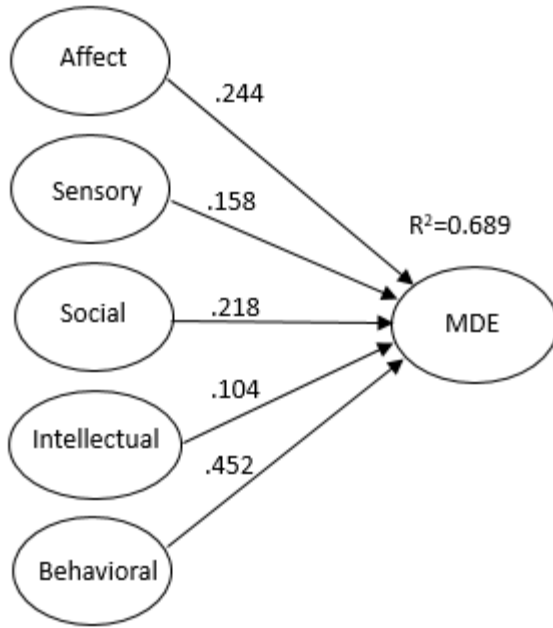
Figure 5.3 Results of Second-Order Measurement Model of MDE

5.5.4 Model Validation across Different Samples

In the formative index development processes, formative index construction

requires testing the model across different samples (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer,

2001). This is to test whether the formative index model structure was held across

different samples. As indicated previously, in the measurement model processes, the

procedures using the Split Sample 1 were repeated using Split Sample 2. The

measurement model procedures (same steps as in 5.3.3.1 through 5.3.3.4) were applied to

cross validate the MDE formative index. As shown in Table 5.6, among 37 indicators

generated from Split Sample 1, 35 should be retained with 26 indicators' outer weights at

significance level of 0.05, and 9 indicators' outer loadings larger than 0.5. The remaining

two indicators' outer loadings were under 0.5 but they were significant at 0.05.

Specifically, two indicators from sensory: "the restaurant's inside surroundings were

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pleasing to my eye", and "the restaurant's interior architectural design was attractive".

Compared with other indicators from the 5 dimensions, these two indicators contributed

relatively less but still achieved the level of significance at 0.05. Therefore, all the 37

indicators were retained, which validated the original model structure generated from

Split Sample 1 that five dimensions constituted the MDE that all five dimensions

significantly contribute to MDE (p <0.05). Therefore, the five-dimension model was held

using the Split Sample 2. Moreover, the R^2 value between overall experience and MDE

was 0.642, meeting the desired level of 0.64 (Chin, 1998) to ensure convergent validity.

Furthermore, the criterion validity was checked using Split Sample 2 and the results

showed that the path coefficients between MDE and the behavioral intentions was 0.847,

indicating good predictive power of the MDE.

Table 5.6 Results for Measurement Model (Split Sample 2)

	PC	STERR	T Stat	Sig.	f^2
Affect -> MDE	0.210	0.097	2.169	0.030	0.634
Behavioral -> MDE	0.366	0.068	5.415	0.000	3.468
Intellectual-> MDE	0.157	0.042	3.745	0.000	0.940
Sensory -> MDE	0.234	0.090	2.592	0.010	0.914
Social -> MDE	0.227	0.075	3.048	0.002	1.266

Note. PC = Path Coefficients; STERR = Standard Error; T-Stat = T- Statistic.

In conclusion, the formative measurement model of MDE was repeated using

Split Sample 2. The results empirically supported the formative structure of the 37-

indicators solution, thus the MDE formative index was validated across different

samples.

5.5.5 Overall Measurement Model

The overall measurement model was assessed using the full sample of the online

survey to test the proposed hypotheses of the overall model. Descriptive statistics for

constructs in the structural model (bootstrap samples of 5000) were examined and shown

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in Table 5.7. Based on the previous study of Ma et al. (2013), all five antecedents are conceptualized as reflective constructs. As a result, analysis of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and the reliability were examined. It is suggested that average variance extracted (AVE) of 0.5 or higher indicates an adequate convergent validity; and composite reliability (CR) of 0.7 or above is considered as satisfactory (Hair et al., 2014). Table 5.7 presented that the AVE of all antecedent constructs were above 0.5 and CR above 0.7, indicating good convergent validity and reliability.

Table 5.7 Statistics of Reflective Constructs

	Indicators	M	Std.	AVE	CR
Symbolic Meanings	The dining experience is meaningful to me.	5.50	1.25	0.56	0.80
	I learned about myself in this dining experience.	4.33	2.00		
	The dining experience has symbolic meaning to me, such as an anniversary, birthday, rewarding gift, etc.	5.21	1.40		
Goal Congruence	The dining experience has symbolic meaning to me, such as an anniversary, birthday, rewarding gift, etc.	5.21	1.40		
	The dining experience is special and unique.	3.83	1.58		
	This memorable dining experience helped me in pursuing my plans or in attaining my personal objectives.	4.28	1.64	0.62	0.81
	Compared with what I expected, this memorable dining experience was___.	5.34	1.23		
	Most of the time, I would consider this memorable dining experience as___.	6.13	1.10		
Personal Importance	This dining experience matters to me emotionally.	4.99	1.48	0.74	0.92
	This dining experience means a lot to meet my personal objectives.	4.35	1.66		
	This dining experience is an important memory to me.	5.22	1.45		
	This dining experience is personally relevant to me.	5.40	1.30		
Novelty	I felt surprised during this dining experience.	4.04	1.76	0.59	0.80
	I experienced something unexpected during this dining experience.	3.79	1.84		
	I experienced something new or novel during this dining experience.	4.38	1.70		

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	Indicators	M	Std.	AVE	CR
Agency	I myself contributed to making the dining experience memorable.	5.17	1.32	0.59	0.85
	The restaurant is an important factor to make the dining experience memorable.	5.61	1.17		
	The person(s) who I dined with contributed to making the dining experience memorable.	6.04	1.10		
Behavioral Intention	I would say positive things about this restaurant to other people.	6.04	1.22	0.79	0.96
	I would recommend this restaurant to someone who seeks my advice.	5.97	1.25		
	I would encourage friends and relatives to visit this restaurant.	5.91	1.30		
	I would revisit this restaurant in the next few years.	6.11	1.23		
	This restaurant is on my list of revisiting.	5.98	1.31		
	I would pay premium prices at this restaurant.	4.83	1.70		

Note. M= Means; Std. = Standard Deviations; AVE= Average Variance Extracted; CR=Composite Reliability.

The discriminant validity was checked using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), which compares the square root of AVE with the latent variable correlations (Hair et al., 2014). A satisfactory level of discriminant validity is evident if the square root of AVE is higher than squared correlations of any other constructs. As shown in Table 5.8, the bolded numbers at the diagonal were square root of AVE, which were higher than any other squared correlations of both horizontal and vertical. Therefore, the discriminant validity was ensured for the structural model.

Table 5.8 Discriminant Validity Check Based on Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	AG	BI	GC	PI	NV	SM
AG	**0.751**					
BI	0.489	**0.891**				
GC	0.482	0.754	**0.785**			
GI	0.548	0.479	0.607	**0.859**		
NV	0.283	0.197	0.300	0.346	**0.765**	
SM	0.565	0.493	0.605	0.767	0.418	**0.767**

Note. AG= Agency; BI=Behavioral Intention; GC=Goal Congruence; PI=Personal Importance; NV=Novelty; SM=Symbolic Meaning.

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After reviewing the validity and reliability check of the antecedent and outcome

constructs, the final structural model for hypotheses testing was conducted based on Hair

et al.'s (2014) procedures of evaluating the following values: VIF, the path coefficients,

R^2 value, effect size f^2, and Q^2. The collinearity issues were first assessed on the construct

level of the five dimensions of MDE and the results displayed in Table 5.7 showed that

all five dimensions reached a satisfactory level (i.e.,< 5).

Table 5.9 displayed the VIF of each of the antecedent construct, and VIF of all the

constructs were under 5. Then the path coefficients of the structural model were

examined and all the path coefficients were statistically significant ($p<0.05$). The R^2

value was 0.657 and R^2 adjusted value was 0.656. This means that about 66% of the

variance was explained in the structural model, indicating that the MDE construct can be

well predicted through the proposed PLS path model. The Q^2 was evaluated on the

reflective endogenous constructs: behavioral intentions. Q^2 value is used to present the

predictive relevance, which shows that the path model precisely predicts the indicators of

Table 5.9 Results for Final Measurement Model

	PC	STERR	T Stat	Sig.	f^2	VIF	R^2	R_{adj}^2	Q^2
Affect -> MDE	0.240	0.062	3.836	0.000	1.101	3.229			
Behavioral -> MDE	0.420	0.047	9.021	0.000	5.327	2.127			
Intellectual-> MDE	0.144	0.034	4.210	0.000	0.902	1.65			
Sensory -> MDE	0.189	0.059	3.206	0.001	0.821	2.784			
Social -> MDE	0.198	0.047	4.196	0.000	1.243	2.161			
Overall Model							0.657	0.656	0.671

Note. PC = Path Coefficients; STERR = Standard Error; T-Stat = T- Statistic;
VIF=Variance Inflation Factor; N=801, bootstrapping 5000.

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the measurement model of a particular endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2014). Since the predictive relevance, Q^2, is only examined in the reflective measurement model of endogenous constructs, the behavioral intentions were the only constructs that were examined. If the Q^2 value is larger than zero, it suggests that the model has predictive relevance (Chin, 1998). The result of the Q^2 was 0.671, which showed the predictive relevance of the behavioral intentions.

The path coefficients of the structure model was assessed and the results were presented in Table 5.10. No statistical significance were found from two antecedents of the MDE, personal importance and symbolic meanings (p>0.05), meaning these two constructs did not significantly predict MDE. Three antecedents, agency, goal congruence, and novelty achieved the significance level of 0.05, indicating these antecedents can significantly predict MDE. Additionally, MDE was found to be a strong predictor of behavioral intentions, with a path coefficient of 0.825.

Table 5.10 Path Coefficients and T-Statistics of Final Model

	PC	STDEV	STERR	T Stat	Sig.	f^2	VIF	Hypothesis
Agency -> MDE	0.223	0.222	0.043	5.125	0.000	0.031	1.59	Supported
Goal Congruence -> MDE	0.715	0.715	0.039	18.561	0.000	0.034	1.76	Supported
Personal Importance -> MDE	-0.010	-0.010	0.039	0.253	0.800	0.008	2.72	Not Supported
Novelty -> MDE	-0.077	-0.076	0.023	3.411	0.001	0.000	1.22	Supported
Symbolic Meanings -> MDE	0.006	0.046	0.046	0.139	0.890	0.002	2.90	Not Supported
MDE -> Behavioral Intention	0.825	0.825	0.018	45.281	0.000			Supported

Note. PC = Path Coefficients; STDEV = Standard Deviation; T-Stat = T- Statistic; VIF=Variance Inflation Factor; N=801, bootstrapping 5000.

Figure 5.4 was presented to visualize the path coefficients of the structural model. It showed that goal congruence was the strongest predictor of MDE, which means that dining experiences are more likely to be remembered when the experience was consistent
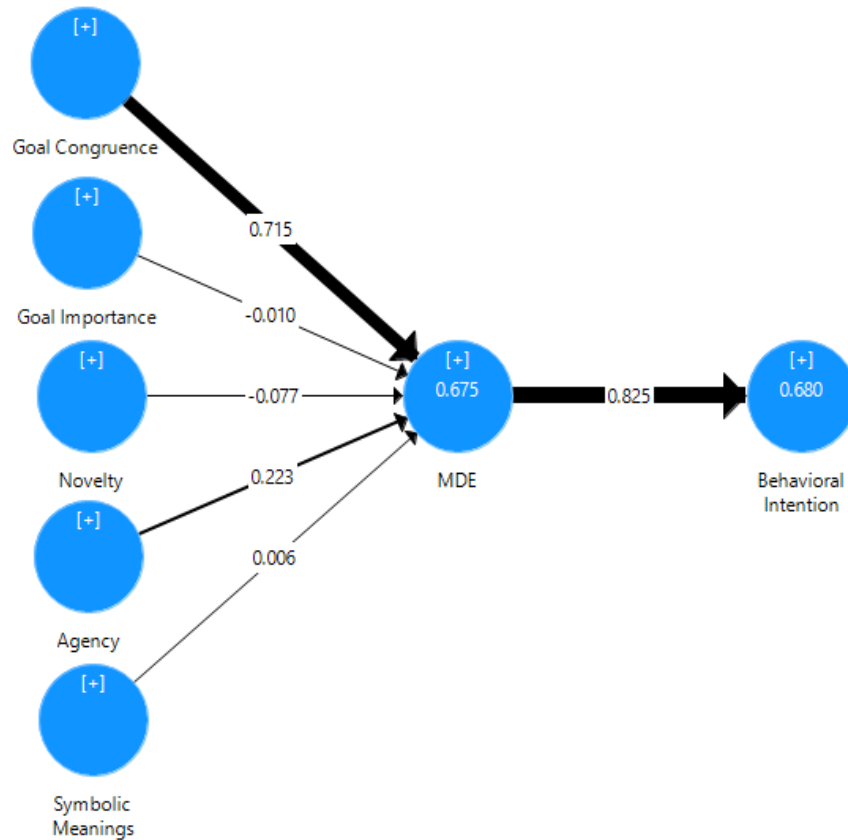
Figure 5.4 Overall Structural Model of Path Coefficients. (Due to the limitation of space, the five dimensions of MDE as well as underlying indicators were not shown but reflected in the measurement)

with the consumers' goals. Agency was another antecedent of MDE, which means that the person(s) who contributes to the dining experience being memorable significantly influences the likelihood that a dining experience can be remembered. It is interesting to note that although novelty significantly influences MDE, it has weak and negative effects

on MDE. This means that novelty may actually slightly decrease the likelihood of the dining experience being remembered.

To conclude, the structural model results supported that three antecedents (i.e., agency, goal congruence, and novelty) were significant predictors of MDE. MDE is also a strong predictor of behavioral intentions. No empirical supports were found on the antecedents of personal importance and symbolic meanings as predictors of MDE.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter exhibited the results and findings to address the research questions. First, in-depth interview results provided rich information to guide the survey design process. Then a series of analyses were conducted using online panel data, such as data screening, descriptive statistics, the analysis of the measurement model, and finally the analysis of the structural model. The measurement model was conducted to finalize the formative index, using two split samples from the overall sample. The final formative index included 37 indicators from five dimensions of sensory, affect, intellectual, social, and behavioral. Using PLS-SEM method, the results of the overall model indicated that three of the antecedents were significant predictors of MDE (agency, goal congruence, novelty), and nonsignificant relationship were found on the two antecedents: personal importance and symbolic meanings. Moreover, MDE was found as a strong predictor of behavioral intentions. Based on the study findings, the next chapter will discuss in detail about theoretical contributions and practical implications.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the results of the current study's research findings and addresses each of the research hypotheses for this study. It also includes a discussion of the formative index construction, antecedents and outcomes of MDE, and concluding remarks. Then, theoretical contributions and practical implications for existing literature are highlighted, and the conclusion is presented to summarize this study. Finally, limitations and future research suggestions are provided for MDE.

6.2 Key Findings and Discussion

In general, this study offered insights related to the conceptualization and measurement of the MDE concept and examined the underlying relationships of its antecedents and outcomes. A 5-dimension formative index of MDE was developed and validated through a multi-step formative index procedure illustrating reliability and validity. The MDE index can be used for measuring and understanding how experiences are remembered and retrieved. Three antecedents, goal congruence, agency, and novelty,

were found to significantly influence MDE, which provided theoretical and practical insights to understand the MDE concept. Moreover, MDE was found to be strong predictors of consumers' behavioral intentions. Based on results presented in Chapter 5, the following discussion is organized according to each of the research hypotheses. Research questions were first addressed for the current study, and then the research hypotheses became the purpose of this study.

6.2.1 MDE Formative Index

Hypothesis 1: Memorable Dining Experience (MDE) is explained through five dimensions: sensory, affect, intellectual, behavioral, and social.

There has been an emerging recognition of the importance of consumer experiences research in hospitality and tourism marketing (Walls et al., 2011; Xu & Chan, 2010). As special types of consumer experiences, MDE emphasizes consumers' memorable and distinct memory-formation that may occur in full-service restaurant settings. Since there is no existing measurement scale available for MDE, the formative index provided a feasible measure to empirically examine this concept. In response to the four research questions, the current study proposed that MDE was conceptualized as five dimensions: sensory, affect, intellectual, social, and behavioral. The MDE formative index was developed using 37 indicators representing five dimensions. Further, five dimensions were proposed to be antecedents of MDE, and three of them were found significant: goal congruence, agency, and novelty. MDE was found to be strong predictors of consumers' behavioral intentions, and MDE emerges as important factors in consumers' decision-making processes. The following section discusses the findings to address each of the research hypotheses.

For research hypothesis 1 MDE is explained through five dimensions: sensory, affect, intellectual, behavioral, and social, the final 37-indicator formative index provided guidelines for understanding the underlying structures of MDE. All five dimensions were found to be significant sub-constructs contributing to MDE, consistent with the claim that consumer experiences are multidimensional and unique (Walls et al., 2011). To this end, MDE was considered subjective for consumers, as these five dimensions focus more on inherent feelings and reactions.

Drawn from the results of the current study, it is noteworthy that these five dimensions contribute differently to MDE, represented by different levels of path coefficients in the measurement model. Specifically, the behavioral dimension, or the physical and mental engagement of the consumers, was the most important dimensions constituting MDE, and the second most important dimension was affect, or consumers' emotions and feelings. The remaining three dimensions, ranked from third to fifth, were sensory, social, and intellectual, respectively. Each dimension is discussed in more detail below, based on level of importance in the current study.

The importance of the behavioral dimension is consistent with previous studies (Barnes et al., 2014; Brakus et al., 2009; Walls, 2013) showing that human interaction had a significant impact on influencing consumer experiences (Walls, 2013). In the context of dining experiences, the behavioral dimension is especially emphasized. This is because that the restaurant context is more experience-oriented and filled with consumers' interactions with the dining environment, the restaurant employees, and other guests (Walls, 2013). Consumers also engaged in activities such as eating, talking, and observing others. Physical and mental involvement of experiences demonstrate the level

of consumers' attention, and, in turn, are more likely to be remembered by the consumers. From the results of the current study, it is suggested that managers should engage consumers in restaurant atmospheres during dining experiences. Notably, most respondents indicated their interests in restaurant activities (Mean=6), but there were not many activities such as having a live band, singing, dancing, etc. (Mean=2.84). This reflected a large discrepancy between consumers' interests and their actual behaviors and between consumers' preferences and the actual experiences offered by the restaurant. Restaurant owners could offer more activities to enhance consumers' levels of physical engagement and mental involvement, such as adding a cooking show at the hibachi barbecue and multi-screen televisions at sports- themed restaurants. In addition, restaurant can implement karaoke or games to enhance consumers' level of engagement and improve the restaurant atmosphere. These activities would make the experiences more memorable. Moreover, restaurant managers can also engage consumers through restaurant themes. Consumers immersed in themes are more likely to become engaged in dining experiences. Examples of full-service themed restaurants include Rainforest Café, which is a rainforest-themed restaurant; and the Bubba Gump Shrimp Company, which is a themed restaurants inspired by the movie *Forrest Gump*.

Identifying affect as the second most important dimension in this study was consistent with previous studies claiming that affect was an important component comprising consumer experiences (Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999). Two indicators of the affect dimension were found most significant in leading to MDE: "I did not have strong emotions for this dining experience" (reversely recoded) (path coefficient of 0.4), and "I felt excited during the dining experience" (path coefficient of 0.39). This helps

explore the nature of the MDE concept characterized by levels of emotions and excitement. Strong emotions and excitement represent consumers' feelings about MDE, which is consistent with previous studies (e.g. Prayag, Khoo-Lattimore & Sitruk, 2015). Considering the nature of restaurant contexts where consumers seek hedonic components beyond mere food provision, the importance of providing positive emotions and excitement becomes obvious for restaurant managers (Jang & Namkung, 2010). To enhance consumers' emotions, it can be achieved through other dimensions of MDE such as consumers' engagement and the social dimensions. It is suggested to use light music in the restaurant, which can enhance the restaurant atmosphere and bring consumers' pleasant feelings. In addition, managers can enhance consumers' feelings through making changes to aspects such as restaurant atmosphere and food quality (Jang & Namkung, 2010), both identified in the sensory dimension.

The third important dimension was sensory, or assessing consumers' direct feelings and reactions based on environments and atmospheres of dining experiences. Different from the findings of Brakus et al. (2009) and Barnes et al. (2014), where sensory was the most important dimension in the context of brand experiences, the current study found that sensory was the third most important dimension in forming MDE. This is, perhaps, due to the contextual differences. Brakus et al. (2009) studied consumers' brand usage, and Barnes et al. (2014) used the tourism context, while consumers in restaurant settings seek more from behavioral and affect dimensions. This is perhaps because consumers can expect restaurants to provide sensory dimension, which is not considered as special or surprising.

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The most important indicator for the dimension of sensory was "the restaurant made a strong impression on me" (path coefficient of 0.62), followed by "the presentation of the food was appealing to my senses" (path coefficient of 0.23). The results emphasized the importance of the overall impression and the presentation of the food. Managers should pay special attention to the presentation of the food in addition to building the overall impressions of MDE. While most studies find that the food quality and the service quality are the most important factors of dining experiences (e.g. DiPietro & Partlow, 2014; Jang & Namkung, 2009; Prayag et al., 2015), the current study focused more on the integrated, subjective evaluations of what consumers remember most from their dining experiences. That is to say, instead of evaluating specific attributes that the restaurants could offer, the current study considered consumers' overall impressions and assessed whether the experiences were appealing to consumers' senses. The results also indicate that a dining experience can not only offer different aspects of food, such as the presentation of the food (Andersson & Mossberg, 2004), but also integrate the sensory components of visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile to create MDE. For instance, restaurant managers could integrate music, scents, aromas, and lighting to create positive emotions and exciting atmospheres to consumers (Prayag et al., 2015). Disney is an excellent example in using all these elements to create a theme and tell a story in order to enhance consumers' feelings and emotions.

The importance of the social dimension as a contributor to MDE was consistent with the findings of Andersson and Mossberg (2004) that consumers seek out restaurants for social purposes, especially in the evenings. The most important indicator was "The conversations with friends or restaurant staff during the dining experience enhanced my

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experience" with a path coefficient of 0.36, demonstrating the importance of the conversations during dining experiences. The second important indicator was "the restaurant felt like a 'home away from home'," confirming the need for social connectedness during dining experiences (Antun et al., 2010; Lashley et al., 2005). Two managerial strategies are suggested to provide a friendly environment for consumers to feel comfortable and warmly welcomed. First, restaurant employees should ensure that consumers are not disturbed, but, at the same time, show the care to consumers. This can be achieved through managers observing the consumers in the restaurant. When consumers were busy eating and talking, they may not want to be bothered. On the other hand, when consumers constantly look around, they may need some help or services. Restaurant managers should frequently walk through each table observing and greeting each consumer with eye contact in order to show the care and service of the restaurant. Second, service staff should develop relationships with consumers by recognizing their names by asking their names at seating and calling their names during the meal. Also restaurant servers can keep records about loyal consumers' order preferences and their names in order to provide customized services next time. Conversations should taking place throughout the service, from initial greetings and food ordering to food delivery (Antun et al., 2010; Line et al., 2012; Jin, Line, & Ann, 2015).

The intellectual dimension was ranked last among the five dimensions, but was still a significant contributor to MDE. This is consistent with the study of Brakus et al. (2009) that consumers obtain intellectual merits from their experiences. The most important indicator was "this dining experience stimulated my curiosity to know new things" with a path coefficient of 0.42, indicating that consumers gaining new knowledge

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would make an experience memorable. Marketing strategy for menu development can be used to provide consumers with rich information, such as the ingredients of the food, the ways that the menu items were cooked, and the restaurant culture. Employees can also introduce different types of wines and detailed information to interested consumers. Besides food-related knowledge, restaurant managers could also provide brochures introducing the local history, the story of the restaurant themes, and the restaurant history to the consumers to enhance consumers' learning processes. These strategies could facilitate more meaningful and memorable dining experiences, which has been emphasized in the consumer experiences as key drivers and not easy to be replicated (Diller, Shedroff, & Rhea, 2005).

The overall, strategic recommendation for hospitality practitioners is to use differentiated experiences to deliver unique services and products in order to be remembered and recalled by customers (Yuan & Wu, 2008). Because experiences are more inherent and depend on how consumers react to staged encounters, differentiated experiences cannot ensure MDE (Mossberg, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Walls et al., 2011; Wang, 2002). This makes it more critical for practitioners to find clear, strategic positions for their businesses and define clearly targeted populations to experience these businesses.

6.2.2 Antecedents and MDE

Derived from the cognitive appraisal theory on the antecedents of emotion, the current study proposed that five constructs were antecedents of MDE. Among these five predictors, three were found to significantly influence MDE. The R^2 value of 0.674 demonstrates strong predicting power of these three antecedents, indicating that goal

congruence, agency, and novelty can capture up to 67.4% of the explained variance of MDE. These results further confirmed that the cognitive appraisal theory can be applied in predicting MDE in the restaurant context, which also confirmed that MDE was affective in nature. The specific hypotheses were discussed as follows.

Hypothesis 2b: Goal congruence of the dining occasion positively influences one's MDE.

Hypothesis 2c: Agency positively influences one's MDE.

To address the hypothesis 2b on whether consumers under a high level of goal congruence are more likely to have MDE, the results showed empirical support of the construct of goal congruence significantly influencing MDE. The path coefficient of 0.716 demonstrates that consumer experiences perceived as personally relevant are more likely to be remembered, consistent with the claim that a high level of goal congruence can provoke enjoyment (Scherer, 1993). Consumers walk into restaurants with initial personal goals and expectations for their dining experiences. To address consumers' goals and deliver the services consumers expected, service staff should pay attention to consumers' specific goals and read their facial expressions. If necessary, managers could ask about consumers' purposes during the dining experiences in order to meet their needs. At the reservation process, for instance, service staff could ask consumers whether the meal celebrated special occasions and take notes to provide some additional services. In the fine dining restaurants, service staff could also keep repeat consumers' information on their food and seating preferences, which could help understanding consumers' needs even before they ask.

Hypothesis 2c: Agency positively influences one's MDE.

The second strongest predictor was agency, indicating that the persons who contributed to the experiences would significantly influence MDE. Respondents, on average, thought that the person(s) they dined with contributed the most in making the dining experience memorable (Mean = 6.04). Despite this finding, consumers themselves actually were the most important predictor leading to MDE, with outer loading of 0.77. This means that consumers tend to remember the experiences that relate most to themselves. The second contributor that predicted MDE was the restaurant, with outer loading of 0.75. Although the restaurants contributed slightly less than the consumers themselves, the restaurant factor is also a powerful predictor that contributes to MDE. The third agency factor was the persons who dined with the customers (outer loadings of 0.74), which addresses the importance of those accompanying the consumers. These three agency factors recognized consumers' own contribution in making experiences memorable. Hospitality practitioners understand that consumers can remember an experience completely differently with different agencies. From a psychological perspective, the person(s) who contributed to the experience (the person himself/herself, the restaurant, and the persons who accompanied to the meal) influence how the dining experience can be remembered. As the second most important agency factor contributing to MDE, restaurants were critical in creating MDE, even though MDE was largely subjective and depended on consumers' reactions and takeaways. The results helped restaurant managers understand that consumers' MDE was largely based on the memories associated with themselves, which was consistent with the assumption of the AB memory.

Hypothesis 2e: Novelty positively influences one's MDE.

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Novelty significantly but negatively influenced MDE. Even though this relationship was relatively weak compared with other antecedents, the significance level of the path coefficient indicates that consumers who were less surprised by the experiences are more likely to remember them. Unlike previous findings suggesting novelty should be provided to trigger positive emotions for consumers (Jiang & Wang, 2006; Nyer, 1997; Prayag et al., 2015), the current study found that less novelty can enhance the experience and make it more memorable. Experiences outcomes show great variance among different service settings (Brown, Havitz, & Getz, 2006; Ma et al., 2013), therefore consumers may react differently based on their purposes in different contexts. On some occasions, it is possible that consumers have MDE without being surprised, or with low levels of surprise, according to their preferences in dining experiences. Restaurant managers may keep in mind that consumers, at times, may not necessarily seek out novelty when they have dining experiences, or they may even prefer a low level of surprise in order to have MDE. This is especially true for loyal consumers who have visited the restaurant before, and they have more realistic expectations of their dining experiences and may not want to be surprised by the novel changes. Restaurant managers should pay more attention to the five dimensions of sensory, affect, intellectual, social, and behavioral rather than attempting to surprise consumers in their dining experiences. To provide MDE, renovations should be mild and within consumers' expectations. Small changes within reasonable budget were recommended, such as the example of engaging the consumers using karaoke and games.

Hypothesis 2a: Personal importance of dining occasions positively influences one's MDE.

Hypothesis 2d: Symbolic meaning positively influences one's MDE.

Non-significant results were found in two constructs, personal importance and symbolic meanings in predicting MDE. Despite previous research findings that personal importance and symbolic meanings lead to delight in theme parking settings (Lim, 2015; Ma et al., 2013), these two constructs do not necessarily influence MDE. In a theme park context, Ma et al. (2013) found that personal importance was an antecedent of consumer delight. The current study did not find a direct relationship between personal importance and MDE, perhaps due to the different study context. Although both theme park experiences and MDE greatly involve consumers' emotions, the types of emotions as well as the causes may not be the same. In the dining context, MDE is more influenced by factors such as goal congruence, agency, and novelty.

In a study of dining experiences at special occasions, symbolic meanings were categorized under culture constructs (Lim, 2015). The results revealed that symbolic meanings were found to significantly influence consumers' attitudes towards dining experiences (Lim, 2015). Unlike Lim (2015)'s findings, the current study did not find any significant relationship between symbolic meanings and MDE. The symbolic meanings from dining experiences might occur more during occasions such as weddings, birthdays, and anniversaries, which critically add to the consumption (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Lim, 2015). Symbolic meanings alone cannot significantly contribute to make the experience memorable.

6.2.3 Outcomes of MDE

Hypothesis 3a: MDE positively influences consumers' revisit intentions.

Hypothesis 3b: MDE positively influences recommendation intentions.

The current study found that MDE positively and significantly influenced behavioral intentions (including revisit intentions and recommendation intentions), consistent with many other studies (Brakus et al., 2009; Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Manthiou, Lee, Tang, & Chiang, 2014; Robinson & Clifford, 2012; Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu, 2012). Revisit intentions and recommendation intentions were combined into one construct, behavioral intentions, because of the high correlation between the two constructs and to better fit the structural model. Such integration has theoretical foundations, since many studies treat these two constructs as one (such as Kim & Ritchie, 2014 and Brakus et al., 2009 which named the construct as loyalty). Different from other consumer behavior constructs, such as service quality and satisfaction, MDE incorporates consumers' affective feelings in reaction to external environments, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the consumer experiences. This is reflected by the strong predictive power of MDE, which explained 82.5% of the variance in the current study. This implies that MDE plays an important role in forging consumers' behavioral intentions. In decision-making processes, consumers do not usually select deep reasoning, but rather choose from the options they deem worthy and available in their minds (Lim, 2015; Riquelme, 2001; Setthawiwat & Barth, 2002). Restaurant managers should pay special attention to MDE, because consumers rely on their most remembered experiences in order to make future decisions. With the current high competition in the foodservice industry, it is no longer sufficient to provide merely satisfactory experiences to consumers, but to provide memorable experiences that consumers can remember for a long time (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Therefore knowing how to make the experiences more memorable is the key to trigger future revisit and recommendation intentions.

6.2.4 General Discussion

Memorable experiences are different from general consumer experiences in two ways. First, MDE evaluates consumers' reflections of the most memorable experiences extracted from various previous experiences, emphasizing the memorable feature(s) of the experiences. It is believed that through the evaluation of MDE, researchers could identify the key drivers that make an experience memorable given the strong predictive power of MDE on behavioral intentions. Second, MDE particularly looks at the experiences in the restaurant settings, which have different emphases in terms of the rank of importance of dimensions. The current study found that behavioral and affect are the most important dimensions leading to MDE, which confirmed the subjective and interactive nature of MDE.

The current study defined MDE as consumers' subjective and holistic evaluation of a dining experience that is positively remembered and retrieved retrospectively. Considering the results of the five-dimension formative index, MDE can be redefined as consumers' subjective and holistic evaluation of a dining experience based on the five dimensions of affect, behavioral, intellectual, sensory, and social, which are positively remembered and retrieved retrospectively.

In relation to other concepts, MDE can be understood from concepts such as well-being and positive psychology. This is evident by the shared factors that individuals pursue factors from the hospitality and tourism experiences beyond merely hedonic factor, such as a sense of meaning and purpose of life, happiness, a sense of engagement, and positive relationship, which are the elements of well-being (Filep & Pearce, 2013). Subjective well-being is a concept about life satisfaction and happiness, and hospitality

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and tourism experiences are perhaps one of the most common activities that promote individuals' well-being (Filep & Pearce, 2013). Different from other types of consumer experiences that also promote individuals' well-being, Filep and Pearce (2013) contended that the hospitality and tourism experiences are unreplaceable. That is, many people may be willing to exchange a vehicle for a better one, while many people probably are reluctant to exchange their experience memories (Filep & Pearce, 2013). This unique feature of the hospitality and tourism experiences is proposed to play an important role in promoting individuals' well-being. Although the connection between hospitality and tourism experiences and the well-being is still under studied, this research area can help researchers gain a complete understanding about the consumer experiences from psychological perspectives (Filep & Pearce, 2013).

Recent research in hospitality and tourism fields holds that consumer experiences can occur in both ordinary and extraordinary situations, demonstrating interchangeable features, ranging from ordinary to extraordinary in different contexts (Cohen, 1979; Quan & Wang, 2004; Walls et al., 2011). The current study confirmed that dining experiences can be ordinary or extraordinary, depending on the multi-dimensional components of the experiences. Previous studies acknowledge the differences between daily experiences and tourism experiences (Cohen, 1979; Quan and Wang, 2004; Smith, 1978; Uriely, 2005; Walls et al., 2011), and this study extends the experience literature by examining MDE in consumers' daily lives.

6.3 Theoretical Contributions

The current study constructs a formative index for future research to measure the MDE concept. Based on the theoretical backgrounds and the empirical support of the

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current study, this study posits MDE is a second-order formative construct, measured through five dimensions: sensory, affect, behavioral, social, and intellectual. This extends the theoretical understanding of the MDE concept and advances the knowledge for future research. Research along this line could build on the current study by applying the MDE formative index to examine consumer experiences related to concepts in different contexts, such as hotels, destinations and theme parks.

In addition, the current study applied the cognitive appraisal theory and identified three factors of goal congruence, agency, and novelty as antecedents of MDE. To the researcher's knowledge, studies are rare on the antecedents of experiences, and the current study contributes to the body of literature by identifying the antecedents that influence experiences in the restaurant context. The results further support that MDE by nature is largely affective, and the antecedents of emotions can be used to capture MDE.

Unlike tourism experiences, where tourists travel to a place they do not normally live in, MDE in restaurant settings is more common and often happens in consumers' daily lives, which might be the reason that novelty negatively relates to MDE. This study asserts that MDE is theoretically more related to brand experiences when consumers experience through the consumption of product and services. By applying Schmitt (1999)'s five dimensions of brand experiences, the MDE was well explained and justified to fit the restaurant context.

From a statistical standpoint, this study highlighted the need to pay more attention to formative constructs, which received increasing attention in general marketing research (2001) but are less common in hospitality and tourism research. Statistical tools analyzing SEM such as Amos assume reflective constructs in the measurement model,

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which somewhat increased the difficulties with implementations of formative constructs. However, using reflective structure to measure formative constructs could result in serious problems in accuracy and interpretation (Hair et al., 2014).

6.4 Practical Contributions

Besides significant theoretical contributions, the current study suggests several practical implications for restaurant management practices. The construction and validation of the formative index of MDE offers useful tools for restaurant managers to measure how MDE is created through the consumption of products and services. The 37-indicator index has a clear, user-friendly structure comprised of five dimensions, which can be easily implemented in hospitality organizations. Restaurant managers can send their consumers an online survey via email and ask their most memorable aspects of the dining experience to understand consumers' opinions and the restaurant's key strengths. Consumers' feedback on their dining experiences can create new marketing strategies to gain competitive advantages.

Unlike assessments of satisfaction or service quality, MDE can capture consumers' recall of the key drivers that make the experience memorable and unique in order to measure the effectiveness in creating the memorable experiences. The importance of measuring consumer experiences relies on the increasing attention on the consumer experiences in hospitality and tourism literature (Oh & Jeoung, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Walls et al., 2011). Additionally, the formative index structure of the survey is especially valuable when the research concept is not theoretically established (Hair et al., 2014). This is true due to the fact that the MDE conceptualization is still in

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the early stage, and using formatively structured surveys can help restaurant managers accurately measure MDE in order to optimize consumers' behavioral intentions.

Furthermore, three important antecedents of MDE provided insights for hospitality practitioners to advance the understanding of the consumer experiences. Hospitality managers can understand the reasons some customers are more likely to have MDE than others given the same consumer experiences. The distinction between these two types of customers is important because restaurant managers can customize their services based on these differences and they can be more efficient in providing MDE. The underlying relationships between MDE and other constructs provide a comprehensive view of the MDE and address its importance influencing behavioral intentions.

The five-dimension structure of the formative index of MDE calls for restaurant managers' attention because all five dimensions are relatively important contributors to constitute MDE. Special attention should be paid to behavioral, affect, and sensory dimensions, given their high path coefficients. These three dimensions represent physical and mental engagement, consumers' affective and cognitive components, which are often emphasized in experience research (Walls, 2013; Walls et al., 2011). The other two dimensions, social and intellectual, are still significant contributors to MDE. To this end, industry practitioners can improve the level of MDE through developing personal relationships with customers and providing valuable information to inspire customers intellectually. As mentioned earlier, restaurant can provide knowledge during the dining experience such as the information about ingredients, and the restaurant culture, local history, the story of the restaurant themes. These strategies can strengthen customer

relationships and differentiate the restaurant business from others. Consequently, consumers who gained knowledge and are socially connected are more likely to have MDE, which can eventually advance their behavioral intentions.

The final structural model provides an overview of the underlying relationships between the MDE concept and consumer behavior constructs. The impact of MDE on behavioral intentions provides strong evidence of the important role of creating memorable experiences. This is especially true when customers today react to a combination of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components in service encounters (Walls et al., 2011). It is no longer sufficient to understand consumers' functional needs, such as consumption of food, but to consider consumers' psychological needs, such as consumers' social needs. Marketing strategies can be made through the interactions with consumers on the social media platforms. For example, restaurant mangers could use multiple websites in order to promote their business and also communicate with their customers such as Facebook, Yelp, Trip Advisor, and the restaurant's official websites, and the local convention and visitor bureau website. This is critical for restaurant mangers that social media platforms has dominated as a communication channel among consumers (Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015).

This study found that MDE could influence consumers' revisit intentions and recommendation intentions. Future research can investigate this relationship to an opposite direction: through behaviors of revisit and recommendation, the dining experiences can be more memorable. In other words, revisiting behaviors and recommendation behaviors can influence the experience to be more memorable. For instance, restaurant can promote the online reviews by offering discounts when

consumers show they have made comments on Yelp or Trip Advisor upon check out. Consumers on the other hand can review later what they had in their MDE from the pictures and comments made at the website. This can remind the consumers with their previous experiences, which can also enhance the experiences to be more memorable.

In sum, hospitality managers can obtain insights from the current study through applying the measurement tool of MDE survey to investigate the consumer experiences in the hospitality industry. In practice, using formative and reflective surveys is the same in the application processes, with the only difference in the survey design. However, the formative structured survey is more suitable for the MDE concept, which is used for explanatory studies without established theoretical foundations.

6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study investigated the concept of MDE, developed a formative index, and examined the antecedents and outcomes of MDE. The data was analyzed with a measurement model and structural model using PLS-SEM. The results supported the five-dimension structure of the formative index of MDE, confirming that the MDE index was useful and valid for implementation in the hospitality industry. Three out of five antecedents were found to be strong predictors of MDE, indicating that MDE can be successfully captured by the constructs of goal congruence, agency, and novelty. This helps the understanding of the MDE concept regarding the ways that the experiences can be better remembered. Last, the results further confirmed that MDE was a strong contributor to consumers' behavioral intentions, which was consistent with previous findings on the positive connection between consumer experiences and behavioral intentions (Lehto et al., 2004; Morgan & Xu, 2009; Schmitt, 1999). The high prediction

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power of MDE on the behavioral intention addresses the fact that consumers'

remembered experiences can better influence their decision-making processes.

6.6 Limitations

This study is not free from limitations. First, from a theoretical standpoint, the

current study investigated the MDE concept in the restaurant context. However, as

mentioned earlier, current MDE research is still in its infancy stage, and there is a need

for further studies to uncover the characteristics of MDE. The current study identified

three antecedents of MDE: goal congruence, agency, and novelty based on the cognitive

appraisal theory, which states that these factors can capture emotions. It is still unclear at

which stage these factors influence the memory formation process.

Second, this research limited the MDE to only full-service restaurant settings,

which may not be applicable in other contexts, such as theme parks and destination

settings. Furthermore, this study analyzes only American consumers, and future studies

can expand to other demographics to cross validate the MDE index. In addition, this

study is limited by the online panel survey design. The survey company MTurk was

employed to access the American adult consumers; however, based on the literature, the

population on MTurk had a slightly lower income level than the general American

consumer sample (Ipeirotis, 2010). Moreover, the online survey used self-selected

responses, which cannot be a random sample. Therefore, the sample of the current study

may not be representative of American consumers. In order to retain respondents'

attention, this study employed a survey that could be completed approximately within 10

minutes, which may omit respondents' important characteristics, such as whether they

were first time to their dining experiences. Future studies can add questions to investigate

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consumers' demographical differences, such as the differences between first-time consumers and repeat consumers.

Third, this study limits the MDE to the last 6 months, which may not capture the special events and occasions that happen relatively less frequently. Therefore, novelty was not positively related to MDE since consumers might not have any novel dining experiences during the last 6 months. Different findings can be generated given a longer time frame to collect consumers' MDE.

Fourth, from a statistical standpoint, PLS-SEM based methods did not provide the overall model fit on the measurement/structure model, and future research extending this topic can use other statistical methods to provide the overall model fit in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the formative index of MDE.

To conclude, the current study has several limitations that future studies should be cautious of when using the results. These limitations are due to reasons such as the study context, the online survey design, and the statistical methods used in the data analysis. Future studies can address these limitations to examine the consistency of the results of memorable dining in different contexts.

6.7 Future Research

Future research along this line can investigate the MDE concept from several perspectives. First, for the context of the current study, full-service restaurants were selected as study settings, which did not further separate into different types of restaurants such as casual-themed dining, upscale dining, or fine dining. Research along this line can examine these different types of MDE and make comparisons among these types of restaurants.

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Second, five dimensions of MDE intended to explore the memorable features of dining experiences. Due to the early stage of memorable experiences, the pattern of memorable experiences over time is still unknown (Lee, 2015). Future studies can investigate this pattern by longitudinal study, from shortly after the dining experience, 6 months after, and 1 year after to show the changes in consumers' MDE. In relation to behavioral outcomes, MDE was found as a strong predictor of consumers' behavioral intentions, and MDE was analyzed as one construct influencing consumers' behavioral intentions. Future studies can examine which dimension(s) of MDE is more likely to influence behavioral intentions and identify each dimension's relative importance in predicting behavioral intentions.

Third, three antecedents were identified as significant predictors of MDE: goal congruence, novelty, and agency. However, these antecedents did not explain how they shape the memory during formation processes. Other antecedents can be identified in the processes of how memory is collected, stored, and retrieved. Such studies on the antecedents of experiences are rare, but worthy for gaining a deeper understanding of the nature of MDE.

Likewise, the outcomes of MDE can be expanded to a more specific area, such as the recommendation behaviors among consumers. This is evident by the dominant use of social media platforms as a communication channel exerting great influence on consumers' recommendation behaviors (Hudson et al., 2015). In the current study, three indicators were used to measure the recommendation intentions: "I would say positive things about this restaurant to other people", "I would recommend this restaurant to someone who seeks my advice", and "I would encourage friends and relatives to visit this

restaurant". It is still unclear in which ways the consumers make recommendations to their family, friends, and significant others. Studying consumers' recommendation intentions as they are influenced by social media platforms such as storytelling, moments sharing, and online reviews can expand future research. It would be interesting to know whether the relationship between MDE and the consumers' recommendation intentions would be strengthened by the influences of social media.

Last but not least, one way for future research could be the MDE study in emerging market (Li, 2016), which is different in terms of consumers' behaviors such as shopping patterns. This research path not only can advance the understanding of the consumers in emerging market, but also can help the cross validate the MDE concept in different cultures.

In summary, there are several avenues for future research in MDE. From a context perspective, future studies can specify different types of restaurants and compare the differences of MDE. Future studies can explore the patterns of MDE over time and the influences of the antecedents on memory formation processes. From an outcome perspective, future studies can involve the influence of social media in shaping consumers' recommendation intentions, which could strengthen the relationship between MDE and recommendation intentions.

6.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter offered a discussion of the findings of the study and a conclusion of the current study. The discussion was illustrated based on the research findings in Chapter 5, which was divided by the research hypotheses of the current study, the antecedents of MDE, outcomes of MDE, and general discussion. Theoretical and

practical implications were discussed to advance the understanding of the current literature and the hospitality industry. Specifically, the current study contributed to the body of literature by developing the formative index of MDE, and the antecedents and outcomes of MDE. Additionally, the current study also called an attention for the use of formative model, which received increasing attention in the hospitality and tourism literature. Lastly, the conclusion of the current study was presented and limitations were highlighted so that future studies should take caution. Directions for future studies were provided to advance the understanding of MDE.

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Dear Interviewee,

My name is Yang Cao. I am a doctoral candidate in the Hospitality Management Program at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study as part of the degree requirements of Doctor of Philosophy, and I would like to invite you to participate. This study is partially funded by a SPARC Graduate Research Grant from the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of South Carolina, and a SETTRA Student Research Grant in memory of Sean McCarthy.

I am studying the concept of memorable dining experience, and its causes and outcomes. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to meet with me for an interview about your memorable dining experiences. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to. The meeting will take place at the café of Carolina Coliseum or a mutually agreed upon time and place, and should last about 20-30 minutes. The interview will be audiotaped, and members who will transcribe and analyze them from the research team will only review the tapes. The interview tapes will then be destroyed.

Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location at the University of South Carolina. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed. Participation is anonymous, which means that no one (not even the research team) will know what your answers are. So, please do not write your name or other identifying information on any of the study materials.

Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also quit being in the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at 334-559-2326 anor my faculty advisor, Dr. Robert Li, 803-777-2764, and

robertli@sc.edu if you have study related questions or problems. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at the University of South Carolina at 803-777-7095.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please contact me at the number listed below to discuss participating.

With kind regards,
Yang Cao
701 Assembly St, Carolina Coliseum Suite 1020
Columbia, SC, 29201
334-559-2326
Cao22@email.sc.edu

Let me first introduce the concept of memorable dining experiences, which is consumers' subjective and overall evaluation on a dining experience that is positively remembered and recalled after the event has occurred. I'm most interested in the factors that make your dining experience memorable in a full-service restaurant setting. Full-service restaurants include casual themed dining, upscale dining, and fine dining, at prices for $12 or above per person, with table services provided by servers. I'm going to break this interview into three sections beginning with the description about the restaurant, the décor, atmosphere, etc. and then your feelings and reactions, and finally we'll talk about your revisit intentions. I will ask several questions, and you can talk as much as you want.

1. Do you eat out often? I'd like to invite you to take a minute to think about the most memorable dining experience in the past six months.

    Can you please describe a little bit about it? When did this experience happen? Was that the first time you have been this restaurant?

2. How about the atmosphere of the experiences, music, sight, light, colors, decorations, restaurant style, etc.? Probe: Suppose I were with you at the dinner, what would I see in the restaurant? Please tell me everything you can remember.

    (if not mentioned) What food did you order? How was it? How about the service, and the waiter/waitress? Do you think all these factors you mentioned are important to you? Why do you think these are (sensations described in the answer) important to you? Are there any factors that are less important to you?

3. Tell me how you would describe your feelings at the dining experience. Please use some adjectives. (Probe: such as exciting, happy, etc.) How about your (persons with you) feelings, can you describe?

4. During your dining experience, did you have anyone go with you? Can you talk a little about it?

Do you think people coming with you helped make this dining experience memorable?

> How was your relationship with___ after that meal?

> Why this dining experience is important for your relationship with___?

> Did you and ___talk about this dining experience afterwards?

5. Tell me about how involved or concentrated you were in the experience, for example, focusing on particular things in the experience, or your physical participation, or gaining special attention from others?

> What is your level of attention? Why?

> (If mentioned) Did you focus more on the conversation with____? Why?

> Was there any entertainment in the restaurant? For example, the live band, or any activities you had in the experience?

> How would you describe this particular experience, which you consider to be memorable, compared with other dining experiences that you had? What makes it stand out?

6. Can you think of any reasons why this experience was memorable?

> Is there anything in particular that makes it unforgettable?

> Usually when you visit a restaurant, do you like to try the ones you have not been to?

> What's your expectations of this dining experience before the experience? Did the experience meet your expectations?

> Are there anything special for this particular experience, for example, a special occasion, such as birthdays, anniversaries? Or are there any special meanings to you? (If yes) Why do you think this occasion is important to you?

7. Do you want to revisit the restaurant you just talked about?
   Why do you want to revisit this restaurant?
   Cues: have you told anyone else about this experience, revisit or plan to revisit the restaurant, or recommend to a friend?

That's all about my questions. Thank you very much for your help, I really appreciate your time!

APPENDIX C–IRB APPROVAL FORM FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

APPROVAL LETTER for EXEMPT REVIEW

This is to certify that the research proposal: **Pro00042387**

Entitled: *Memorable Dining Experiences: Dimensions, Selected Antecedents, and Outcomes*

Submitted by:

Principal Investigator: Yang Cao

College: Hospitality, Retail & Sport Management

Department: Hospitality Management

Address: 701 Assembly Street

                               Columbia, SC 29208

was reviewed in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(**2**), the referenced study received an exemption from Human Research Subject Regulations on **2/26/2015.** No further action or Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight is required, as long as the project remains the same. However, the Principal Investigator must inform the Office of Research Compliance of any changes in procedures involving human subjects. Changes to the current research protocol could result in a reclassification of the study and further review by the IRB.

Because this project was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, consent document(s), if applicable, are not stamped with an expiration date.

Research related records should be retained for a minimum of three (3) years after termination of the study.

The Office of Research Compliance is an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB). If you have questions, contact Arlene McWhorter at arlenem@sc.edu or (803) 777-7095.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Johnson
IRB Manager

Interview ID _____   Survey date _____

Survey time: Beginning _____   Online Panel Company _____

Study of Memorable Dining Experiences

July 2015

Thank you for participating in this study. We are interested in understanding your memorable dining experiences, which are the experiences that are positively remembered and retrieved after the experiences have occurred in full service restaurant settings. Full service restaurants are those dining establishments that have a variety of food and beverage options, table service provided by a server, and an average check of typically $12 or above per person. The types of full service restaurants include both fine dining and casual or casual themed dining.

Before starting this survey, please answer the following questions.

1. In which year were you born?

   After 1997 (Under 18) → **TERMINATE**

2. How long have you lived in the U.S?

   3 months or more 1
   Less than 3 months...2→
   TERMINATE

3. As indicated, full service restaurants are those dining establishments that have a variety of food and beverage options, table service provided by a server, and an average check of typically $12 or above per person. The types of full service restaurants include both fine dining and causal or casual themed dining. Did you dine in full-service restaurants **in the past 6 months**?

   Yes, I had at least 2 dining experiences in full-service restaurants. ..1
   Yes, I had only 1 dining experience in full-service restaurants.........2→
   TERMINATE
   No..3 →
   TERMINATE

4. In this study, we are interested in understanding your memorable dining experiences, which are the experiences that are positively remembered and retrieved **after** the experiences occurred. How would you describe your most memorable dining experiences in the past 6 months?

   All of the dining experiences in the past 6 months were positive 1
   Some of the dining experiences in the past 6 months were positive .2
   None of the dining experiences in the past 6 months were positive ..3→
   TERMINATE

5. Have you taken part in any research relating your dining experiences in the past six months?

    Yes
    ....1→**TERMIN
ATE**
    No..2

About Your Most Memorable Dining Experiences

M1. How often do you eat out at full-service restaurants?
    Less than once a month..1
    Once a month 2
    2-3 times a month...3
    Once a week/4-5 times a month...4
    2-3 times week/8-12 times a month 5
    Daily..6

Please recall your **dining experiences** in the past 6 months at a full-service restaurant, and choose **the one that is the most memorable** and answer the following questions:

M2. How long ago did this experience happen (in weeks or months)? _____

M3. Where did this dining experience occur? (City, State/Province, Country) _____

M4. Please evaluate to what extent you agree with the following statements about this dining experience.

		Strongly disagree		Neutral			Strongly agree		Not applicable
1.	The restaurant's inside surroundings were pleasing to my eye.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
2.	The restaurant's interior architectural design was attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
3.	The restaurant's interior decorations and artifacts were attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
4.	The restaurant did not appeal to my senses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
5.	The dining experience made me feel relaxed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
6.	I liked the restaurant atmosphere.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

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7.	The dining experience aroused positive feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
8.	The dining experience made me feel happy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
9.	I found this restaurant interesting to my senses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
10.	The restaurant made a strong impression on me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
11.	The presentation of the food was appealing to my senses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
12.	The taste of the food was appealing to my senses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
13.	The smell of the food was appealing to my senses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
14.	I ordered the food of my own choice in the dining experience, not from someone else's choice or staff's recommendation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
15.	I visited a restaurant that I really wanted to go.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
16.	The dining experience made me feel satisfied.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
17.	I was interested in the main activities of this dining experience, such as eating, socializing, and observing, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
18.	I engaged in observing other guests and surroundings in the dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
19.	There were not many activities in the dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
20.	I focused on the conversation with my friends during the dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
21.	I engaged in the entertaining activities in the dining experience, such as live band, live shows, singing, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
22.	I engaged in a conversation with the restaurant staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
23.	The dining experience was fabulous– please choose 1 (This is a testing item).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

24.	I shared information about my dining experience with others after the experience occurred.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
25.	I did not have strong emotions for this dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
26.	I met new friends during this dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
27.	I felt refreshed during the dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
28.	It was pleasant just being there in the dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
29.	The dining experience was fun.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
30.	I felt excited during the dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
31.	I engaged in extensive thinking when I was in this dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
32.	This dining experience stimulated my curiosity to know new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
33.	The server explained menu item ingredients to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
34.	I felt cheerful during the dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
35.	The server explained how menu items were prepared or cooked.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
36.	The dining experience gave me insight into a new culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
37.	The dining experience made me more knowledgeable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
38.	The restaurant felt like a "home away from home".	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
39.	I was made to feel like family at the restaurant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
40.	The restaurant staff took care of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
41.	The conversations with friends or restaurant staff during the dining experience enhanced my experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
42.	The dining experience promoted my connection with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

43.	The dining experience made me think about my relationship with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

M5. Please evaluate to what extent you agree with the following statements about this dining experience.

	Strongly disagree		Neutral			Strongly agree		Not applicable
a. Overall, I had a memorable dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
b. I speak to others of this dining experience often.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
c. I often recall and recollect this dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
d. I can still remember this dining experience vividly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

About Your Overall Evaluation on the Memorable Dining Experience

O1. What was the purpose of this memorable dining experience? Choose one that fits best.

Socializing and networking...1
Family reunion 2
Culture/religious ceremony...3
Romance 4
Celebrate achievement 5

O2. This memorable dining experience helped me in pursuing my plans or in attaining my personal objectives.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly Agree

O3. Compared with what I expected, this memorable dining experience was___.

Much Worse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Much Better

O4. Most of the time, I would consider this memorable dining experience as___.

Very Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Pleasant

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O5. This dining experience matters to me emotionally.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly Agree**

O6. This dining experience means a lot to meet my personal objectives.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly Agree**

O7. This dining experience is an important memory to me.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly Agree**

O8. This dining experience is personally relevant to me.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Strongly Agree**

O9. Please describe the level of agreement of each statement.

	Strongly disagree		**Neutral**			**Strongly agree**		**Not applicable**
a. I felt surprised during this dining experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
b. I felt something unexpected during this dining experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
c. I experienced something new or novel during this dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

O10. Please describe the level of agreement of each statement.

	Strongly disagree		**Neutral**			**Strongly agree**		**Not applicable**
a. I myself contributed to making the dining experience memorable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
b. The restaurant is an important factor to make the dining experience memorable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
c. The person(s) who I dined with contributed to making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
the dining experience memorable.								
d. The dining experience is meaningful to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
e. I learned about myself in this dining experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
f. The dining experience has symbolic meaning to me, such as an anniversary, birthday, rewarding gift, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
g. The dining experience is special and unique.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
h. I would say positive things about this restaurant to other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
i. I would recommend this restaurant to someone who seeks my advice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
j. I would encourage friends and relatives to visit this restaurant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
k. I would revisit this restaurant in the next few years.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
l. This restaurant is on my list of revisiting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99
m. I would pay premium prices at this restaurant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

About Yourself

D1. Gender:

    Male 1
    Female...2

D2. What is your marital status?

    Single/never married...1
    Married...2
    Separated/divorced/widowed..3
    Unmarried partners 4

D3. What is the highest level of degree you have completed? (Please choose only one)

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Below high school..1
High school 2
Two year college degree 3
Four year college degree..4
Master's degree...5
Doctoral degree/ Professional degree (JD, MD).............................6

D4. What is your ethnicity?
Caucasian or White..1
African American or Black..2
Hispanic or Latino...3
Asian 4
Native American or Pacific Islander...5
Others..6

D4. What was your annual household income in U.S. dollars for 2014 before tax?

$19,999 and below 1
$20,000-$39,999 2
$40,000-$69,999 3
$70,000-$99,999 4
$100,000-$129,999 5
$130,000 and above 6

APPENDIX E–IRB APPROVAL FORM FOR ONLINE SURVEY

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH
APPROVAL LETTER for EXEMPT REVIEW**

This is to certify that the research proposal: **Pro00043968**

Entitled: *Memorable Dining Experiences: Dimensions, Scale and Model Development*

Submitted by: Principal Investigator: Yang Cao
College/Department: Hospitality, Retail & Sport Management
     Hospitality Management
     701 Assembly Street
     Columbia, SC 29208

was reviewed in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(**2**), the referenced study received an exemption from Human Research Subject Regulations on **7/13/2015.** No further action or Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight is required, as long as the project remains the same. However, the Principal Investigator must inform the Office of Research Compliance of any changes in procedures involving human subjects. Changes to the current research protocol could result in a reclassification of the study and further review by the IRB.

Because this project was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, consent document(s), if applicable, are not stamped with an expiration date.

Research related records should be retained for a minimum of three (3) years after termination of the study.

The Office of Research Compliance is an administrative office that supports the
University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB). If you have questions,
contact Arlene McWhorter at arlenem@sc.edu or (803) 777-7095.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Johnson
IRB Manag

APPENDIX F-CTA-PLS RESULTS FOR FIRST AND SECOND ORDER MDE

Model-implied non-redundant vanishing tetrad	CI Low Adjusted	CI Up Adjusted
Second-order MDE		
τ1:Affect,Behavioral,Intellectual,Sensory	-0.091	0.018
τ2: Affect,Behavioral,Sensory,Intellectual	-0.162	-0.051
τ3: Affect,Behavioral,Intellectual,Social	0.030	0.129
τ4: Affect,Intellectual,Social,Behavioral	-0.127	-0.033
τ5: Affect,Intellectual,Sensory,Social	-0.225	-0.096
First-order MDE		
Affect		
1: M17,M25Recode,M27,M28	-0.081	0.139
2: M17,M25Recode,M28,M27	-0.204	0.107
4: M17,M25Recode,M27,M29	-0.136	0.103
6: M17,M27,M29,M25Recode	-0.169	0.105
7: M17,M25Recode,M27,M30	-0.384	0.089
10: M17,M25Recode,M27,M34	-0.127	0.119
13: M17,M25Recode,M27,M5	-0.073	0.179
17: M17,M25Recode,M8,M27	-0.280	0.053
20: M17,M25Recode,M9,M27	-0.311	0.047
29: M17,M25Recode,M34,M28	-0.088	0.118
31: M17,M25Recode,M28,M5	-0.109	0.155
35: M17,M25Recode,M8,M28	-0.135	0.092
41: M17,M25Recode,M30,M29	-0.068	0.132
43: M17,M25Recode,M29,M34	-0.133	0.127
47: M17,M25Recode,M5,M29	-0.153	0.084
50: M17,M25Recode,M8,M29	-0.202	0.044
60: M17,M30,M5,M25Recode	-0.487	-0.045
64: M17,M25Recode,M30,M9	-0.059	0.124
66: M17,M30,M9,M25Recode	-0.580	-0.100
71: M17,M25Recode,M8,M34	-0.202	0.072
80: M17,M25Recode,M9,M5	-0.131	0.184
91: M17,M27,M28,M34	-0.191	0.122

120: M17,M30,M34,M27	-0.377	-0.036
169: M17,M28,M30,M8	-0.030	0.139
182: M17,M28,M9,M34	-0.196	0.079
205: M17,M29,M34,M5	-0.115	0.074
233: M17,M30,M8,M5	-0.091	0.159
236: M17,M30,M9,M5	-0.101	0.166
248: M17,M34,M9,M8	-0.012	0.168
281: M25Recode,M27,M8,M29	-0.103	0.188
324: M25Recode,M29,M5,M28	-0.092	0.172
358: M25Recode,M28,M8,M9	-0.066	0.190
395: M25Recode,M30,M8,M34	-0.008	0.391
434: M27,M28,M9,M29	-0.065	0.151
526: M28,M29,M30,M34	-0.058	0.176
Behavioral		
1: M15,M16,M18,M19	-0.035	0.129
2: M15,M16,M19,M18	-0.043	0.148
4: M15,M16,M18,M20Recode	-0.053	0.121
6: M15,M18,M20Recode,M16	-0.055	0.113
9: M15,M18,M21,M16	-0.080	0.034
10: M15,M16,M18,M22	-0.070	0.087
13: M15,M16,M18,M23	-0.068	0.158
17: M15,M16,M24,M18	0.009	0.230
20: M15,M16,M20Recode,M19	-0.014	0.235
26: M15,M16,M22,M19	0.072	0.409
29: M15,M16,M23,M19	0.037	0.314
33: M15,M19,M24,M16	-0.045	0.172
41: M15,M16,M23,M20Recode	0.014	0.270
47: M15,M16,M22,M21	-0.039	0.146
49: M15,M16,M21,M23	-0.091	0.168
51: M15,M21,M23,M16	-0.007	0.175
57: M15,M22,M23,M16	-0.154	0.031
109: M15,M19,M20Recode,M21	-0.040	0.071
113: M15,M19,M22,M20Recode	-0.010	0.292
133: M15,M19,M22,M24	0.002	0.419
137: M15,M19,M24,M23	-0.116	0.385
149: M15,M20Recode,M23,M22	-0.155	0.149
151: M15,M20Recode,M22,M24	-0.053	0.284
161: M15,M21,M24,M22	0.031	0.339
165: M15,M23,M24,M21	-0.093	0.051
174: M16,M19,M21,M18	-0.059	0.110
231: M16,M21,M23,M19	-0.067	0.153
Intellectual		
1: M31,M32,M33,M35	1.785	3.415

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2: M31,M32,M35,M33	1.732	3.392
4: M31,M32,M33,M36	-0.280	0.774
6: M31,M33,M36,M32	-1.011	0.048
7: M31,M32,M33,M37	-0.394	0.739
10: M31,M32,M35,M36	-0.430	0.685
16: M31,M32,M36,M37	0.015	1.409
22: M31,M33,M35,M37	-0.356	0.329
26: M31,M33,M37,M36	-0.215	1.123
Sensory		
1: M1,M10,M11,M12	-0.042	0.155
2: M1,M10,M12,M11	-0.082	0.132
4: M1,M10,M11,M13	-0.072	0.148
6: M1,M11,M13,M10	-0.106	0.075
7: M1,M10,M11,M14	-0.028	0.128
10: M1,M10,M11,M2	-0.066	0.046
13: M1,M10,M11,M3	-0.059	0.055
17: M1,M10,M4Recode,M11	-0.223	-0.035
20: M1,M10,M7,M11	-0.148	0.009
29: M1,M10,M2,M12	-0.259	-0.046
31: M1,M10,M12,M3	-0.100	0.009
35: M1,M10,M4Recode,M12	-0.169	0.012
41: M1,M10,M14,M13	0.054	0.280
43: M1,M10,M13,M2	-0.095	0.022
47: M1,M10,M3,M13	-0.274	-0.021
50: M1,M10,M4Recode,M13	-0.150	0.065
60: M1,M14,M3,M10	-0.181	0.001
64: M1,M10,M14,M7	-0.049	0.057
66: M1,M14,M7,M10	-0.085	0.039
71: M1,M10,M4Recode,M2	-0.092	0.028
80: M1,M10,M7,M3	-0.104	0.012
91: M1,M11,M12,M2	-0.081	0.038
120: M1,M14,M2,M11	-0.256	-0.041
169: M1,M12,M14,M4Recode	-0.031	0.054
182: M1,M12,M7,M2	-0.065	0.086
205: M1,M13,M2,M3	-0.025	0.097
233: M1,M14,M4Recode,M3	-0.020	0.074
236: M1,M14,M7,M3	-0.021	0.068
248: M1,M2,M7,M4Recode	-0.006	0.178
281: M10,M11,M4Recode,M13	-0.107	0.117
324: M10,M13,M3,M12	-0.398	-0.071
358: M10,M12,M4Recode,M7	-0.033	0.126
395: M10,M14,M4Recode,M2	-0.011	0.132
434: M11,M12,M7,M13	-0.262	-0.047

526: M12,M13,M14,M2	-0.016	0.097
Social		
1: M26,M38,M39,M40	0.002	0.496
2: M26,M38,M40,M39	0.148	0.900
4: M26,M38,M39,M41	-0.105	0.312
6: M26,M39,M41,M38	-0.241	0.552
10: M26,M38,M39,M43	-0.236	0.179
13: M26,M38,M40,M41	0.224	0.820
19: M26,M38,M40,M43	0.021	0.456
25: M26,M38,M41,M43	0.189	0.801
30: M26,M42,M43,M38	-0.500	-0.024
34: M26,M39,M40,M42	0.159	0.572
38: M26,M39,M43,M40	-0.682	0.019
40: M26,M39,M41,M42	0.238	0.934
50: M26,M40,M42,M41	-0.292	0.200
55: M26,M40,M42,M43	-0.198	0.330

APPENDIX G INITIAL ITEMS AND SOURCES

Indicators	Sources	N
Sensory		17
The restaurant's noise level allowed for comfortable conversation.	(Antun et al., 2010; Walls, 2013), In-depth interview	
The lighting complimented the dining experience.	(Antun et al., 2010, Cetin & Dincer, 2013)	
The restaurant's inside surroundings were pleasing to my eye.	(Antun et al., 2010)	
The inside temperature of the restaurant was pleasant.	(Antun et al., 2010; Walls, 2013)	
There were no unpleasant odors.	(Antun et al., 2010)	
This restaurant makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses.	(Brakus et al., 2009)	
I find this restaurant interesting in a sensory way.	(Brakus et al., 2009)	
This restaurant does not appeal to my senses.	(Brakus et al., 2009)	
Atmosphere is an important element at the dining experience	(Kim, Cha, Knutson, Beck, 2012), In-depth interview	
Music enhances my interaction with the dining experience	(Cetin & Dincer, 2013; Kim, Cha, Knutson, Beck, 2012; Walls, 2013,)	
The appearance of the food is very important to me.	(Kim, Cha, Knutson, Beck, 2012)	
The taste of the food is very important to me.	In-depth Interview	
The restaurant's interior architectural design is attractive.	(Walls, 2013)	
The restaurant's interior decorations and personal artifacts are attractive.	(Walls, 2013)	
The signage and information are arranged right.	(Cetin & Dincer, 2013)	
The food is enjoyable in the restaurant.	(Cetin & Dincer, 2013)	
The surroundings of a product/service should be entertaining to me	(Kim, Cha, Knutson, Beck, 2012, Knutson, Beck, Kim, & Cha, 2009)	

Indicators	Sources	N
Behavioral		15
I paid attention in the dining experience	(Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Xu & Chan, 2010)	
I paid attention to other guests in the restaurant.	In-depth interview	
I have a choice in the dining experience.	(Otto & Ritchie, 1996, Xu & Chan, 2010)	
I have control over the outcome.	(Otto & Ritchie, 1996, Xu & Chan, 2010)	
I visited a restaurant where I really wanted to go.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
I enjoyed activities in the dining experience which I really wanted to do.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
I was interested in the main activities of this dining experience.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
Restaurant guests display proper behavior toward other guests.	(Walls, 2013)	
Restaurant guests value the privacy of other guests.	(Walls, 2013)	
Restaurant guests respect other guests by being peaceful and quiet.	(Walls, 2013)	
I engage in physical actions and behaviors in the dining experience.	(Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Brakus et al., 2009)	
The dining experience results in bodily experiences.	(Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Brakus et al., 2009)	
The dining experience is not action oriented.	(Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Brakus et al., 2009)	
I was indulged in the activities in the dining experience.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
I focused on the conversation with my friends in the dining experience.	In-depth interview	
Affect		21
This dining experience induces feelings and sentiments.	(Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Brakus et al., 2009)	
I do not have strong emotions for this dining experience.	(Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Brakus et al., 2009)	
This dining experience is an emotional experience.	(Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Brakus et al., 2009)	
The dining experience is good for recreation and relaxation.	(Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Walls, 2013; Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu, 2012; Xu & Chan 2010)	
The dining experience inspires happiness.	(Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu, 2012)	

Indicators	Sources	N
The dining experience can make consumers escape from reality and trouble.	(Lo & Wu, 2014; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu, 2012)	
The dining experience gives me enjoyment.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010; Lo & Wu, 2014; Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014; Walls, 2013)	
The dining experience arouses positive feelings.	(Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014; Walls, 2013)	
The dining experience makes me feel satisfied.	(Walls, 2013)	
I feel physically comfortable in the dining experience.	(Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Xu & Chan, 2010)	
I feel liberating in the dining experience.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
I enjoyed sense of freedom in the dining experience.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
I felt refreshing in the dining experience.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
I feel revitalized in the dining experience.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
I felt cheerful during the dining experience.	(Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014)	
I felt I was having the ideal dining experience.	(Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014)	
It was pleasant just being there in the dining experience.	(Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014)	
I enjoyed the dining experience for its own sake.	(Lo & Wu, 2014; Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014,)	
I did something thrilling in the dining experience.	(Otto & Ritchie, 1996, Xu & Chan, 2010)	
The dining experience was fun.	(Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014)	
I felt exciting in the dining experience.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
Intellectual		11
I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this dining experience.	(Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Brakus et al., 2009, Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu, 2012)	
This dining experience does not make me think.	(Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Brakus et al., 2009)	
This dining experience stimulates my curiosity.	(Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Brakus et al.(2009); Oh, Marie, &, Jeoung, 2007; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013; Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014)	
The server explains menu item ingredients.	(Becker, Murrmannm, Cheung 2001), In-depth interview	

Indicators	Sources	N
The server explains how menu items are prepared or cooked.	(Becker, Murrmannm, Cheung 2001), In-depth interview	
The dining experience made me learn about a new culture.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
The dining experience is exploratory.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010)	
The dining experience made me more knowledgeable.	(Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010; Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011, Oh, Marie, &, Jeoung, 2007, Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013, Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014)	
The experience was highly educational to me.	(Oh, Marie, &, Jeoung, 2007; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014)	
I did something new and different in the dining experience.	(Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Oh, Marie, &, Jeoung, 2007)	
My imagination is being stirred in the dining experience	(Otto & Ritchie, 1996)	
Social		19
Restaurant employees knew MY name.	(Antun et al., 2010; Cetin & Dincer, 2013)	
Restaurant staff had a sense of what was going on in my life.	(Antun et al., 2010)	
I knew the restaurant's employees names.	(Antun et al., 2010)	
Restaurant felt like a "home away from home".	(Antun et al., 2010)	
Server/bartender knows what I like to eat/drink without having to tell them.	(Antun et al., 2010)	
I had a sense of belonging in the restaurant.	(Antun et al., 2010)	
Other customers in the restaurant were like you.	(Antun et al., 2010)	
I were made to feel like family at the restaurant.	(Antun et al., 2010)	
I didn't feel out of place in the dining experience.	(Antun et al., 2010)	
I made new friends.	(Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014)	
I talked to new and varied people.	(Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2014)	
Restaurant staff care about guests.	(Cetin & Dincer, 2013)	
Restaurant staff show individual attention to guests.	(Cetin & Dincer, 2013)	
Restaurant staff customize the services according to guests' individual needs.	(Cetin & Dincer, 2013)	
The dining experience enhanced my relationship with others.	In-depth interview	

The conversations with my friends/family/significant others enhanced my dining experience	In-depth interview	
The dining experience promotes my association with others.	(Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu, 2012), In-depth interview	
The dining experience makes me think about my relationship with others.	(Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu, 2012)	
I would like to share my experience with others later on.	(Otto & Ritchie, 1996), In-depth interview	
Overall MDE		4
Overall, I had a memorable dining experience.		
I tell stories to others about this dining experience.	(Tung & Rithcie, 2011)	
I often recall and recollect this dining experience.	(Tung & Rithcie, 2011)	
	Total Items	83