

MASTER'S THESIS

Antecedents and consequences of customer service experience: the case of theme park service

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**Antecedents and Consequences of Customer Service Experience
-The Case of Theme Park Service**

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ABSTRACT

Customer service experience has been an emerging and pivotal topic in service marketing domain. This study mainly explores the antecedents or determinants in the formation of customers' total service experience, which is argued to be the ultimate conveyor of customers' perceived value and a primary predictor of their post-experience behaviors. Research in environmental psychology and transportation theory serves as theoretical basis for the main propositions. A conceptual framework is proposed to examine the relationships among the constructs including servicescape elements, customer predisposition characteristics, total service experience, and post-experience behavioral intentions.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this study. Respondents were local customers of the two major theme parks located in Hong Kong. To ensure the construct validity of the measurement scales, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with the key constructs and the measurement model yielded an acceptable fit to the data. Then the overall structural model was assessed via path analysis to test the proposed hypotheses.

Findings add to the literature of service experience by re-conceptualizing and elucidating the concept of total service experience for experiential consumers. Specifically, we demonstrate that (1) both substantive staging of servicescape and communicative staging of servicescape positively influence customers' formation of total service experience although they exert different levels of influences; (2) two customer predisposition characteristic, namely fantastic imaginary orientation and desire for active participation, interact with servicescape elements and exert different moderating effects over the relationships between the two servicescape types and total service experience; and (3) total service experience is proved to be a substantial

indicator of customers' post-experience behavioral intentions including both experience intensification and experience extension. To the best of our knowledge, we offer the first empirical investigation of how customer's predisposition characteristics, namely fantastic imaginary orientation and desire for active participation, affect the relationship between holistic servicescape elements and the formation of customers' total service experience in a typical experiential consumption context.

Managerial implications related to servicescape design, promotion strategies as well as brand image enhancement are discussed. Firstly, although the effect of substantive staging of servicescape has been well documented in the extant service literature evidenced by Bitner (1992) and other follow up studies, we stress one critical factor in designing service settings for experiential consumption, the fantasy-evoking element, which has been overlooked in the managerial practices. Secondly, service providers are suggested to introduce more dynamic and interactive offerings which are beneficial to alert people of what and how they could enjoy in an experiential service setting so as to foster customers' favorable service experience. It is believed that customers' expectation and their psychological preparation could to some extent enhance their desire for active participation and arouse fantastic imaginary orientation before they experience the service.

Limitations of this current study and possible directions for future research were presented in the end.

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