

THE INFLUENCE OF STAGED EXPERIENCES ON  
DELIGHTEDNESS AND BEHAVIORAL  
INTENTIONS

by

Charity Richins

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The thesis of \_\_\_\_\_ **Charity Richins** \_\_\_\_\_

has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Linda S. Ralston** \_\_\_\_\_, Chair \_\_\_\_\_ **12/2/2010** \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

\_\_\_\_\_ **Mary S. Wells** \_\_\_\_\_, Member \_\_\_\_\_ **12/2/2010** \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

\_\_\_\_\_ **Gary D. Ellis** \_\_\_\_\_, Member \_\_\_\_\_ **12/2/2010** \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

and by \_\_\_\_\_ **Daniel L. Dustin** \_\_\_\_\_, Chair of  
the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ **Parks, Recreation and Tourism** \_\_\_\_\_

and by Charles A. Wight, Dean of The Graduate School.

## ABSTRACT

The tourism and hospitality industry has focused on customer service and satisfaction as their standard for increasing market share and financial success. During the last decade, industry leaders have shifted from this traditional orientation to customer delightedness in an attempt to achieve greater market share in an increasingly competitive economic environment. Pine and Gilmore introduced a model for staging experiences as the fourth economic model which consists of themeing as a way to create staged experiences. There are numerous studies exploring service quality and satisfaction, but almost no research exists exploring the implications of staging experiences and delightedness in the tourism and hospitality industry.

A fully staged tour, partially staged tour, and nonstaged tour, which incorporated varied elements in Pine and Gilmore's model, was created at a heritage park to investigate if staging experiences had an impact on customers' levels of delightedness and subsequently if delightedness was significantly correlated with intention to return and recommend. A total of 228 individuals participated in the study; 76 participated in the fully staged tour, 83 in the partially staged tour, and 69 in the nonstaged tour. A delightedness measure and questions measuring intention to return and intention to recommend were used to measure delightedness and behavioral intentions.

The results indicated that staging experiences has a significant impact on delightedness. Delightedness was also shown to be correlated with intention to return and intention to recommend.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In today's economy, many new companies are emerging and both old and new are always trying to find a competitive advantage and the answer to long term survival and increased profitability. Specifically in the travel industry, competition is fierce and many companies offer similar products leading to an increased difficulty to establish a competitive advantage and market share. In recent years, most hotels and travel organizations have been focusing solely on quality customer service mostly using the SERVQUAL model as a tool for measuring customer satisfaction and developing business models.

The SERVQUAL model is based on the framework of Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory, in which satisfaction is the result of prepurchase expectations of the customer. There are many challenges with relying on expectations in the Tourism industry. Initial expectations might be different from customers' expectations if measured after a service experience whereas tourism and hospitality involves numerous encounters. Expectancy disconfirmation paradigm cannot fully accommodate the dynamic nature of expectations in the hospitality and tourism industry (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001), thus, focusing solely on SERVQUAL may not be a long-term solution for success.

If a tourism and hospitality organization desires to guarantee success by focusing on customer service and the SERVQUAL model, which is already what their competition



is offering, it does not give them a competitive advantage or niche in the market.

Focusing on this business model or measurement approach to retain customers in this competitive market may not be enough to survive. Looking at other options beyond customer service and satisfaction may represent a new advantage to the industry and allow a company to find their competitive edge and increase its market share. Some organizations have already moved one step beyond just customer service and it appears that this business model might be keeping them as the leaders in their industry.

Why are companies such as Starbucks and Disney so successful? What are they doing that is beyond the idea of service? Starbucks may not provide the best tasting coffee, but it continues to be successful. By evaluating Starbucks' success and business model, one will discover it is doing something that goes beyond providing great customer service and satisfaction. Customers do not go there for the coffee alone, but are going there for the atmosphere and the experience that Starbucks provides. Throughout the years, Disney has also been very successful at earning a market share and keeping a loyal customer base along with a worldwide reputation and preeminence with regards to name recognition. Disney is known for not just providing outstanding customer service, but also for becoming the market leader in providing the customer with a specific experience with which no others can compare. People go to Disney specifically for the experience that is offered rather than the customer service. Pine and Gilmore (1998) have become very well known by defining the concept that Disney offers and have introduced this business model or idea as intentionally staging experiences, which they believe is the new direction for business and success. This concept seems to represent the new leading edge and standard practice for business (Shaw & Ivens, 2005).

The tourism and hospitality industry is very dynamic and unique with many opportunities to create staged experiences in every organization. As Walt Disney is the pioneer and preeminent leader of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), implementing this ideology and creating a staged experience in the tourism and hospitality industry may provide tour operators and tour destinations with a competitive edge over their competitors. A recommendation from Pine and Gilmore (1998) is that from now on, leading edge companies, whether they sell to consumers or corporations, will find that the next competitive battleground lies in staging experiences.

A staged experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. Looking at what products can be offered to consumers, commodities are considered to be tangible, services intangible, and experiences memorable and with the potential to produce a greater impact and memory. Why would an experience seem to be such a good item to offer a consumer and why is it memorable? When an experience is staged, customers are able to engage specific emotions in a way that creates a memorable event. Shaw and Ivens (2005) propose that a customer's experience is 50% emotions. Evoking emotions and creating a memorable experience are very difficult to achieve with offering just services and commodities. When a positive emotion and memorable experience has occurred it is more probable a customer would return and share his or her experience with others by recommending that they participate as well, which in turn would increase the market share and create the type of business success companies desire.

To create a successfully staged experience that is memorable so customers return and recommend it, an organization should focus on evoking the emotion delightedness. Delightedness is described as a moment in which a person has an emotional feeling of being extremely pleased and is beyond the feeling of satisfaction. Chandler (1989), the former CEO of Eastman Kodak Company, declared, “we must take quality beyond customer satisfaction to customer delight” (p.30). According to Tan et al. (1999), the strategy to adopt is to delight customers and to exceed their expectations. Very little research has explored the concept of staging experiences and the affect of customers experiencing delightedness in tourism or even in other industries, therefore making it more appealing and necessary to further explore its possible implications on the industry.

Many of the hotels in Las Vegas are other examples of businesses that are successfully providing staged experiences to their customers. The Venetian Hotel was designed to stage the sense of being in the virtual reality of Venice, Italy. The Pirates of the Caribbean dinner show is staged so that one feels as if one is actually dining with pirates. These organizations are staging an experience by carefully crafting a theme and maintaining the theme throughout the hotel or shopping experience. Pine and Gilmore (1998) specifically introduced the idea of “themeing” as the pathway to create a specifically staged experience. Themeing is also described as altering some dimension of the human experience, whether it is age, location, environment, social affiliation, or self-image. Being successful in creating a reality other than everyday normal life and interaction and integrating space, time, and matter into a cohesive realistic whole underlies any successful theme (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Why would focusing beyond customer service and investing in a method to create a staged customer experience be important to the tourism and hospitality industry business? How will these benefit the business directly? By creating a quality staged experience using themeing, customers will be delighted and by experiencing delight they are more likely to return and refer their friends to this particular business, which in turn will create company growth and success. According to Shaw and Ivens (2005), a referral from a customer who had a quality experience will create an estimated profit growth of approximately 1%. The ultimate goal is to increase market share and finding the method that can do this is very important to a business in any industry. Expanding customer base and profit is a key factor to survival.

There are numerous products from which customers can choose and an extensive amount of information regarding these products available in all forms. This can create confusion and become overwhelming for consumers to choose between various brands, resulting in a lack of focus on what may be ordinary or nonoutstanding products (Tan et al., 1999). When tour companies attract the attention of customers and successfully stage a themed based experience by evoking delightedness, the customers are more likely to participate with the particular company again and refer others to participate. This idea seems to be working for Disney, Starbucks, and other organizations; however, there is little to almost no empirical research confirming this concept or phenomenon. This idea is nearly exclusively presented and defined initially by Pine and Gilmore (1998). Should these ideas truly have the potential to be the next economic offering and the possible key to obtain a competitive advantage and long-term success, it is important and almost critical to further explore this scientifically and provide empirical data showing the

possible implications. Even though this idea of themeing to evoke delightedness seems fairly simplistic to achieve, it should be considered that other factors throughout an experience may evoke delightedness and may also be a contributing factor in consumer behavioral intentions. Some of these other factors that should be considered are travel motivations, behavioral intentions, expectations, weather, cultural background, age, and gender.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review previous literature and research related to staging experiences and the theoretical background of customer service and satisfaction that evolved from Expectancy Disconfirmation framework to Service Quality specifically (SERQUAL), Kano's Model, and the new idea of the Experience Economy. This chapter will also discuss Delightedness, Themeing, and Behavioral Intentions as correlated to the mentioned framework.

#### Expectancy Disconfirmation

The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm has been the dominant framework in assessing customer satisfaction in the hospitality and tourism industry (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001). This framework is based on the idea that consumers acquire cognitive expectations of the most probable level of product performance to the extent that meeting the expectations determines the perceived disconfirmation experience. This paradigm originated from an experimental study conducted by Cardozo (1965) whose subjects were evaluated by participating in catalog shopping and the research looked specifically at the affect of effort and expectation on the product. Cardozo used two psychological theories for the basis of this study: contrast theory and dissonance theory. Contrast theory implies that when a customer receives a product less valuable than expected, it will

increase the difference between the product received and the product expected.

Dissonance theory implies that a person who expected a high value product and received a low value product would recognize the difference and experience cognitive dissonance or conflict.

This study was conducted by dividing the subjects into two shopping groups. Both groups were presented with catalogs of pens. One group was allowed up to 15 minutes to shop using a low effort and were showed pens whose value was only 29 to 59 cents. The second group was given 60 minutes to search through the catalogs in what was described as uncomfortable surroundings and were asked to go through the catalog carefully recording five specific features of 31 items with a medium value of \$1.95. At the conclusion of shopping in the catalog and regardless of the amount of effort and expectation, all participants received the same 39-cent pens and then asked to evaluate the product and shopping situation.

The study indicated that when participants gave little effort and received a product less valuable than expected, they rated it less favorably than those who expected to receive, and did receive, an identical product. Those who gave high effort and received less than they expected rated the product less favorably than those who received a product that met their expectations. Those who held high expectations and gave a higher effort rated the product more favorable than those who had put forth little effort.

This study demonstrated and implied that customers who put forth a higher effort of shopping, resulting in a more positive evaluation of a product when the product meets or exceeds expectations could lead to repeat purchases if consumers have a more positive evaluation. Using this idea as a business model, it can be concluded that purchase

expectations can be used as a means to evaluate a product and organizations should work to meet customers' expectations to increase product satisfaction. Cardozo concluded (1965) that confirmation and disconfirmation of expectation affect evaluation, and customer satisfaction may depend not only upon the product but also upon the experience surrounding the purchase or use of the product.

Although the findings of the study were valuable for the new paradigm, Cardozo indicated that the measurement and definition of satisfaction pose a complex problem. The shopping experience and product evaluation were conducted under different conditions and evaluated differently. In addition to the evaluation of the product and shopping experience, there were other elements of satisfaction that had not been identified and their potential impact should be further examined. Cardozo had valuable findings indicating the effect of confirmation and disconfirmation of expectations on perceived product performance; however, it had still received little attention in literature and despite the relationship found between expectancy disconfirmation and product satisfaction in previous studies, no definition had been developed for customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Anderson, 1973). Due to the lack of attention to this phenomenon, Anderson further explored the results and designed a similar experiment to Cardozo's by dividing participants into five groups based on different levels of product information.

The study supported Cardozo's findings that high effort may lead to a more positive evaluation of the product. The idea was presented that having prepurchase information about the product creates some type of commitment to the product. The study also concluded that when expectations are not met, the consumer perceives the



product to be less favorable than a customer who had lower expectations. While the findings were similar to Cardozo's, Anderson (1973) recommended that research should be conducted with a variety of products and services to better evaluate expectancy disconfirmation and satisfaction.

The relationships between expectancy disconfirmation and satisfaction had been measured on several occasions, proving to be significant. However, it had not been conducted more than five times; thus more research was conducted to further review this phenomenon and its possible implications. Oliver (1977) looked to explore this further and conducted a similar study specifically focusing on the evaluation of disconfirmation and preexposure to the product. In this study, participants were asked to evaluate their previous exposure and expectations prior to test driving a car, rather than evaluating the product after it was purchased as was the case in the previous studies. The results remained consistent with Anderson's (1973) study that perceived performance or effort has a positive effect on expectations and disconfirmation when other factors are held constant. In addition, Oliver (1977) noted that disconfirmation effect related to expectation theories of satisfaction might be an indicator of behavioral intentions independent of product performance expectations. The results supported the findings of Anderson's (1973), although Oliver concluded it with mixed feelings and indicated further research surrounding disconfirmation should be done.

Oliver (1980) indicated the studies conducted by Anderson (1973), Oliver (1977), Cohen and Goldberg (1970) and Olshavsky and Miller (1972) conclude that expectations are an indicator in postpurchase product evaluations. However, their viewpoints are different in terms of the process of disconfirmation. Some view it in three different ways:

The phenomenon exists only when expectations are paired with dissimilar performance, comparative processing leads to an immediate decision of satisfaction, it as a cognitive state resulting from the comparison process then followed by an immediate judgment of satisfaction (Oliver, 1980). Based on these thoughts, Oliver (1980) then conducted another study in order to provide more rigorous research on the relationships among expectation, disconfirmation, satisfaction, attitude, and purchase intentions. The previous models were modified by lengthening the consumption period, analyzing nonpurchasers, and operationalizing expectations, disconfirmation, and satisfaction. The study was carried out by including an extension to the federal flu vaccination program divided into two stages. Stage one involved questionnaires that were sent out measuring attitude and intentions toward the flu inoculation. Stage two, conducted near the end of the flu season, involved another questionnaire asking for feelings towards the program and including a specific measure for behavior, disconfirmation, attitude, and future intentions with both preexposure and postexposure variables being measured. Though results of the study differed from prior studies, it did support previous conclusions that satisfaction is correlated to expectations and disconfirmation. Oliver (1980) concurred that disconfirmation was now well positioned in the theoretical satisfaction framework and that findings provided in his study offered support for the development of an integrated model of customer satisfaction.

Yuksel and Yuksel (2001) concur that although the Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm has become the dominant framework, there remain a number of unresolved factors concerning this model and it is, therefore, questionable in terms of validity and reliability. This framework has been significant for consumer products and may provide

a foundation for management and marketing in the goods industry; however, it may not be an effective method to measure satisfaction in tourism and hospitality due to the many probable factors and numerous encounters that make it difficult to measure. Specifically in the tourism and hospitality industry, this framework would imply that satisfaction could only be measured as the result of the discrepancy between expectations and perceived performance. Many researchers in tourism felt that it may be useful for tangible goods that are easy to evaluate pre-purchased, but most tourism and hospitality services cover numerous encounters and are often experiential in nature so consequently measuring expectations may not be as significant or even useful for the industry (Hill, 1985; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). Limited research has actually looked at evaluating whether this has theoretical and/or methodological limitations and can be applied in every situation (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001).

The methodology in expectancy disconfirmation uses pre-purchase expectations as the means for measuring post-purchase satisfaction; however, there is a lack of research on whether consumers use only pre-purchase expectations on their post-purchase evaluations. This lack of measurement may not be practical for the hospitality and tourism industry because of several service encounters that can occur. For example, during a tour there are several service encounters from the purchase of the product, throughout the tour, and until the customer returns home, that would be overly complex and making it difficult to measure the correlation of pre-purchase expectations for every service encounter. Consumers' initial expectations might be different from their expectations throughout the experience, and measuring this after a service experience involving numerous encounters would be difficult.

In addition, in the tourism sector if everyone has expectations before the service encounter and without prepurchase expectations, neither confirmation nor disconfirmation can occur (Halstead et al., 1994; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). If a customer has few or no expectations and or little prepurchase effort, this type of measurement and data are not relevant for those types of circumstances and leaves a gap of information about customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Assuming that the attribute-specific expectation occurs before each purchase in the hospitality and tourism industry context may be false according to Yuksel and Yuksel (2001). Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm is really not able to accurately accommodate the dynamic nature of expectations in the hospitality and tourism industry (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001).

According to the theory, a customer should be satisfied as long as his or her expectations are met or exceeded, but this may not be the case in the tourism and hospitality industry. Other factors can be correlated to satisfaction such as level of engagement, age, external factors such as weather, discounts, repeat customers, and inconsistency in service encounters throughout the usage of a product such as a tour or hotel stay. Learning and change of attitude may also take place during the service encounter and modify expectations making the measure of prepurchase expectations in satisfaction unreasonable. According to Yuksel and Yuksel (2001), studies conducted by Pearche (1991), Yuksel and Remmington (1998), and Smith (1995) found that even though experiences did not fulfill expectations, a substantial number of tourists were relatively satisfied, which shows a lack of consistency in the model as it predicts customers to be dissatisfied when initial expectations are not met.

The expectancy disconfirmation paradigm can be interpreted in a variety of ways in terms of marketing; one could lower expectations for a given service or product allowing customers to discover a more superior service or product than expected, which would lead to greater satisfaction (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). If high expectations lead to more favorable ratings, companies could raise expectations beyond the actual product and/or service to obtain a higher evaluation (Yi, 1990; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). However, following this ideology either intentionally lowering or raising expectations does not seem to be logical, can be very risky, and may result in dissatisfaction and a loss of trust.

Another problem with the model discussed by Yuksel and Yuksel (2001) is that disconfirmation must operate in every consumption situation depending on the product category and nature of customers' expectations. The customers' assessments of certain services may not even rely on disconfirmation but instead rely on performance evaluations. When customers' expectations become passive (not actively processed) as in the case with continuously consumed services, or when there is a high familiarity with the service (repeat patronage) the disconfirmation process may not operate unless performance is clearly outside the range of experience-based norms (Oliver, 1989; Yuksel & Yuksel 2001).

Although the studies conducted in the framework of Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory concluded that prepurchase expectations were the indicator in satisfaction and behavioral intentions, this may not be a reliable form of measurement and analysis for satisfaction of a tour because multiple service encounters and other external factors were not taken into consideration. Due to the many complications and lack of clarity, it may

be a safer approach to look at further research to analyze customer satisfaction in the tourism and hospitality industry (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001).

### Service Quality

Many service and retail businesses continually look for ways to improve and differentiate themselves from their competitors, and a strategy that evolved to offer this type of success was the delivery of high service quality (Parasuram, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Service quality has been increasingly identified as a key factor in differentiating service products and building a competitive advantage in tourism (Hudson et al., 2004.). Characteristics of services that should be acknowledged are intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability in order to understand service quality (Parasuram, Zeithaml, & Berry 1985). Services are performances and are further defined by Parasuram et al. (1985) as not being counted, measured, and inventoried in advance. Performance of a service is also different from producer to producer, customer to customer, and from day to day. Production and consumption of services are inseparable and quality services cannot be engineered at the manufacturing plant then delivered to the customer. Quality actually occurs during service delivery and is an interaction between the customer and the firm.

Parasuram et al. (1988) further defined service quality as an attitude or global judgment and consumers do not interpret the term quality the same as researchers, managers, and marketers do. It had also been defined in the past as the quality of attributes of a service that is under the control of a supplier, and specifically in the tourism sector; service quality refers to service performance at the attribute level (Chen & Chen, 2010). Service quality in tourism has been viewed mostly as the quality of

opportunities available at a destination, and is considered related to a tourist's quality of experiences (Crompton & Love, 1995).

According to Lee and Chen (2006), service quality has both poor characteristics and versatile characteristics because service quality is based on the customer's feelings, so for this reason the evaluation of service quality is more difficult than that of product quality. Service quality is difficult to measure and has several different definitions from research and management. It had only been discussed and defined by Parasuram et al. (1985) in a handful of writings, yet it was used by companies in the service industry as it was the only construct available to assist them in product differentiation and increasing market share.

### SERVQUAL

Although expectancy disconfirmation theory became very popular, it did not satisfy the needs of the service industry. There have been previous studies and research attempting to define or measure quality. However, in most cases it was for the goods sector. Even though other ways of measurement existed, they were still lacking the capacity to measure and define service. In particular, expectancy disconfirmation theory was studied in the context of goods using such items as pencils, pens, or cars. Goods are tangible where a service is not tangible as it consists of continuous personal encounters throughout the service delivery. It also is important to consider that people have different interpretations and definitions of service quality, making it very difficult to measure.

Due to these different challenges with the previous theoretical framework that was solely focused on tangible goods, Parasuram et al. (1985) worked to develop a service model based on the expectancy disconfirmation framework that was more

measurable. The three main ideas by Parasuram et al. (1985) are that service quality is more difficult for the consumer to evaluate than good quality, service quality perceptions result from a comparison of consumer expectations with actual service performance, and that quality evaluations are not made solely on the outcome of a service; they also involve evaluations of the process of service delivery. To further explore these ideas, a qualitative study was conducted consisting of focus groups and interviews with consumers and managers. As a result of this study, they developed 10 determinants from which customers form expectations and perceptions of services: reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/knowing the customer, and tangibles. The concepts developed from this study were that perceived service quality is the result of the consumers' comparison of expected service with the perceived service.

Delivering superior service quality became the new focus of businesses in the 1980s, in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Parasuram et al. (1988) further examined the meaning of service quality beyond the 10 dimensions in their previous research by reviewing previous work defining service and conducting more qualitative research. They gathered data from a 97-item instrument that consisted of two parts indicating the level of service that should be offered and the guests' perception of that service. After evaluation and analysis of these data, they refined this instrument into 22 items (SERVQUAL) and eliminated five dimensions. The five new dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, assurance, and empathy) were for assessing customer perceptions of service quality. Their intended purpose was to create a basic skeleton for use across a broad spectrum of services (Carman, 1990).



This newly defined model provided the start for the service industry. However it received numerous criticisms, particularly with the expectations side of SERVQUAL. Performance-minus-expectations was suggested to be an inappropriate basis for use in the measure of service quality (Chronin & Taylor, 1994). A shortcoming of the expectancy idea is the ability to administer it, and the factor analysis of the difference between perceptions and expectations specifically several of the factors should not be eliminated from the original 10 because there was not enough evidence they were not all relevant (Carman, 1990). Parasuram, Zeithaml, and Berry (1994b) continued to argue that expectation is very important as a diagnostic tool.

The different criticisms were reviewed and the model was again modified in order to better operationalize service quality and expectations (Parasuram et al., 1994b). A three-format approach was developed, specifically one including the difference-score formulation and the other two incorporating direct measures of service quality. The formats expanded expectations by obtaining scores for the measures of service superiority (MSS) and service adequacy (MSA). The three-service quality measurement formats by Parasuram et al. (1994b) are:

1. *Three-Column Format.* This format generates separate ratings of desired, adequate, and perceived service with three identical, side-by-side scales. It requires computing the perceived-desired and the perceived-adequate differences to quantify MSS and MSA, respectively. Thus, its operationalization of service quality is similar to that of SERVQUAL although it does not repeat the battery of items. (Parasuram et al., 1994b, pp. 204-205)
2. *Two-Column Format.* In contrast to SERVQUAL, this format generates *direct* ratings of the service-superiority and service-adequacy gaps (i.e., MSS and MSA scores) with two identical, side-by-side scales. (Parasuram et al., 1994b, pp. 204-205)
3. *One-Column Format.* This format also generates direct ratings of the service superiority and service-adequacy gaps. However, the questionnaire is split into two parts, with Part I containing one set of scales for MSS and Part II containing

the same set of scales for MSA. Thus, this format involves repeating the battery of items as in SERVQUAL. (Parasuram et al., 1994b, pp. 204-205)

All three formats contained the 22 attributes with minor modifications formulated to the scale items with the third scale changed from a 7-point to a 9-point scale. The three-column format seemed more useful as it can be used for diagnostic purposes and offers the ability to use the perception items separately for those interested in maximizing predictive power (Caruana, Ewing, & Ramaseshan, 2000).

After the final model was established, several studies used the framework in order to assess its reliability and validity; however, it continued to receive criticism. A study by Caruana et al. (2000) concluded that most respondents found it difficult to distinguish between minimum and desired expectations and indicated that the addition of minimum expectations appeared to have added little incremental value to the measurement of service quality. Expectations are important, though, but may not be suitable for service quality, and researchers remained unconvinced that consumer expectations in the measures of service quality is a position managers should support (Chronin & Taylor, 1994). A need for additional research and further experimental designs should be repeated across other industries to ensure the appropriateness and generalizability of the findings; in particular a more theoretical development should be pursued to gain a clearer understanding of expectations (Caruana et al., 2000). SERVQUAL does not address both affective and holistic factors that contribute to the overall quality of service experience (Fick & Ritchie, 1991). The consistent criticism of the SERVQUAL model in the service industry cannot be disregarded and therefore it may not be the only option to determine satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Further development or exploration to this idea would be highly beneficial for the hospitality and tourism industry as it is solely based on

repeated encounters, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions and may not be solely related to repurchase expectations.

### KANO's Model

Kano developed a diagram that characterizes customer needs in order to better understand customer satisfaction (Kuo, 2004). SERVQUAL was based on the theoretical framework of expectations relating uniquely to satisfaction where Kano focused more on perception and experience to define customer satisfaction (Kuo, 2004). The usefulness of Kano's model is such that it offers a theoretical model and operative methodology for studying the area of preferences more so than expectations, which has received less attention in studies relating to satisfaction (Jane & Dominguez, 2003). The model developed by Kano also allows one to gain a profound understanding of customer satisfaction and to understand that higher product performance can result in higher satisfaction (Tan et al., 1999). The model developed by Kano has been widely accepted and applied (Chen & Lee, 2006) and is used in all realms of product development, marketing, and measuring satisfaction. In the past, customer satisfaction has been perceived in one-dimensional terms: the greater the fulfillment of desired quality attributes and/or expectations, the higher the customer satisfaction (Yang, 2005). This measurement tool and approach are more beneficial as other models may fall into the category of no complaints means satisfaction. Where development of the model finds more attributes, and can identify the customer satisfaction increment index and customer dissatisfaction decrement index, which in turn prevents dissatisfaction and loss of customers (Kuo, 2004). The research and literature identifies service quality as being based upon the one-dimensional definition that if a service provider delivers what

customers expect they will be satisfied and if not they will not be satisfied. Kano's two-dimensional quality model's core concept is that sufficiency of service quality may not affect the consumers' satisfaction, and sometimes it may result in the consumers' dissatisfaction or even no feelings (Lee & Chen, 2006). A two-way model enables managers to create better approaches to reach a higher level of satisfaction and develop better products attractive to customers.

The two-dimensional model developed by Kano addresses many different attributes that are divided into the following specific group categories:

- The one-dimensional model: when these quality attributes are present, customers will feel satisfied. If they are not present to a high enough degree the customer may feel dissatisfied; however, the level of satisfaction varies as the level of the intensity of the attribute varies. This dimensional quality illustrates that "more begets more" and "less begets less" (Jane & Dominiguez, 2003). The idea is for a manager or an organization to work on creating higher quality attributes that will lead to satisfaction and if they have lower quality attributes it will lead to lower levels of satisfaction. An organization should strive to maintain and improve on a continuous basis to preserve or increase consumer satisfaction (Jane & Dominguez, 2003). In relation to service quality, an example at a hotel could be the length of a wait at check in; a shorter waiting period would lead to a higher level of customer satisfaction whereas a very lengthy wait would be related to the level of dissatisfaction.
- Must-be attributes: are based on customer expectations and expectancy disconfirmation theory. If the attribute is expected it must be present and not

flawed or the customer will not be satisfied. However, if the attribute is not expected and not present it does not significantly relate to dissatisfaction. The corresponding element in Herzberg theory is in hygiene factor (Kuo, 2004). A manager or organization should not disregard the must-be attributes as doing so can greatly dissatisfy the customer and lead to customer loss.

- Attractive quality, also known as excitement, attributes: the presence of this quality can contribute to great satisfaction; however, if it is not present it will not lead to dissatisfaction. Examples of this would be added features, surprises, and attributes that would generate delight (Matzler et al., 2004). Strong achievements of these attributes delight customers (Tan et al., 1999). An example in the tourism industry is a fully themed tour that may not be expected. However, if offered, it would generate delightedness thus leading to a higher level of satisfaction. If this fully staged tour was not offered the customer would not be dissatisfied. This model is the earliest framework relating to the idea of the experience, economy, and theme-based tours.
- Indifferent quality: when an attribute does not cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction.
- Reverse quality: an attribute that causes dissatisfaction and the absence of it causes satisfaction.

The Kano model illustrates the relationship between customer satisfaction and the attribute and/or performance of product or a service. The relationships differ from attractive to one-dimensional and to must-be attributes. The Kano model provides an effective approach for a manager and an organization to be able to categorize attributes

into different types and review which ones are important for future or continued strategy. A competitive strategy for developing products and services should take into account these three categories (Tan et al., 1999). The Kano model offered more options in the tourism sector because it looks at customer satisfaction on more than one level and providing attributes that are important to success whereas the former method of research in the tourism service industry had focused primarily on expectations in regard to the Expectancy Disconfirmation theory and SERVQUAL. This model is important because it implies that basic factors establish a market entry threshold and if the factors are delivered at a satisfactory level it does not necessary lead to an increase in customer satisfaction (Matzler et al., 2004). Through the framework of SERVQUAL and Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory, satisfaction is achieved if expectations are met but they do not further explore beyond satisfaction nor identify how to find the niche for better competitiveness and increased profitability.

Kano's framework although seeming very useful and practical has been used only once to study the implications in the tourism and hospitality industry. Specifically, Lee and Chen (2006) used this model to evaluate hot spring hotels in Taiwan. Questionnaires were collected in order to investigate the hotel's current service quality attributes, to identify which attributes could improve satisfaction, and to provide specific attributes that contribute to customers feeling dissatisfied. Although a resource of information was provided to look at future strategies and attributes, it was a challenge to identify some attributes. The results indicated that 50% of tourists identified a certain quality item as a one-dimensional quality and 49% of tourists identified it also as reverse quality. Therefore, they were not able to generalize that specific attribute. In order to solve this

problem, Lee and Chen (2006) suggested extending the Kano model to include the concept of the “Fuzzy,” which would cover attributes that were not clearly defined.

Kano’s model appears to be very promising for the Tourism sector to look at improving satisfaction beyond expectations; however, there were still questions about the identification method of its attributes. Even though other scholars have proposed some corrective methods, some believe there are still some defaults in the application (Chen & Lee, 2006). There continues to be little research exploring customer service beyond one dimension and particularly in tourism and hospitality. Kano’s model seems to have great application and potential use in these industries. However since it has been rarely explored, there is little evidence regarding its full potential and effectiveness. Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) who presented a new idea of staging experiences, which is beyond the expectations of customers and can create delight, can be considered an attribute attractive quality as discussed by Kano's model.

### Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has generally been the ultimate goal that a manager or an organization is trying to reach. Customer satisfaction at a profit has been highly publicized and used as a successful business model since the early 1950s (Anderson, 1973). The word “satisfaction” is derived from the Latin words *satis* being (enough), and *facere* (to do or make), which illustrates the point that satisfaction implies a filling or fulfillment (Cole & Crompton, 2003). According to Cole and Crompton (2003), fulfillment has been defined in tourism and recreation in two ways. The first approach is the idea that satisfaction is needs based and related to motives being met. Travel motives have been studied frequently and, according to Cole and Compton (2003), an early study

suggested that the quality of a wilderness recreation experience is judged only by examining the extent to which motivations and objections of the visitor are fulfilled.

The second approach suggested by Cole and Crompton (2003) is fairly opposite and is identified as an assessment or evaluation of the extent to which an individual's perceived reality meets with his or her current expectations as proposed in Expectancy Disconfirmation. Early research in recreation and tourism stated that a high quality outdoor experience is when visitors' expectations are met or exceeded. This then emerged as the dominant framework of satisfaction in the tourism and recreation fields (Cole & Crompton, 2003). The motivating factor behind the development of Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory was to redefine satisfaction as being the result of when prepurchase service expectations are met a customer should be satisfied. When expectations are not met, a customer will not be satisfied. However, this was measured only in the concept of tangible goods and not service, which is not tangible and consists of several encounters.

The needs based idea defined satisfaction as a static state of fulfillment of needs, while the appraisal approach viewed satisfaction as a process and satisfaction is also perceived to be associated to psychological outcomes (Cole & Crompton, 2003). Oliver (1981) defined satisfaction as a psychological state resulting when emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer's prior feelings about the consumption experience. According to Lee and Chen (2006), satisfaction in tourism involves the actual experience of the traveler and the psychological and emotional state after the traveler has experienced tourism activities.



There are different definitions and theories working to define and operationalize satisfaction. Many of these definitions resulting from research are necessary to identify in order to understand the complexity and diversity of what constitutes customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is defined as the result of expectation and cognition as noted by Miller (1977) and Lee and Chen (2006). Consumer satisfaction judgments are experiential in nature, involving both an end state and a process, and reflecting both emotional and cognitive elements (Oliver, 1993). Satisfaction relates to the judgment of a specific transaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Consumer satisfaction is a transitory judgment made on the basis of a specific service encounter (Chronin & Taylor, 1994). Customer satisfaction can be met and exceeded by providing customers with innovative products of high quality (Tan et al., 1999).

Cole and Crompton (2003) claimed that satisfaction was also conceptualized by an earlier researcher who claimed that visitor satisfaction is determined by the extent to which desired outcomes or benefits are realized. Satisfaction in recreation and tourism was defined by Crompton and Love (1995) as visitors' quality of experience which is the psychological outcome resulting from their participation in tourism activities. Customer satisfaction is a function of expectations according to Anderson (1973). A study conducted by Cole and Crompton (2003) concluded that both overall service quality and overall satisfaction are attitudes with cognitive and affective components and specifically at the transaction level, satisfaction is the psychological outcome or emotional response to a destination, and thus affective in nature. In the tourism context, satisfaction is primarily referred to as a function of pretravel expectations and posttravel experience;

then experiences compared to expectations result in feelings of gratification in which the tourist is satisfied (Chen & Chen, 2010).

There are numerous different definitions of satisfaction and determining how to measure it can be confusing and the meaning can be interpreted in many different ways. "Although everyone knows what satisfaction is, it clearly does not always mean the same thing to everyone" (Oliver, 1997, p. 125). Over several decades, different theories have sought to explain consumer satisfaction behaviors (Jane & Dominguez, 2003). Even though there are several definitions of satisfaction, and research is attempting to define them, there is yet to be a model or theoretical framework without error. The important concepts to explore regarding satisfaction are whether it is the result of an expectation, a psychological outcome or feeling, what phenomenon is considered satisfying, and does satisfaction lead to a positive outcome or behavioral intention? The ultimate goal of a manager or organization is to find out what ensures consumers will return and refer their product or service, which will in turn offer the organization longevity and the ability of increasing its market share.

### Experience Quality

Service quality and experience quality are two different constructs. Otto and Ritchie (1991) discussed that experience quality is subjective in terms of measurement while service quality is objective. The idea extends that the evaluation of experience quality is holistic rather than attribute based, and the focus or idea of experience tends to be based on oneself and not the service environment that is external. According to Chen and Chen (2010), service quality refers to service performance at the attribute level while experience quality refers to psychological outcomes resulting from customer participation

in tourism activities. For example, the qualities of the attributes of the service are in control by the supplier, while the other involves both the attributes brought to the opportunity by the visitor. Professionals in the marketing and tourism field also agree that service quality is an elusive concept and there is confusion in its definition and its interrelationships with visitor satisfaction and revisit intentions (Cole & Scott, 2004). In the tourism field some researchers believe that the confusion about service quality and visitor satisfaction stems from not recognizing the difference between performance quality and experience quality (Cole & Scott, 2004; Crompton & Love, 1995).

A study by Chen and Chen (2010) focused on the experience quality of heritage tourism and looked at the relationship among experience quality, perceived value, and satisfaction. They considered that service quality has been frequently used in tourism research; however, experience of the service has been nearly neglected. Chen and Chen (2010) define the service experience as subjective personal reactions and feelings that are felt by consumers when they are participating in or using a service, and that having a better understanding of experiences in tourism is important to help the industry perform better. Chen and Chen (2010) used the model developed by Otto and Ritchie suggesting that experience quality in the tourism industry consists of four factors: hedonics, peace of mind, involvement, and recognition. Specifically, they used the factors peace of mind and involvement, and then included their own factor, educational experience. These findings suggested that experience quality had a positive effect on perceived value and both experience quality and perceived value are supported as direct determinants of satisfaction. In addition, both perceived value and satisfaction were found to have a positive effect on behavioral intentions, but there was no statistically significant effect of

experience quality on behavioral intentions. Even though the findings showed promising evidence, Chen and Chen (2010) felt that establishing a better scale of experience quality requires more research efforts in order to be generalized and applied to a wider scope of tourism services.

### Staged Experiences

Pine and Gilmore (1998) provide more in depth detail into Quality Experiences. They agree that economists have typically lumped experiences with services, but experiences are a distinct economic offering, as different from services as services are from goods. Their central idea is that today we can identify and describe the fourth economic offering because consumers unquestionably desire experiences and more businesses are responding by explicitly designing and promoting them. They proposed that companies will find that the next competitive battleground lies in staging experiences. An experience is a real offering, as is any service, good, or commodity. Pine and Gilmore (1998) firmly suggest that unless companies want to be in a commoditized business, they will be compelled to upgrade their offerings to the next stage of economic value.

Pine and Gilmore's (1998) definition of an experience is that it occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. Commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences memorable. Walt Disney is well known as the pioneer of the experience economy and is very successful in this arena. Experiences are not about companies simply providing entertainment but carefully staging a specific experience whenever it engages with customers (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Commodities,

goods, and services are considered as external to the buyer. Experiences are personal, and on a psychological level that is created in the mind of an individual, when he or she has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual level (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Thus, no two people can have the same experience because experiences derive from the interaction between the staged event (like a theatrical play) and individual's state of mind (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Experiences are not just the core of Disney but also theme restaurants and retail stores such as Hard Rock Café, Planet Hollywood, Starbucks, and Cabellas. Experiences engage customers in a personal and memorable way. Pine and Gilmore (1998) define experiences in two dimensions. The first dimension is active and passive participation. Passive would be people attending a concert whose participation does not affect the performance as they are passively participating. Active participation is when a customer is participating in something such as learning an activity or sport. However, those who watch a sporting event such as basketball are not completely passive as they contribute to the ambiance of the event and the experience of those nearby. Escapist experiences such as acting in a play or climbing Mt. Everest are similar to what we consider educational activities, but escapist experiences involve a higher level of immersion or engagement. If a customer's active participation is minimized, it becomes esthetic rather than escapist. The second dimension describes a level of connection between the customer and the event or performance. At one of the spectrum is absorption where customers are watching an event take place in front of them. The other end of the spectrum is considered immersion when the customer is completely engaged in everything around him or her, such as sights, sounds, and smells. Absorption is watching a sporting event at

home whereas immersion is attending the event at the stadium. Pine and Gilmore (1998) divide these into what they call The Four Realms of an Experience (Figure 1).

The richest experiences could be going to Disney or Las Vegas, as they incorporate all four realms. An important factor noted by Pine and Gilmore (1998) is that experiences, like goods and services, have to meet a customer's need and they should be designed from an extensive process of exploration, scripting, and staging. They further recommend designing a memorable experience by including five key principles:

1. Theme the experience: Rainforest Café, Hard Rock Café, Paris Hotel are examples of themes. One knows what to expect when you go to this establishment.

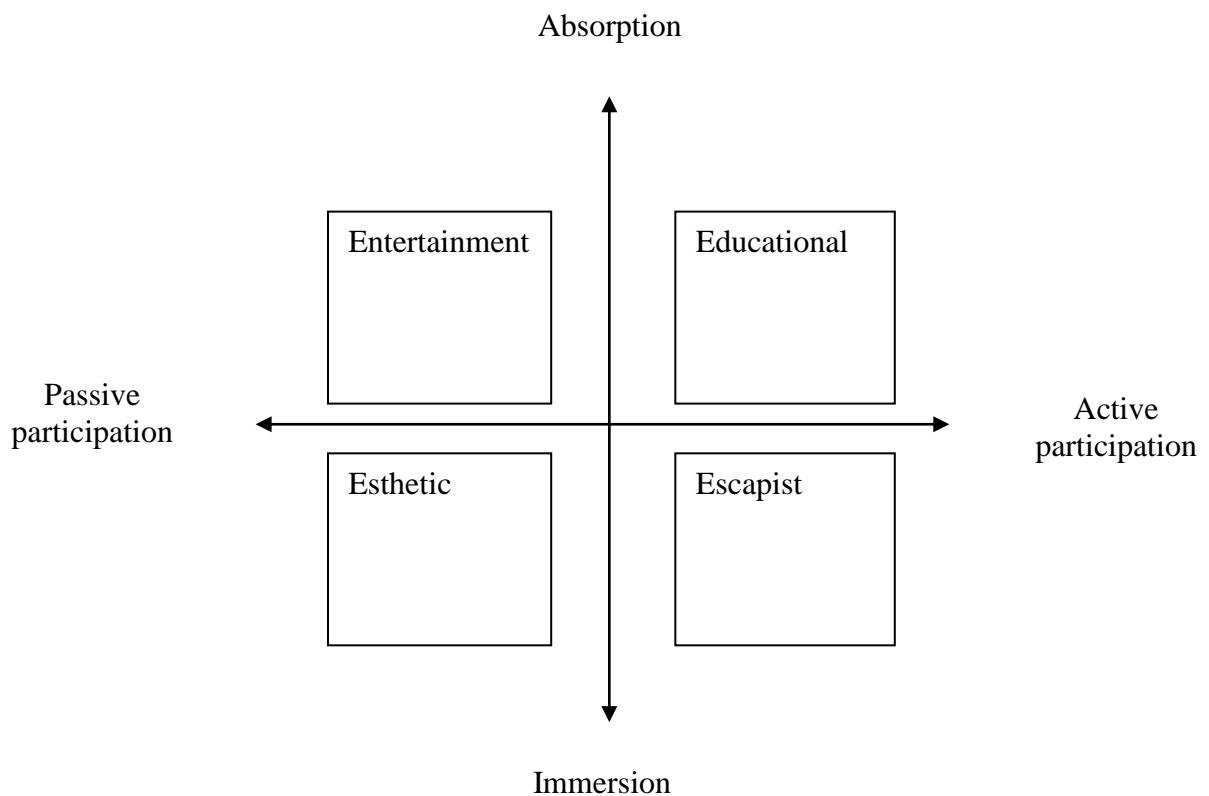


Figure 1: Pine and Gilmore (1998) Four Realms of an Experience

2. Provide positive cues: Impressions that support the theme and are the “takeaways” of the experience by fulfilling the theme.
3. Eliminate Negative Cues: Eliminate anything that diminishes or distracts the theme.
4. Mix in memorabilia: A good that can be purchased or given as a physical reminder of an experience.
5. Engage all five senses: The idea is that the more senses one engages with the more affective and memorable it can be. These sensory stimulants must support or enhance the theme.

This design by Pine and Gilmore (1998) provides the framework for creating a staged experience. Smith (2003) used this framework to conduct an exploratory study of 50 bed-and-breakfast operations using 17 experience management strategies relating to five areas: strategy, design, technology, operations, and people. The idea was to determine which would have a significant importance for creating a “unique” experience from the visit to the destination site with particular emphasis placed on the literature related to creating a useful environment for the guests. The findings of the study provided researchers with an idea of what is important in regard to strategies that may incorporate a feeling of a unique experience. There were limitations in the study due to the sample size and confusion with the terms used in the questionnaires. Therefore, the study did not have any significant results or implications.

A study by Haahti (2003) used part of Pine and Gilmore’s model for small and medium tourism enterprises. A three strategic core process consisting of the following was developed for the model: bonding to create customer capital (a model of relationship

ethics), enabling (a model of co-created value chain), experience staging (a model of role play, script, and staging the experience). The setting took place in a small inn located in Korvola, Finland, where specific staged experiences were created consisting of re-creating the life of the 1850s by using old Christmas plays and authentic menus.

Although there was no specific statistical measurement approach from this study, a story of the owners was revealed to provide an idea of the use of staging experiences and how bonding was deemed to be part of the success of the inn. From this study, ideas were generated to create and design tourism experiences on the basis of identifying local sources of social, cultural, and historic identity.

Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung (2007) felt that although Pine and Gilmore presented a practical and conceptual framework for understanding the nature of customer experience, they had not found a corresponding measurement tool. Their study attempted to introduce relevant theoretical variables such as arousal, memories, overall quality, and customer satisfaction, in an effort to test the predicative validity of guests' lodging experience for some important variables related to business success. The two purposes of the study were to provide scales for measuring experience economy concepts and to test the predictive validity of experience economy concepts applied to the bed and breakfast lodging experience.

Oh et al. (2007) used a qualitative preliminary approach to develop a 24-item model to define the four experience realms. Ninety-five midwest bed and breakfasts participated in the study and the experience dimensions were measured on a 7-point strongly disagree-strongly agree scale. In addition to the four experience realms, the model included the variables arousal, memory, overall quality, and satisfaction. The four



realms were intended to predict the outcome of those variables. Arousal was measured using four items: interest, stimulation, excitement, or enjoyment. Results of the study indicated that the esthetic variable appeared to be a dominant determinant of the outcome of the experience. The opposite of the previous findings and indications of expectations in the tourism literature, the escapist entertainment dimensions were not statistically significant contributors to guest satisfaction, arousal, memory, and overall quality. Although the results did not relate to previous tourism research regarding expectations, the study did not evaluate that going to an esthetically pleasing location could have been a prepurchase expectation for bed and breakfast guests which may have resulted in their feeling satisfied as their expectation was met. Esthetics in the study solely implied that their satisfaction was a result of the current esthetics and satisfaction did not include other prepurchase expectations such as escaping or getting away. Regardless of the findings or errors in the research, this study provided initial terms for measuring the ideas presented by Pine and Gilmore in the tourism and hospitality field.

The Pine and Gilmore (1999) construct of experience economy seems promising; however, there is concern whether staging experiences, particularly themeing, can be long lasting. After a rapid rise in popularity in the early to mid 1990s, theme restaurants began to experience a decline in market share and thus have been downsizing or eliminating brands altogether (Weiss, Feinstein, & Dalbor, 2004). In order to assess this concern, Weiss et al. (2004) conducted a study assessing Hard Rock Café, Planet Hollywood, and Rainforest Café in Las Vegas. Customer satisfaction was measured by food quality, service quality, atmosphere, and novelty in the theme restaurants. One of the most significant findings was that customer satisfaction with the novelty of theme

restaurants' was significantly lower than satisfaction with the other tested attributes. This is important because theme restaurants have tried to sell themselves to their customers on the promise of providing new and different experiences and this tends to support the notion that these theme restaurants are no longer providing a new dining experience (Weiss et al., 2004). According to Weiss et al. (2004), these findings could help theme restaurant managers understand that they can no longer sell themselves on novelty alone and should increase their focus on food quality, service quality, and value to maintain their popularity. Another important finding was that customer satisfaction with theme restaurant novelty was not a significant factor in predicting intent to return. The attribute predicting intent to return was food quality and atmosphere.

After reading these results one might jump to the conclusion that Pine and Gilmore's idea of themeing might be highly fallible. However, looking more closely at the study, only the result of themeing was measured. Findings showed that customers at Rainforest Café were more satisfied with the restaurant's novelty than those at the Hard Rock Café. This could be interpreted that Hard Rock Café was not successful in creating their theme or, as it has been around for very long time the novelty may have worn off. Weiss et al. (2004) did indicate they only focused on one aspect of themeing to assess customer satisfaction and repeat purchase behavior, and acknowledged that there were many others external and internal factors that could be contributing to the decline in the theme restaurant industry. This study does provide a great indicator to look at the validity of themeing and provides a basis for future exploratory research, and for further research to be conducted in regard to themeing, satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

### Delight

According to Oliver, Rust and Varki (1997), there had been a dramatic upsurge of interest in services, as academics and practitioners alike have realized the profound structural shift toward services in every advanced economy. Organizations should strengthen their competitive edge by surpassing the service performance of other organizations (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). Oliver et al. (1997) found that the services literature has increasingly made use of behavioral concepts and suggested the existence of "higher levels" of satisfaction and/or service quality that may produce exceptional behavioral results, such as greater customer loyalty known as "customer delight." This higher level of satisfaction is thought to be the key to reach loyalty and loyalty-driven profit. Chandler (1989), the former CEO of Eastman Kodak Company declared, "we must take quality beyond customer satisfaction to customer delight" (p.30).

Oliver et al. (1997) sought to offer an initial perspective on delight and to suggest how it operates in service settings. They reviewed the construct of delight from the opinion of both practitioners and consumers and proposed what the construct means to each group. From the practitioner's perspective, there are numerous amounts of literature regarding consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction; however, little academic work has been done on customer delight, even though it has been declared that organizations must move be beyond satisfaction, and delighting a customer is very important. Chandler's (1989) definition of delight is the delivery of products and services that exceed expectations and represents excellence in every respect with examples being faster delivery, longer life, lower cost, or consistent performance. "In short, it is anything you can do for your customer, whether internal or external customer to make him or her say: I am absolutely delighted" (Chandler, 1989, p.30).

A strategy that many companies adopt is to delight customers and to exceed their expectations (Tan et al., 1999). The implication is that while satisfaction may be induced by avoiding problems (the "zero defects" strategy), delight requires more (Oliver et al., 1997). Although the elimination of defects is critical to continuing customer satisfaction, increased productivity, and decreased costs, it is customer delight that is the key to survival in today's markets (Whittaker, 1991). According to Oliver et al. (1997), executives and consultants also have some thoughts on the psychological meaning of customer delight. They defined customer delight as a strong, positive, emotional reaction to a product or service, the key word being emotion. They suggest that delight is dependent on emotion in the consumer's response to consumption and begs the question of what emotions are necessary for delight to occur. Delight is one of a set of extreme positive emotions that could include exhilaration and excitement (Rust & Oliver, 2000).

Researchers have looked at the possibility that high positive emotions such as delight may supplement the satisfaction concept. However they have not pursued this further (Oliver et al., 1997). In the literature, delight has not been investigated as a separate construct or in further detail and references, only defined as a pleasant surprise. Kano's model suggesting attractive quality attribute comes close to this notion of providing something beyond an expectation. However, delight has not been looked at or evaluated in terms of an attractive quality. Although there is nothing specifically addressing *Customer* delight, conditions for "positive surprise" have been elaborated and a framework for emotion within the satisfaction response has been proposed (Oliver, 1989).

Oliver et al. (1997) reviewed literature regarding disconfirmation theory, delight within theories of emotion and effect, and delight as an affect within the satisfaction paradigm in order to create a model to distinguish delight. They suggested the following three basic ideas derived from this literature: High positive disconfirmation in creating the surprise environment is necessary in order to activate high levels of arousal, concomitant importance of joy (positive affect or pleasure) and surprise in reports of delight, and the necessity of pleasant surprise. This model suggests the following:

- Delight is a function of surprising consumption, arousal, and positive affect.
- Arousal is a function of surprising levels of consumption.
- Those individuals experiencing the greatest surprise, and hence arousal, will have elevated levels of affect, either positive or negative depending on the nature of the consumption experience.
- There is a direct path linking delight with intention.
- Disconfirmation influences both satisfaction and positive affect.
- Intention is a consequence of satisfaction.

The study conducted by Oliver et al. (1997) consisted of two groups: Group 1 being patrons of a recreational wildlife theme park, and Group 2 being single ticket purchasers at a symphony concert. Group 1, the wildlife patrons, were asked to participate in an “attitude” survey upon exiting the park in exchange for a discount coupon at the gift shop. Group 2, symphony patrons, were asked to take a survey regarding the concert program in exchange for a free ticket to a future performance. Two disconfirmation measures were used to assess the overall experience on a better-worse-

than expected basis and surprising level of consumption. To measure arousal, positive affect, and delight, participants were asked to rate their emotions. One example of a question was “how frequently they felt the emotions of surprised, happy, and delighted on a 5 point scale, “never” (1) to “always” (5). Satisfaction was measured on a 10-point Likert type satisfaction and intention consisted of four 7-point items regarding their intention to return.

Their findings provided an initial look into the area of customer delight. It showed that delight is a strong function of positive affect. However, both study groups had different results in regard to arousal and positive affect. For Group 1, arousal and positive affect played a direct role in delight whereas in Group 2 arousal did not. The idea was that positive affect is linked to delight and may be distinguished on arousal intensity. The inconsistency also may be related to which surprising consumption was measured. The study also concluded that delight and satisfaction could be separate constructs, as was satisfaction which was found to be a function of disconfirmation. Delight was a function of arousal and affect with surprise as an initiator of the affect-arousal sequence. With the necessity of surprise in the occurrence of delight, only the most unexpected levels of satisfaction or performance can initiate a delight sequence. Oliver et al. (1997) concluded this "threshold effect" is in need of further testing, but it appears reasonable that the more unexpected the level of "positive surprise," the greater the consumer's delight. Group 2 showed that delight had a significant impact on intention whereas Group 1 did not. The findings in Group 1 may have been due to moderating variables affecting delight and intentions such as delight being considered “cute” and not have a strong enough effect that would lead to intention to return. The question raised is

when can it be expected to operate and when would it prove futile to attempt to provide this "service" that creates delight to the customer. This idea shows the possibility that there are some thresholds for the operation of delight. Oliver et al. (1997) explained that first consumer involvement must be adequate for the aroused emotion to be part of the consumption experience. Second, the product/service must have qualities that are variables in their delivery. Specifically, there must be a range of exceedingly pleasing performances that are unexpected either because of this very low frequency or because they did not exist in the consumer's schema. This study provided many future implications for research and was one of the first to surface that looked at delight and its effect on satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Oliver et al. (1999) suggested that delight requires further study so that multi-item scales can be constructed that will discriminate delight from its close relatives, such as joy, which will necessitate greater exploration of the positive effects. In conclusion, once this is done, they believe researchers will be in a better position to discover conditions for when delight occurs and when it does not and, separately, when it "works," and when it does not.

Rust and Oliver (2000) extended their previous research and looked further to develop a clearer model to evaluate whether it is truly beneficial to delight the customer since there are several critics who question whether delight is a suitable goal. The main concern is to pursue this goal because the implication indicates that if a customer is delighted, then expectations may be raised making it harder to delight the customer the next encounter. Furthermore, there may not be a long lasting psychological gain from delightedness while the cost to form these types of programs are very high and in the long term may not lead to increased profitability. In their evaluation, they use the same

framework of delight as in the Oliver et al. (1997) model. However, they reviewed Kano's model and clarified the "attractive quality" attribute was referred by authors as "delighters," where the earlier model it was defined as the attribute categories monovalent dissatisfiers, bivalent satisfiers, and monovalent satisfiers. Despite the fact that the titles of the constructs differ from Kano to Oliver et al. (1997), the ideas are the same such that features with the capacity to delight are those that are unexpectedly or surprisingly pleasant, or add utility to the product beyond that which is expected.

Rust and Oliver (2000) conclude that in order for delight to be used in the context for managerial strategy, if delight or its memory endures, then a strategic effort may be worthwhile. If this is so, the function of memory in the context of delight has two opposing implications for management: the first being that delight could eventually become expected as normal or be a must attribute, the second being that the emotion of delight decays but its memory is savored and one retains memories of the delight and can re-experience the delighting stimulus at will or when available. This concludes that there may be two varieties of delight, one that raises consumer expectations and one that is appreciated on a onetime basis and may be sought again. It may also be possible that over a specific period of time consumers may entirely forget the initial delightedness experience and may always be delighted even after numerous product consumption encounters. These situations and other possible situations could occur in many ways. Oliver and Rust (2000) summarized that delight can be viewed as existing on a continuum whereby it can be programmed permanently as a raised expectation, where it can be selectively retrieved as a remembrance, or forgotten entirely. The names assigned



to these three possible situations are considered to be assimilated, reenacted, and transitory.

In conclusion the model developed by Oliver and Rust (2000) brought about a few strategies of delight that may be successful and should be considered when looking to use delight. Customer delight can pay off if the following exceed a given threshold: satisfaction has a high influence on behavior, future profits receive significant weight, satisfaction of competitor customers has a strong impact on retention and other behaviors, and the firm is able to capitalize on dissatisfied customers of competitors, thus converting them into its customers. One of the biggest concerns by Oliver and Rust (2000) was the notion of raising the bar and making delight more difficult to reach in the future. If satisfaction is not met, the customer may then become dissatisfied in the future. The model presented addresses this concern and if competitors are not able to copy the delight program of the firm, their faults will be highlighted and customers of the competitors might be more likely to switch to the firm who offers the delight program. However, if a firm can copy the program, it becomes a competitive race such that more and more promotions may need to be offered. If such occurs it is suggested to offer the program and focus on quality or only focus on the delight programs when the competitor is not able to do so. This is another reason that the implication regarding the customer's ability to remember the delight program has an effect. If the customer is forgetting delight, then it will be more difficult to take customers away from the competitors; however, if a consumer does not remember delight he or she can continue to create the program over and over, thus exceeding expectations at each transaction. If a firm chooses to drop the program later and the customer remembers and expects the delight program, this will then

lead to dissatisfaction further implying that a firm should not facilitate a delight program if it does not have the intention of retaining the program. Oliver and Rust (2000) have presented some valuable insight in regard to delight and when it may or may not work and what are the implications if this type of program is launched. A few of their recommendations to research further were the organizational factors that led to customer delight, game-theoretic models of customer delight, and behavioral impact of delight and satisfaction.

Fuller and Matzler (2008) took delight a step further and looked at the implications of attributes and delight of specific lifestyle market segmentation. In the study, lifestyle typologies were grouped because the researchers believed they are the most affective segmentation bases and have a long research tradition in the travel industry. The idea the researchers presented is that lifestyle characteristics rather than demographics provide more relevant information to understand the tourist consumer and how to design effective marketing programs. Fuller and Matzler (2008) concurred that delight differs from satisfaction and that it relates to extraordinarily high satisfaction coupled with an emotional response such as joy. The product or services that provide something beyond what is expected and is unexpectedly surprising are defined as excitement factors, satisfiers, or value enhancing attributes. Specifically in a ski resort, a high level of novelty and exceptional entertainment or exceptional service can be considered excitement attributes and generate delight. These attributes can be attractive attributes as described in Kano's model. Fuller and Matzler's (2008) study was conducted at 10 leading alpine ski resorts in locations such as Italy, Austria, and Switzerland. Participants completed a 34-item questionnaire on a 5-point-scale

consisting of satisfaction, accommodation, loyalty, etc. The results of the study showed differences between the lifestyle groups, “sporty” and “demanding.” It was suggested if the ski resort wants to delight the “sporty” and “demanding” lifestyle segment, apres ski, night-life, and entertainment are necessary as they had an impact on satisfaction. In the two other segments, the “party” factor is a dissatisfier. Empirical evidence showed that the satisfaction drivers according to the three-factor theory of customer satisfaction strongly differ between market segments. This is an important extension to Kano’s model that builds on the expectations-disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1980). It shows that basic performance and excitement factors differ between consumer groups which leads to differences in expectations toward the product or service features. The recommendations were for a managerial perspective to fulfill the basic requirements to “enter” the market, be competitive with regard to performance factors to increase satisfaction, and stand out from the rest based on excitement to delight the customer (Berman, 2005; Fuller & Matzler, 2008; Matzler et al., 2004).

Fuller and Matzler (2008) also were concerned that continuously delighting can raise expectations and if delight is not continuously reached that can lead to dissatisfaction among customers and may become the new norm. It is also assumed that customer delight leads to positive word of mouth and repurchase intentions. In cases where these behavioral consequences are not relevant or when satisfaction does not have a strong influence on behavior (when customers are variety seekers), customer delight will not automatically lead to a higher likelihood of returning (Fuller & Matzler, 2008). This study had great implications and findings for the tourism industry but the term “delight” was not used in terms of measurement but rather the authors assumed that if

specific attributes were present, then delight occurred. In order to generalize the findings in regard to delight, it requires specific measurements of delight where the customer can rate their level of delight throughout or at the end of his or her trip at the alpine ski location.

There is a basic approach to delight but very little research has been conducted to conclude if this is a valuable construct to pursue and incorporate in a business. The ideas presented by the research have provided a valuable concept to review and potential positive and negative implications. By using this approach, necessary solid research would be very beneficial to provide an empirical resource to determine if this construct could correlate with positive behavioral intentions and/or future industry growth.

### Behavioral Intentions

Behavioral intentions can be defined as the intention to return, purchase the same product or another product from the same organization, or refer the product to another person after the customer has used a product or service. Numerous studies in all industries conclude that customer satisfaction, however it is defined in each study, appears to have an effect on purchase intentions. According to Cardozo (1965), customer satisfaction leads to repeat purchases, acceptance of other products in the same product line, and favorable word-of-mouth. Cole and Compton (2003) suggested that a study conducted by researchers found a significant relationship between overall satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Past studies suggest that perceptions of service quality and value affect satisfaction, and satisfaction can furthermore affect loyalty and postbehaviors (Chen & Chen, 2010). A study conducted in the hospitality industry by Oh (1999) concluded that customer satisfaction was positively related to both repurchase intention

and intent to spread positive word of mouth about the hotel (Weiss et al., 2004). Given the increasing competitiveness of the travel industry, it is imperative for practitioners to understand what factors influence the formation of tourists' intentions to repurchase tourism packages from a travel agency (He & Song, 2009). Much research indicates statistical significance among the positive relationships of customer satisfaction and their repurchase intentions (Kim et al., 2006)

Users who are highly satisfied with their experience are likely to be repeat visitors, to be loyal users, to disseminate positive word of mouth communications to others, and to be supporters of the providing agency (Cole et al., 2002). This is the belief of most organizations and research is being conducted to look for ways to achieve customer loyalty and continual recommendation of their product or services. Chen and Chen (2010) agreed that favorable behavioral intentions frequently represent a customer's cognitive loyalty and believed loyalty is an important goal in the consumer marketing community and the key component for a company's long-term viability or sustainability, because loyal customers are more likely to make recommendations. According to Martensen and Gronholdt (2001), loyal employees represent value to a company, and they also represent security for the results of the future. The degree of destination loyalty is frequently reflected in tourists' intentions to revisit a destination and in their willingness to recommend it (Chen & Chen, 2010).

Though there has been ample evidence in the literature that perceived value, quality, and satisfaction all play roles in determining tourists' repurchase intentions, disagreement remains as to which is the most salient interim factor that influences repurchase intentions (He & Song, 2009). If an organization is able to identify and

strategize what will generate positive behavioral intentions then this will be an important component to sustainability and growth.

### Summary

Satisfaction has evolved from the one-dimensional model of Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm that defined satisfaction as being based on prepurchase expectations. This framework is solely based upon prepurchase expectations and post-evaluations, particularly in the goods sector. This model was not very useful for the service industry as it does not consist of tangible goods but rather intangible goods that consist of several encounters throughout consumption. SERVQUAL was later developed to better suit the service industry and after several revisions consists of five determinants to measure service quality, is based on expectancy disconfirmation theory and is one-dimensional. Kano's model moved further beyond SERVQUAL and presented three dimensions and specific attributes that affect satisfaction. No further extensions to this model have been offered and little research has focused on the importance of attractive quality, suggesting it is something that exceeds the customers' expectations and can satisfy when present.

Moving further beyond the service industry, the experience industry has started to emerge. Some claim they are lumped into one construct, but, looking at the research and theoretical framework they are two different constructs. Chen and Chen (2010) defined service quality as service performance at the attribute level. Experience quality refers to psychological outcomes resulting from customer participation in tourism activities where experience is an outcome. Pine and Gilmore (1998) defined experience quality as staging

experiences. They suggested it is the fourth economic offering and the direction companies and organizations eventually will have to adopt.

An experience offered from companies such as Disney and Hard Rock Café not only includes entertainment, but engages consumers in a personal and memorable way. In Pine and Gilmore's (1998) model, it is made clear that to create an experience it must be staged as a theatric event consisting of four realms and five important steps. These steps include themeing the experience, creating positive cues, eliminating negative cues, using memorabilia, and engaging all five senses of the participants. The design presented seems rather simple to create. If in fact it does work, it could have great implications for business in the tourism and hospitality industry, yet little research has explored or measured it.

As satisfaction seems to have numerous definitions and could be considered very ambiguous, delight is something that could be more easily measured and obtained. Delight is proposed as being one step beyond satisfaction and has been considered an attractive quality and specific emotional outcome. The Oliver et al. (1997) model of delight had great implications for future research and the later extension of this concept by Rust and Oliver (2000), where specific recommendations of when delight may or may not work, gives a basic guideline for managers or firms who are considering such programs. Fuller and Matzler (2008) studied delight by using a three-dimensional attribute idea relating to Kano's model, and provided potential framework to consider different market segments. All of these studies provide valuable information; however, all studies consisted of postevaluations and have not empirically measured delight. Delight seems to be a "well known" idea but its true potential is lacking and should be

further explored in the setting of the tourism and hospitality industry considering the competitiveness and the easy ability to stage experiences in this sector.

After careful evaluation of the concept of delight and attractive quality by Kano's Model, the findings of Fuller and Matzler (2008), and the potential of what delight can bring, it is proposed that the model presented by Pine and Gilmore (1998) should be further explored. Specifically it is suggested that the staging of experiences by the use of themeing, active participation, use of memorabilia, and engaging the five senses can create the feeling of delightedness, and creating delightedness would lead to positive behavioral intentions.

In order to study the implications of the effect of staging experiences by using the model presented by Pine and Gilmore (1998) on delightedness and the effect of delightedness on positive behavioral intentions, the following hypotheses were formed:

- H1: The greater the level of staging experiences the higher the delightedness.
- H2: The higher the level of delightedness the higher the intention to return.
- H3: The higher the level of delightedness the higher the intention to recommend.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

This chapter will focus on the methods and tools that were utilized to design the experience, as well as collecting and analyzing the resulting data. The design of the experience is essential to the identification and observation of delightedness and intention to return and the intention to recommend.

#### Setting

The effectiveness of this research study is largely dependent upon the design of the experience and the setting is essential to staging the experience. The setting of a “living history park” was selected as living history experiences have rapidly become popular attractions yet are still seen as a somewhat less effective form of historic interpretation or educational tool. It is believed by some historical associates that educational museums provide a better experience than living history museums. Living history museums typically include historic structures, such as homes, barns, outbuildings, churches, banks, mills, and trade shops.

The open-air environment that surrounds the buildings often encompasses animals and articles representative of the period such as wagons and handcarts, road surfaces, fencing, and gardens. The interpreters in living museum parks typically wear clothing

representative of the time period depicted by the structures. Rather than simply telling a story, these docents play the role of the people who might have lived in these living museums. By conducting the study at an existing living history museum/park, we were able to utilize an authentic setting, trained interpreters, and costumes representative of the setting. The trained docents were prepared to role play and speak in first or third person, which is already done at This Is the Place Park, during this specific experience.

**This Is the Place Heritage Park** is one of four living history parks in the state of Utah. The 450-acre park represents a typical Utah settlement during 1847-1897, consisting of original and newly constructed buildings depicting former Mormon Pioneer settlers and prophets. The current setting of the park includes trained interpreters representing specific persons from the era of the early Mormon pioneer settlers. This park was selected for this research study due to the current highly functional program using trained interpreters and activities that are already present on a daily basis at the park. Their current setting already encompassed factors described by Pine and Gilmore (1998) and was an easy setting that required making only minor modifications to encompass all the factors necessary to stage a full experience.

The administration and staff of the This Is the Place Heritage Park agreed to cooperate in this research in hopes of demonstrating the effectiveness of their current business model. The idea is to demonstrate that the Pine and Gilmore model is effective in the tourism and hospitality setting. In addition, this type of model is more effective than a general historical museum as has been presented by historical associates, and to measure a living history experience in which participants will be able to interact and

connect with strong, positive messages of the park, as well as the effect of the living history experience and future participation of current park and potential park visitors.

### Participant Recruitment and Selection

Visitors entered the park for a planned visit and were invited by a volunteer from the University of Utah to participate in this study. They were informed that the study would last approximately 1 hour or less and they would be engaged in an experience within the grounds of This Is the Place Heritage Park and would not be charged admission at the park for participation in the study. After participants had volunteered, they were asked to read and agree to the consent form. If the tour was fully staged, the volunteer escorted the participants to the park entrance to meet a guide who was dressed entirely in pioneer clothing. If the tour was partially staged or nonstaged, participants were given a map of the park and a list of the locations they were required to visit for the study. The timing of tour group selection was based on the next group arriving near the completion time of the previous tour group. An extensive wait time would have negatively impacted the results of the study; thus, a convenience sample was used to better serve the purpose of the study. Only individuals 18 years or older were allowed to complete a survey.

All study participants had to be present for the entire 1 hour experience. If, for any reason, a group or individual decided to end the experience prematurely, his or her incomplete survey instruments were destroyed without entering the results in the database. Those in the group who refused to participate during the study after agreeing to and commencing the study were allowed to continue with their group, but their surveys were discarded and their results were not entered.

Volunteers who frequented the park and chose to participate on the Study Day 2 were assigned to participate in the Nonstaged Tour 1. Volunteers who frequented the park and chose to participate on Study Day 2 and 3 were assigned to participate in the Partially Staged Tour 2. Volunteers who frequented the park and chose to participate on Study Day 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 were assigned to participate in the Fully Staged Tour 3. It was planned that every 3 days the tours were to be rotated. However, due to inclement weather and the length of participation for the fully staged tour and the days available for the park's use of the facilities, the days were modified accordingly. The target for each staged group was a total of 180 individuals, 60 participants in each of the three staged designed experiences.

### The Experience

Pine and Gilmore's (1999) model of staging experiences was used by means of designing the experience. Three tours were designed. Each tour was different and had varying of levels of design according to Pine and Gilmore's model. Themeing, the use of five senses, active participation, eliminating negative cues, and use of memorabilia were all used in the fully staged tour and it was anticipated this tour would create the highest level of delightedness among the participants. In more detail, this tour consisted of a tour guide to take them to and from each location, full interpretation, the receipt of memorabilia, use of all five senses, active participation, and full themeing. The second tour, partially staged, consisted of interpretation, the receipt of memorabilia and use of a few senses. It received a moderate level of themeing and was considered to be partially staged. The participants in the nonstaged experience viewed the facilities only as if it

were a historical museum and did not participate in activities, listen to interpretation, and did not receive memorabilia.

Participants visited three locations in the park, and each participant visited the same locations regardless of the tour. Initially the participants were scheduled to visit four locations rather than three. After the first day of conducting the tour, a park docent was taking extensive time and a facility was to be closed during some of the anticipated tour days, it was necessary to eliminate one activity for the proceeding days.

The active participation for the fully staged tour consisted of a full interpretation from the docents and full participation in the park activities such as plowing the garden and a money exchange with the banker. Questions were asked by the docents to engage the participants. All of the minor details are presented in Tables 1-3. The partially staged tour participants received an interpretation from the park docents, and it was intended for them to participate in passive participation by watching a University of Utah study volunteer participate in the park activities. However, due to the challenges with lack of volunteer staff and complications with the park, this was eliminated from the tour and no staged passive participation took place and the model was later modified. The nonstaged tour participants did not participate and were supposed to only read and view the three selected locations.

Participation in the fully staged tour memorabilia consisted of dressing up in pioneer clothing and having a photo taken. Participants in the partially staged tour received a postcard from the This Is the Place Heritage Park. The nonstaged tour did not receive any memorabilia.

Table 1

*Full Description of Tour 1*

| <b>Activity</b>  | <b>Variable Manipulated</b>    | <b>Tour 1-Nonstaged</b>  |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
|  | Survey                         | Survey booklet printed on white paper                                    |
|  | Costume                        | Docents will wear This Is the Place t-shirt and regular street clothing. |
|  | Tour Script and Interpretation | No interpretation  |
|  | Participation Level            | Look at the locations and read as if it were a museum.<br>No interaction |
| Activity 1<br>Gardening at Gardiner Home                       |                                | Visit Gardiner Home  |
| Activity 2<br>Money Exchange                                   |                                | Visit the bank   |
| Activity 3<br>Print Press<br><br><b>Eliminated after Day 1</b> |                                | Visit the printing press   |
| Activity 4<br>Heber C Kimball Home                             |                                | Take a tour through the home   |
| Final Data Collection  | Memorabilia                    | None   |

Table 2

*Full Description of Tour 2*

| <b>Activity</b>   | <b>Variable Manipulated</b>    | <b>Tour 2-Partially Staged</b>   |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
|   | Survey                         | Survey booklet printed on beige paper  |
|   | Costume                        | Docents will be in a partial costume (hat or shirt costume only)                       |
|   | Tour Script and Interpretation | Interpretation as normal at the park   |
|   | Participation Level            | Participants will not participate in activities. Docents to point to items and explain |
| Activity 1 Gardening at Gardiner Home                       |                                | Visit Gardiner Home<br>Interpretation of the history, gardening, and activities        |
| Activity 2 Money Exchange                                   |                                | Visit the bank<br>Listen to the interpretation   |
| Activity 3 Print Press<br><br><b>Eliminated after Day 1</b> |                                | Visit the printing press<br>Watch them prepare the press and make a paper              |
| Activity 4 Heber C Kimball Home                             |                                | Take a tour through the home   |
| Final Data Collection                                       | Memorabilia                    | Participants will receive a post card from This Is the Place Heritage Park             |

Table 3

*Full Description of Tour 3*

| Activity  | Variable Manipulated           | Tour 3-Fully Staged  |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
|   | Survey                         | Survey booklet printed on beige paper with “oldie” illustrations   |
|   | Costume                        | Docents will be in full pioneer costume  |
|   | Tour Script and Interpretation | Interpretation as specified by the park and specific questions for each group- Tour guide to accompany guests and assist the park docents  |
|   | Participation Level            | Item for activities will be present and participants will participate in each activity   |
| Activity 1 Gardening at Gardiner Home                       |                                | Visit Gardiner Home<br>Learn about the history.<br>Smell fresh lavender<br>Learn about gardening<br>Each participant to plow the garden (full stride to the end of the garden) and wash clothing.<br>Play 2 pioneer games. Each participant to earn a gold for their daily wages |
| Activity 2 Money Exchange                                   |                                | Visit the Bank<br>Participant to give a gold coin to the banker and have an exchange with the banker.<br>Each participant a receive Deseret dollar to pay for proceeding activity  |
| Activity 3 Print Press<br><br><b>Eliminated after Day 1</b> |                                | Visit the printing press<br>Listen to dialogue of printing docents (learn about the print press & how it works). Each participant pay for a paper to be printed.<br>Participant makes their own paper. Take a finished paper as memorabilia                                      |
| Activity 4 Heber C Kimball Home                             |                                | Take a tour through the home, interpretation given by the tour guide.<br>Apple pie scented candle in the kitchen (docent to note the smell to participants)  |
| Final Data Collection                                       | Memorabilia                    | Each participant to put on pioneer clothing and takes a photo at the Madsen Home. Participants given the photo   |



The use of senses was incorporated during the tour in a variety of ways. All participants received a small survey booklet. Although the instrument did not change, the booklet's overall design was changed for the different experiences. For the nonstaged tour, the survey booklet was printed on white paper and participants used a pen to complete the survey. There was no other sensory manipulation. For the partially staged tour, the survey booklet was printed on beige paper, and the participants used a pen to complete the survey. It was intended for music not particular to the time period to be played during this tour; however, the park forgot to play the music. During the fully staged tour, the survey booklet was printed on parchment paper representative of the time period of the This Is the Place Heritage Park and participants used a pencil to complete the survey. Participants were given candy from the pioneer time period; a scented candle was lit in one of the locations; music from the pioneer era was played, and participants were asked to stop and listen to the music; and during the walk to the different locations the participants were asked to intentionally observe certain items such as the garden, etc. The different paper textures, music, candy, smells, and visual appearance assisted in manipulating the five senses.

The appearance of the docents at the different activities was manipulated by varying the level of costume involved. During the nonstaged experience, the docents wore a **This Is the Place Heritage Park** t-shirt and normal modern clothing. During the partially staged experience, the docents wore a partial period costume, such as a hat or shirt. During the fully staged experience, the docents wore a full pioneer period costume. The features and elements of the three staged experiences are provided in full detail in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

### Data Collection

All data collection was taken onsite immediately following the experience. The research guide informed the participants that this was not an evaluation of the docents or park itself but rather an evaluation to measure delightedness and behavioral intentions. The survey booklet included an overall delightedness measure, one question designed to identify a “wow” aspect of the experience, one question designed to identify a “disappointing” aspect of the experience, questions identifying certain aspects throughout the tour to identify if the tour guide and other factors influenced the study and if participants and docents followed the tour appropriately, a question measuring intention to return and intention to recommend, and basic demographic questions.

### Measuring Delightedness

A 100-point scale designed by Drs. Gary Ellis and Linda Ralston was used to measure and determine a participant’s level of delightedness during the staged experience. Similar to a thermometer, the scale begins at one and then moves up numerically to a high of 100. Scores that are assigned a higher number show that a greater level of delightedness has been achieved. Participants marked on the scale their level of delightedness with the experience.

### Measuring Intentions

For this study, participants were asked to indicate their intention to return to This Is the Place Heritage Park at a future date. Participants were also asked to indicate their intention to recommend a visit to This Is the Place Heritage Park to their family and friends.

### Data Analysis

Based on the first hypotheses developed for this study, the mean of the delightedness scores for each participant was calculated and compared across the three different staged tours. The statistical software package, SPSS, was used to identify a significant difference in the levels of delightedness reported among the nonstaged, partially staged, and fully staged participants. The second and third hypothesis examined the individual's intention to return and intention to recommend according to the achieved mean of overall delightedness scores. Again, SPSS was used to correlate the intention to return and intention to recommend to the mean of the delightedness scores.

### Limitations of Data Collection

The scope of this study and the convenience sample did not control for the weather, repeat customers, the nature of the individual study groups, ethnicity, legal residence, home address, distance from the park, religious affiliation, or an appreciation for pioneer history. Although it is impossible to control for weather, the university volunteers collecting the survey recorded the temperature and general weather conditions at the conclusion of the tour experience. This enabled an investigation regarding the possible influence of weather upon the delightedness reported by the participants.

This study was based upon the perspective of the participant. It is possible that how participants viewed and evaluated their experiences may be completely different from other individuals. It is the nature of individuality that one's personal perspective may be very different even if the individuals share similar background, education, religious affiliation, or country of birth. The selection of participants to any particular ethnicity, age, or legal residence was not limited. Any individuals or small groups that

arrived on the day of the study were eligible to participate in the tour experience. If a small family group agreed to participate and they had one or two children under the age of 18, the entire family was eligible to participate but only the survey instruments completed by adults over the age of 18 were included in the data analysis. No specific group was targeted and adults or groups mixed with children and adults participated in the study. They were selected based upon their agreement to participate in the study and if they entered the park when there was the availability to study. Any demographic information regarding religious affiliation or an awareness of Mormon or early American pioneer history was not requested.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This study examined the level of impact of staging experiences on delightedness, and delightedness on intention to return and recommend at a heritage park. This section will look at the analysis for this study, descriptive statistics, hypotheses tests, and mixed model analysis. Some of the descriptive statistics that will be highlighted in this section are the means of delightedness and intention to return and recommend. The hypotheses tests will examine the impact of staged experiences on delightedness and delightedness on intention to return and recommend. The mixed model analysis will look at if there is a difference in groups within the treatment condition.

#### Participants Profile

A total of 228 individuals participated in the study. In each individual tour, 76 participated in the fully staged tour, 83 in the partially staged tour, and 69 in the nonstaged tour. Children were allowed to participate in the tour accompanied by adults. However, only participants 18 years and older completed a questionnaire. The ages of participants ranged from 18 to 95 years old, with an overall mean age of 42. The majority of participants were female (68%). Further details of the participants are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Participants Profile*

|                        | Total Number |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Total Participants     | 228          |
| Male                   | 73           |
| Female                 | 154          |
| Did not specify Gender | 1            |
| Mean Age               | 42           |
| Youngest Participant   | 18           |
| Oldest Participant     | 95           |
| Fully Staged Tour      | 76           |
| Partially Staged Tour  | 83           |
| Nonstaged Tour         | 69           |

Hypotheses Tests

Hypothesis 1 stated that the greater an experience is staged the higher the delightedness. This hypothesis was tested using mixed model analysis. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each tour group: fully staged, partially staged and nonstaged. The mean for delightedness was highest in the fully staged tour ( $m=93.42$ ,  $SD=8.30$ ), and lowest in the nonstaged tour ( $m=73.885$ ,  $SD=21.03$ ). The difference between standard deviations in the nonstaged tour was a much greater range than the other two tours, which indicates there was a greater range of delightedness in the

nonstaged tour. Means and standard deviations for delightedness in each individual tour group are presented in Table 5 and Figure 2.

Results of the mixed model analysis suggest that a significant ( $p < .05$ ) difference existed among means of delightedness across the three tour groups. Follow-up analyses using the Tukey procedure (see Table 5) suggested that the mean of fully staged tour

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for Delightedness in Each Condition Group*

| Tour             | Mean  | Standard Deviation | Mean Differences ( $\psi_{ij}$ )* |                  |            |
|------------------|-------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------|
|                  |       |                    | Fully Staged                      | Partially Staged | Not Staged |
| Fully Staged     | 93.42 | 8.30               | --                                | 8.00             | 19.32      |
| Partially Staged | 84.58 | 9.14               | -8.00                             | --               | 11.315     |
| Nonstaged        | 73.89 | 21.03              | -19.32                            | -11.315          | --         |

\*All contrasts are significant at  $p < .05$ , based on Tukey's HSD

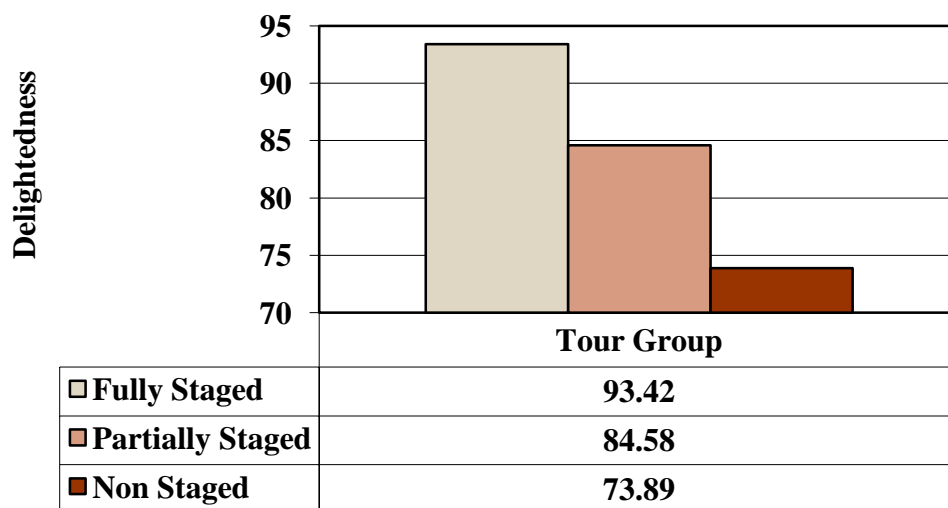


Figure 2: Means of Delightedness for the Condition Groups

groups was significantly higher than the mean of the partially staged and the mean of the nonstaged group. The mean of the partially staged group was also significantly higher than the nonstaged group.

$R^2_{PRE}$  was calculated as a measure of association strength. The value of that coefficient was .23. See Table 6.

The second and third hypotheses suggested that a positive relationship would exist between delightedness and the intention to return and recommend. A correlation analysis was conducted to tests this hypothesis. This analysis revealed a significant ( $p < .05$ ) relationship between overall delightedness and both intention to return and intention to recommend. These results support Hypothesis 2 and 3 and can be seen in Table 7 and Figures 3 and 4.

Table 6

*Strength of Association*

| Source      | $R^2$ | $P$  |
|-------------|-------|------|
| Mixed Model | .23   | <.01 |

Table 7

*Correlations Between Delightedness and Intentions*

| Intention | Pearson Correlation | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Return    | .157                | .024**          |
| Recommend | .227                | .001*           |

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$



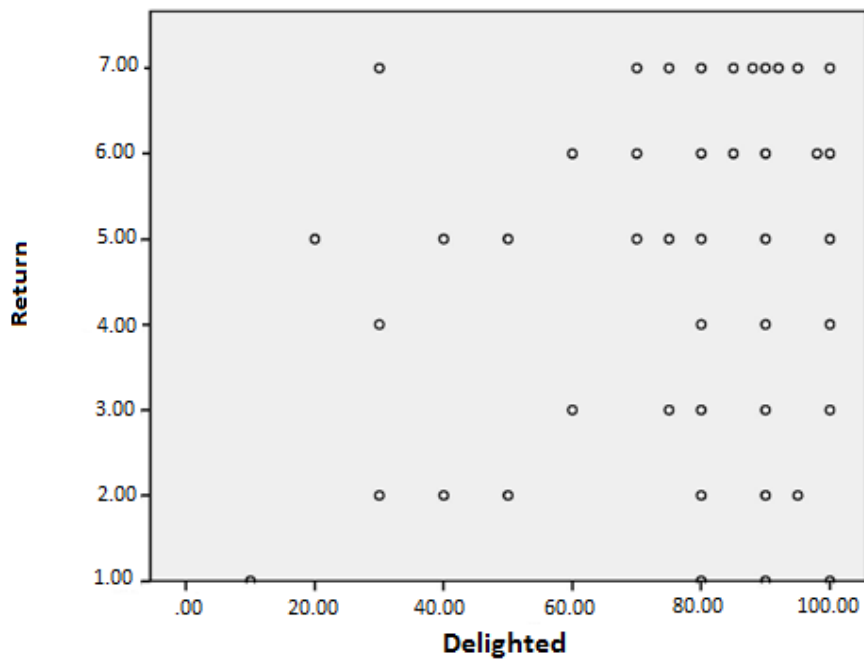


Figure 3: Delightedness and Intention to Return

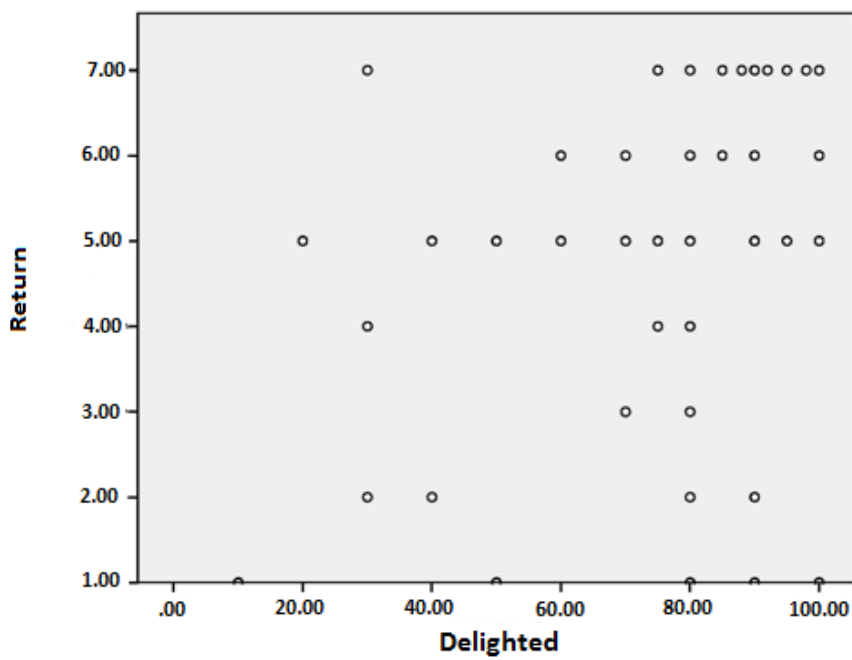


Figure 4: Delightedness and Intention to Recommend

### Conclusion

Results from the analyses demonstrate a significant difference in each of the conditioned tour groups. Participants in the fully staged tour experienced greater delightedness than participants in the partially staged and nonstaged tours. Results also suggest that participants in the partially staged tours experienced greater delightedness than participants in the nonstaged tours. The correlation analysis measuring intentions demonstrated significant correlations between delightedness and intention to return and intention to recommend. This would suggest that the higher the delightedness experienced in a tour, the greater the intention to return and recommend. Although there were significant correlations among delightedness and both intention to return and intention to recommend, the greatest significance was shown among intention to recommend than intention to return. Reasons for a weaker correlation among intention to return will be further explored in the Discussion section. The large difference of standard deviations in the nonstaged tour will also be further reviewed in the Discussion section

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if staged experiences have an influence on delightedness, and if delightedness has an influence on one's intention to return and recommend. This chapter provides a summary of the results and a discussion of the study's limitations and recommendations for future research. It concludes with implications for staging experiences in the tourism and hospitality industry.

#### Discussion of Results

This study concluded that the level at which the experience was staged had a significant impact on the level of delightedness experienced by participants. A fully staged experience consisted of fully themeing, the uses of the five senses, active participation, and the receipt of memorabilia. Furthermore, according to Pine and Gilmore's model, a heritage park tour that offers all of the elements for staging experiences leaves customers with a greater experience of delightedness than a heritage tour that does not offer these elements. Specifically as demonstrated in the results, there was a significant ( $p < .05$ ) difference represented in means among all three different tours, fully staged ( $m = 93.42$ ), partially staged ( $m = 84.58$ ), and nonstaged ( $m = 73.89$ ).

The most important finding was the greatest difference in means between the fully staged and nonstaged tour, which suggests that participation in a fully staged tour experience versus a nonstaged experience would have a significantly greater impact on

the delightedness experienced among guests. The results coincide with the Oliver et al. (1997) model of delight and satisfaction that suggests consumer involvement must be adequate for aroused emotion to be part of the consumption experience and a surprise consumption leads to arousal, which generates delight. The fully staged tour included active participation and stimuli that engaged all five senses, ensuring that consumers had a high level of involvement. In addition, the receipt of memorabilia at the end of the tour could be considered a surprise consumption.

There was also a significant difference in means among partially staged and nonstaged tours. This demonstrates that even a partially staged tour experience still had an effect on the level of delightedness experienced among participants. Since the partially staged tour included partial themeing, passive participation, minimal use of the five senses, and a small item of memorabilia, these findings agree with the model of Oliver et al. (1997), in that even a small level of consumer involvement and a simple surprise consumption experience can lead to delight.

Although each variable was not measured individually, it can be assumed that all variables did contribute to the outcome and, therefore, the greater the use of the variables suggested in Pine and Gilmore's model, the higher the delightedness. As themeing was one of the important variables in the model, the results of the study can further support Pine and Gilmore's (1998) idea that "themeing" is the pathway to create a staged experience. The results show that all of these variables had an impact on delightedness, but in order to better evaluate which of the variables used in this study had a greater impact on the overall delightedness, it would be necessary to conduct a new study that duplicates the level of staging while manipulating only one variable in Pine and

Gilmore's model. For example, each of the tours would be identical with only the receipt of the memorabilia being varied. For example, the tours would be identical with the exception of the memorabilia, which would be manipulated from tour to tour. This would allow for further evaluation regarding the level of impact the receipt of memorabilia may have on a staged experience.

The concluding hypotheses claimed that the higher level of delightedness, the greater the intention to return and intention to recommend. Results of the correlation analyses showed there was a significant relationship among the variables. The correlation between delightedness and intention to return was significant ( $p < .05$ ), which would suggest the higher the delightedness experienced by participants in a staged experience, the more likely they will return to that particular location and/or participate again in the heritage tour experience. The correlation between delightedness and intention to recommend was also significant ( $p < .01$ ), which would suggest that the higher the delightedness experienced, the more likely a guest is to recommend that others visit that particular location and/or participate in a heritage tour experience. Since the correlations of delightedness and behavioral intentions have not been measured in past research, there are almost no data results to compare. The only likely supporting findings that could be comparable would be Cole and Crompton's (2003) study that found a significant relationship between overall satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

### Practical Implications

Staging an experience and the use of themes are currently being used as a business model by a few organizations in the tourism and hospitality industry such as Disney, Las Vegas hotels, and themed restaurants like Planet Hollywood or Hardrock

Café. Themeing and staging experiences appear to be a contributing factor to these organizations' success, but very few companies have followed their ideas. Instead, service quality and customer satisfaction are used as the key business approaches for success and other models are rarely considered. Even though it appears that offering a staged experience is what leads to the success of these organizations because they continue to thrive and are profitable, nearly no previous research exists to support or even explore this idea. The findings in this study are important because they provide empirical evidence about the effect of staging experiences including themeing. They also provide implications and potential outcomes for businesses who want to consider adapting Pine and Gilmore's idea as a business model.

As demonstrated in this study, when an experience is fully staged, the higher the delightedness the participants experienced the greater their behavioral intentions. These findings can be interpreted that if an organization offers staged experiences their guests can experience delightedness which is beyond general customer satisfaction. The more guests are delighted, the more likely they are to return and recommend others, which are important goals to an organization's success. Achieving these results and maintaining customer loyalty can support sustainability and increase growth. If a heritage park is striving to achieve greater loyalty and a increase market share, there is now empirical research that supports a model that can help to create those desired goals. If a heritage park chooses to offer no experience and only a historical museum, which is being suggested by industry leaders as the new direction for today, then the results of their business are more likely to be that of the nonstaged tour where participants were less likely to experience delightedness and have lower behavioral intentions. According to

those findings, following a business model that does not incorporate staged experiences may not provide an organization with the ability to increase market share and be competitive.

Although the findings were positive to the industry, can these findings go as far as Pine and Gilmore's (1998) proposal that staging experiences is the fourth economic offering? The findings may not be able to go as far as confirming it is the fourth economic offering. However, the findings give their model more credibility that staging experiences can provide positive results for a business. If businesses start to choose this new approach by staging experiences, it could shift the industry's direction from focusing only on the service industry and also moving further beyond achieving only customer satisfaction. Businesses that do not to adapt this new approach may eventually fall behind their competitors and lose market share.

Even though the setting was at a heritage park, these results maybe applicable in other tourism and hospitality settings as they offer very similar products and have the ability to easily create fully stage experiences. Implementing themeing, active participation, engagement of the five senses, and the receipt of memorabilia are not very complex and can be done in an economic way. A specific example of themeing a hotel is already present at the Venetian, Bellagio, and Paris hotels in Las Vegas. It is not necessary to re-create an entire era or build a new hotel such as those hotels but a current small boutique hotel or standard hotel can be easily themed. What is considered an antique hotel would not have IKEA furniture in the lobby with Hip Hop music playing, as that would not fit the theme, nor be appropriate, and would be considered negative cues. The environment and employees would need to support the entire theme with the

appropriate surroundings such as boutique furniture in the entire hotel and employees wearing uniforms that represent a boutique hotel. The hotel would need to engage the use of the senses by having a specific scent that supports the boutique theme, music, and pictures so guests feel as if they are living in the theme or virtual reality of a boutique hotel. The final step to staging the experience would be to offer and encourage guests to participate in activities at the hotel and give a post card or photo at the conclusion of their stay as the receipt of memorabilia. All of these suggested ideas make up the model of Pine and Gilmore's staging experiences.

For tourism destinations and tour operators, there would only be a few new factors to create as most likely the authentic heritage setting would be already present as was with This Is the Place Heritage Park. The historical buildings and theme already existed and the park staff dress up regularly in pioneer clothing. Only a few other variables were necessary to create a fully staged experience at the park and it was very easy and inexpensive to execute.

Rather than providing only great customer service and taking guests on a bus and dropping them off at a location, a tour operator can go one step further and make the experience more memorable. If a tour was visiting the pyramids in Egypt the setting is already present. A local tour guide taking the guests to the pyramids could wear a historical Pharaoh era costume or what is authentic to the area. Arabic music or music from the era can be played on the tour bus, local herbs or flowers can be placed on the bus, and hibiscus, a traditional drink, can be served to the guests during the drive to engage the senses. A picture of the guests can be taken in traditional clothing or another



type of memorabilia could be given to the guests to remember the specific tour company and not just the destinations.

As shown in the data, the partially staged tours experienced a significant level of delightedness and more delightedness than the nonstaged tours. If a company cannot add all of these variables in order to create a fully staged tour, adding a few variables is still beneficial and can have an impact on the customers' experience and behavioral intentions. These recommendations provide a basic idea and models of how managers can implement staging experiences into their organization.

#### Implications for Future Research

There is very little research regarding staging experiences by using Pine and Gilmore's model, delightedness, and the possible implications of using this model in the tourism and hospitality industry. This study provides a brief insight into the implications of staging experiences and delightedness in the industry; however, further research is recommended to explore this phenomenon. In order to further explore this research, it is recommended to conduct similar research in other settings and not just heritage parks in order to make the model more widely usable. It is also important to determine what specific variables may or may not work and if the results can be achieved again in other settings. Specifically, since staging an experience and themeing can be easily created in the tourism and hospitality sector without a lot of additional work or props, this study would be very easy for researchers to duplicate in this specific industry.

As the engagement of the five senses, themeing, active participation, and the receipt of memorabilia were all grouped together in the fully staged tour, it could not be determined which of those specific variables had a greater impact on delightedness. It is

not known if any of the factors could be eliminated or if all would be required to reach a similar outcome of results. It will cost an organization time, money and manpower to implement this business model. Therefore, it would be beneficial to know which factors have a greater impact, lesser impact, or no impact. Specifically, if it were necessary to eliminate some of the variables due to budget or other constraints, this information would be very useful for organizations in making those decisions. In order to determine the difference among specific variables, it would be necessary to conduct identical fully staged tours with only one specific variable of Pine and Gilmore's model being manipulated and tested. An example of this would be to conduct the fully staged tour with active participation, engagement of five senses, and themeing being identical for each tour and only modify the receipt of memorabilia. The first tour would include a printed photo given to the guests, the second tour would include a post card, and the third tour would include no memorabilia. This would enable the researcher to indicate the level of impact the receipt of memorabilia has on delightedness. In order to determine the impact of the other variables, another study would need to be conducted in a similar manner with only that specific variable being manipulated.

From the data in this study it was identified that staging experiences has an impact on delightedness and delightedness on behavioral intentions; however, the long-term impact of staging experiences on delightedness and behavioral intentions is not known. Fuller and Matzler (2008) raised the concern that continuously delighting consumers can raise their expectations and if these expectations are not then met on a continuing basis it can lead to dissatisfaction. It would be worthwhile to conduct the same duplicated study over a period of time with current loyal customers to determine if, in fact, it can

continually create delightedness, positive behavioral intentions, and does not lead to dissatisfaction once expectations are raised or customers get bored. As Disney and Las Vegas continue to attract repeat visitors, it can be assumed this may not be the case; however, nothing has been supported by research. If, in time, there are so many tourism and hospitality organizations offering staged experiences, would that change the outlook and outcome from customers? Having empirical research to determine those factors would be highly beneficial for organizations to review before deciding to change their business model.

### Limitations

Based on the complex nature of staging an experience there were some limitations to this study. The tours took place for only an hour or less rather than an entire day at the park. As this heritage park is designed for all day participation, the delightedness and behavioral intentions of the participants were based only on this short experience rather than an entire day. The level of delightedness and behavioral intentions results may have differed if participants had participated for an entire day. Specifically if they participate for an entire day, there are more opportunities to be exposed to negative cues, continual active engagement may not be possible, or the feeling they had visited everything there was to see at the park.

The survey was administered at the end of the tour rather than after each staged experience. As specific factors or experiences could have influenced the participants either positively or negatively at each location, it was not known if any particular experience influenced the overall score or if the score was based only on the overall feeling at the end of the tour. For future research it is recommended to run duplicate

studies with the survey instrument being administered at the end of one tour and also after each experience throughout the tour. This will provide insight as to which specific experiences had a greater or lesser impact. It will also help to determine if combining all the individual scores after each staged experience would result in different overall measurement other than the one measurement at the end of the tour which was done in this study.

Although there was a correlation between the delightedness and intention to return, it must be considered that tourist individual behaviors and attitudes may impact their intention to return. It is not uncommon for participants to visit a heritage park or tourist destination only one time with no intention to return even before or after the experience regardless of the outcome of the staged experience. Another factor that must be considered is the survey instrument did not include the home location of the participants nor their distance from the heritage park. If participants live far enough away from a destination, even though they would like to return, they do not have the intention to return because regardless of the experience they know they will not be able to return. Specifically in this study, some of the participants in the fully staged tour were from another state or a different country and told the study volunteers or wrote on their survey instrument the reason for not having the intention to return was based solely on their location being far away from the park. This may have been a key contributing factor to the lower correlation between delightedness and intention to return. Also, it should be considered that even if customers have intentions to return or recommend, their intention can only be measured and they may not follow through with those intentions.

Even though the park was very willing and happy to assist in this research, it was challenging to work with the park docents, staff, and managers in facilitating the study. Due to these challenges, it is highly recommended for further research studies using this design to have all docents or staff as volunteers working specifically on the project and not employees of the park staff. This would enable the study facilitator to have more control over the variables and avoid many of the challenges faced. The park agreed to participate in the study, but as the park still has obligations to meet its customers' needs, set staff schedules, adapt to last minute staffing changes or demands, a specific philosophy and image to keep it made coordinating the study and staging the experience somewhat challenging.

Initially it was agreed to have the same docents for the entire study, but with complications of staffing and other business obligations this was not possible. Many last minute changes to staffing occurred and, at times, staff members were not given advance notice that they were required to participate in the program, and were not able to be trained properly in following the study guidelines. Employees showed up late, which resulted in the study starting late and the study days having to be extended in order to obtain enough participation. Buildings were closed early due to other necessary events in the park, which upset tour participants. The tour facilitator was not informed of the changes until the last minute which made it difficult to accommodate the changes and eliminate upsetting guests.

At times docents did not completely follow the fully staged tour guidelines. During the fully staged tours, some participants did not participate in activities even though the study specifically stated that all participants must participate in order to

complete the survey. On some occasions, the docents found it difficult to encourage guests to participate but would instead hurry through the activity. They did not always ask the scripted questions and would minimize their interpretation and level of engagement. On the first day of the fully staged tour there was overcrowding at the park and a docent took too much time at the print press activity which resulted in many of the tours exceeding 1 hour. This location had to be eliminated after the first day due to docent not following the time guidelines and the park not having additional staff to work at that facility on future days of the study. On the third day of the fully staged tour, the research staff and many of the park staff were not informed that the main entrance to the park was closing. Due to the road closure, the participants were then required to park at a another unfamiliar entrance, take a train into the park, and then walk a far distance to the first tour location. It was a very hot day and the changes resulted in confusion with the tour guides and tour groups were either delayed or rushed through the tour to avoid overcrowding. As these problems occurred, it is very likely that some of the delightedness measures may have been lower. Had the tour guidelines been followed accurately and the facilitators' been able to avoid some of these problems with better notification, the level of delightedness and behavioral intentions measurements on the fully staged tours may have been higher.

During the partially staged tours, some guests participated in activities and were asked questions by the docents. This should not have been part of the partially staged tour but rather the fully staged tour. Had this not occurred during the partially staged tour, the overall mean of delightedness may have been lower in the partially staged tour

and made a greater significance of difference from the fully staged tour and partially staged tour.

During the nonstaged tour some participants were given interpretations, asked questions, and participated in activities. This resulted in the tour being nearly fully staged when it should have been nonstaged with no activities or engagement. Some participants seemed annoyed they were not able to participate in activities even though they previously agreed as part of the study this was not included and they would be able to participate after the study had concluded. They may have been annoyed because the park was operating as normal and they were observing nonstudy participants participating. The participants who were upset because they could not participate in activities during the nonstaged experience may have rated their experience lower even though they agreed to the terms of the study which included no participation.

As the nonstaged tour was conducted during the regular park activities, which includes participation and interpretation, the guests were subject to passive participation just by observing others engage and overheard interpretations. Seeing the passive participation of the participants may have influenced their overall experience. If the park had been closed and participation and interpretation were not included at the park on that day for nonstudy participants, it would have eliminated the chance of passive participation. It would be more appropriate to conduct the nonstaged tour when the entire park has the same experience or conduct the study when the park is closed so the surroundings truly support a museum and a nonstaged experience. Due to the nonstaged tour occurring during normal park operations, some of the guests may have rated having a delightful experience because of the influencing park surroundings. Had there been no

influential external surroundings at the park, the study participants may have experienced lower levels of delightedness. Although it is not known how great an impact these challenges may have had on the overall results of the study, it is important they are considered and avoided in future studies to acquire more accurate results.

Other recommendations for future research would be to conduct the same staged experience for all park guests and study participants during the duration of the study. This would be very important not only for the nonstaged tour as previously mentioned but for the other staged tours as well. Any external experience or factor that is different than the current experience that is being staged may have a positive or negative influence on the data results. Conducting the study when the park is closed would be another good alternative as this would eliminate overcrowding at a location and many of the mentioned uncontrollable factors. In addition, had the docents been volunteers who were fully trained and instructed by the thesis facilitator, it is likely that organizing and facilitating the study would have been easier and some challenges easily avoided. Had many of those challenges been controlled and avoided it may have had a greater significance on the level of delightedness experienced in each tour and the participants' behavioral intentions.

### Conclusion

The results of this study show that staging experiences using Pine and Gilmore's (1998) model can positively impact customers' overall experiences and intentions to return and recommend. These findings are beneficial to the tourism and hospitality industry and organizations that are looking to move beyond the current practice and philosophy that providing superior customer service and satisfaction is the only way to



operate a business and increase market share. Pine and Gilmore's model can be implemented in a simple and economic manner to all areas of the tourism and hospitality industry. It can provide organizations with creative ways to be more competitive and differentiate themselves from their competitors.

As the study did not include the ability to measure which variables in Pine and Gilmore's (1998) model had a greater or lesser impact, further research should be conducted to investigate which variables can have a greater or lesser impact on the outcome of delightedness and the guest experience and to determine which variables have no impact at all. The volunteers and tours should be managed solely by the research study facilitator and the park should be used only as a setting. This would eliminate outside influences and potential problems such as staffing issues that may make the study more difficult to conduct.

A very important factor to be explored is the long term impact of staging experiences on a business. This is important to a business that has never offered such experiences and is required to invest time and money and to change its current business model. Should exceeding expectations create boredom or dissatisfaction over time, it could be more costly for such a business to adapt this current model. This is something that must be considered before implementing this model.

To remain successful and survive in the tourism and hospitality industry it is critical to find a competitive advantage and a method to increase market share. Since there has not been prior empirical research exploring this model and identifying the outcomes, it has not been known in this industry if staging experiences can be beneficial. This empirical research provides a foundation regarding staging experiences and

recommendations of how this model can be applied and used for businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry.

## APPENDIX

### SURVEY INSTRUMENT

## Your Delightedness with the Overall Experience

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### Instructions:

Please think about the overall experience you have had today at **This is the Place Heritage Park**. The purpose of this research is to better understand designing experiences. We are not evaluating the researcher, tour guide, or docents in this question.

Please note the following terms:

- **Delightedness** can be described as a moment in which you have an emotional feeling of being extremely pleased beyond your expectations. You just could not feel better about a visit to a living museum comparable to This is The Place Heritage Park.
- **Satisfaction** is the fulfillment of your expectations and needs in visiting This is The Place Heritage Park..
- **Disgusted** would be total dis-satisfaction, a failure to meet your expectations, boredom, and/or the most disappointed experience at This is The Place Heritage Park.

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Please circle the number on the "delighted-o-meter" that best describes your experience at **This is The Place Heritage Park** today:



**Please continue on the next page**

## Overall Evaluation

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2. Please indicate how many times you have visited **This is The Place Heritage Park** in the past. If this is your first visit, just indicate zero/0.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you a member of **This is The Place Heritage Park**? (Circle one)

Yes

No

4. Although **This is The Place Heritage Park** is a non-profit organization, admission fees must be charged to recover costs. In your opinion, what would be a fair admission fee assuming that the tour you just completed was part of visitors' experiences?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Did the docents or tour guide ask you any questions? (Circle one)

Yes

No

If yes, please tell us one of the questions you recall?

**Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements with this scale:**

1. Very Strongly Agree
2. Strongly Agree
3. Agree
4. Neither Agree or Disagree
5. Disagree
6. Strongly Disagree
7. Very Strongly Disagree

**Please circle one number per statement.**

|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The docents seemed relaxed during our visit to the various sites.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The tour guide made eye contact with me.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The docents seemed knowledgeable about their site.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Our tour guide looked tired.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The tour guide helped our group enjoy our visit.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Today's experience was very educational.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Today's experience was very enjoyable.                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I enjoyed being able to participate in the activities, such as, gardening. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |





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Please indicate your level of agreement with the statement: "I was completely satisfied with my experience today at **This is the Place Heritage Park.**" (Circle One)

1. Very Strongly Agree
2. Strongly Agree
3. Agree
4. Neither Agree or Disagree
5. Disagree
6. Strongly Disagree
7. Very Strongly Disagree

Please indicate your likelihood of returning to **This is the Place Heritage Park:** (Circle One)

1. Extremely Unlikely
2. Somewhat Unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Neither Unlikely or Likely
5. Likely
6. Somewhat Likely
7. Extremely Likely

Please indicate your likelihood of recommending a visit to **This is the Place Heritage Park** to your family or friends: (Circle One)

1. Extremely Unlikely
2. Somewhat Unlikely
3. Unlikely
4. Neither Unlikely or Likely
5. Likely
6. Somewhat Likely
7. Extremely Likely

**Please continue on the back**

---

The following information will be helpful in our better understanding of our guests participating in this experience.

**Please tell us a little about you.**

What is your gender?      \_\_\_\_\_ Male    \_\_\_\_\_ Female

What is your age?      \_\_\_\_\_

How many adults (over 18) are in your group today?

\_\_\_\_\_

How many children (under 18) are in your group today?

\_\_\_\_\_

---

**Thank you for your  
assistance in this study.  
Please return the completed  
survey to the University of  
Utah researcher.**

**Please enjoy your visit to  
This is The Place Heritage  
Village**

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