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Exploring the Dimensions of Co-creation Behavior in Customer Experience: A case study of Guests' Hotel Check-in Experiences

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TITLE:

Exploring the Dimensions of Co-creation Behavior in Customer Experience: A case study of Guests' Hotel Check-in Experiences

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Abstract

The study begins by reviewing forces that affect competitive advantage -paradigm shift forces, and economic offerings forces -that is the progressive forces pushing economic value over time, for example: from goods, to services, to experiences and now to co-creation. Influence of the forces in the natural environment affect the product, what organizations must do to present an acceptable product and how it is requested of by the consumer. The consumer appears to influence the product more, thus, organizations seek to align with consumer needs more in an experiential and co-creative manner, or as the consumer is requesting of the product. Even the paradigm shifting forces such as technology, become a prerogative partly controlled by the new way of asking for the product by the guest, ultimately bestowing control of it in part to the consumer. Experiential designs are made such that both the service providers and guests share the same meaning for value. Co-creation offers the same, plus the ability to have new personal experiences, through a process of co-construction and interactions. Co-creation is divided into physical and mental/psychological participation and this study aligns itself to looking at the psychology of co-creation behavior.

Data was collected using an online survey from PhD students in four universities in Norway. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was done, and the measurements were weighed to produce a table of weighted average mean, giving five compounded variables that were used in correlation analysis. The lifestyle component could not be loaded on the EFA as it was not in line with the seven-point Likert scale designs and could not be equally weighed. This component was explained using means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis. Findings gave the hierarchy as follows: Cognitive, Pragmatic, Emotional, Sensory and Relational. These are the most important to the least important psychological components that influence co-creative behavior. The lifestyle component was seen as one with the potential to shift in level of importance within groups. Service

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providers such as hotels, adventure tourism companies, even technology companies where guests interact with the product before purchase, could benefit from following this hierarchy by creating an offering that is cognitively engaging, pragmatically authentic and interactable with; emotionally engendering with just the right amount of sensory engagement for interaction with the product and relational to some extent, that is, either participating with friends or with oneself. Lifestyle should be considered with caution; standardized offers could mitigate the risk of alienating clients ascribing to different lifestyles.

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Outline of the thesis

This study will be written in six chapters. Chapter one will be the introduction and the background information, with a dive into experiential and co-creative considerations, research questions and the introduction of the hypothesis. Chapter two will look at the literature review encompassing the six psychological components and explaining them within the relevant literature and explaining why they are termed as psychological components. Chapter three will talk about the methodology and will incorporate factor analysis, correlation analysis and the use of means and standard deviations in explaining our data, as well as readings of skewness and kurtosis. Chapter four will be the results, and will elaborate by answering the research questions, approving, or disapproving the hypothesis, as well as explaining the results from the factor analysis and correlation table. The data will be presented in tables. Chapter five will be a discussion of how the data aligns with our research questions and literature and how this information helps us to infer meaning. Chapter six is the conclusion. It will discuss the conclusion encompassing some detailed impacts of the study, strengths, weaknesses, and limitations and will also suggest on future research areas.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Our economic world works on the proposition that someone will buy what another is selling. The buyer is referred to as the consumer (Doyle, 2011). Consumers typically buy for personal consumption and over the years, disciplines such as consumerism have grown to try and understand the consumers as they buy (Solomon, Russell-Bennett, & Previte, 2012). Consumerism talks about the rights of a consumer: the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose and the right to be heard (Aaker & Day, 1982). Consumerism dwells on the premise that consumers need to be protected whenever there is an exchange relationship with an organization (Aaker & Day, 1982, p. 2).

These exchange relationships are when companies take various inputs such as raw materials and transform them into outputs or products for the consumer (Normann, 1977, p. 15). Exchange relationships are part of organizations' value creation processes. These are the processes an organization uses to create economic offerings, or the goods, products or services for sale. Exchange relationships are quite dominant themes for companies seeking to differentiate themselves in a world where consumers have more and more choice (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b).

Consumers thus require protection to ensure they are informed in their purchase decisions. Businesses must ensure consumers are informed and must bear the extra burden of adjusting to market forces that steer immense change all around them, such as competition, new technology and so on. These forces present subtle dictates to a standard way of operating, that may over time, be picked up by many businesses and could easily become a norm. The point to this is usually to

align with the demand in the market, or the way in which the product is being inquired of by the consumer, and that the consumer is satisfied enough to make a future purchase.

In this study, the position to have a deeper, understand of the dimensions of co-creation in customer experience is considered to be part of consumerism (Solomon et al., 2012), because it deals with trying to understand the experiential consumer. This will be observed through the eye of two forces that have been considered as some of the dictates that govern the co-creative-experience industry. First is the force of economic offerings (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) and second is paradigm shift forces by Gharajedaghi (2011) also known as forces that erode competitive advantage.

In economic offerings theory, Pine and Gilmore (1998) explain a model of economic progression from commodities, to goods, services, and finally experiences. This is to say that at one point, people cared about having the products more than the service, after some time, people cared about the service more than the product, and within the experience economy, people cared about the entirety of the experience, the emotions and feelings the item brought out. That was how customers inquired about the product during these times. An economic offering is the product that an organization produces for sale. It can be a service, a tangible product, an experience and so on. With every shift in the economic value progression, there needed to be a complete change of models and systems, as previous ones from former times could not handle the new normal. These now becomes the paradigm shift.

We define paradigm shifts as overhauls of all existing nature, of theory that once guided the sale and request of goods and services into something new (Gharajedaghi, 2011, p. 8). A paradigm shift happens when several events within the business environment nullify conventional wisdom on how to deal with them, or an increasing number of dilemmas for which prevailing models

cannot handle (Gharajedaghi, 2011, p. 8). The goods are no longer requested in the same way as before, economic progression has occurred, and the systems that supported the former system have to be overhauled in a new paradigm. For example; consumers don't just want a bottle of water to quench their thirst, instead they want one fortified with minerals, healthy or supports the going green campaign and from a company that perhaps has a political affiliation to what they believe in. The systems now have to be put in place to encompass the broad nature the offering is taking, and because it is business for profit, the organizations have to provide what consumers are asking for, and the way in which they are asking for it.

Paradigm shifts occur due to two reasons. Either a change in reality occurs where the former norms are gone, and the new norm has to be addressed with new models and thought processes. For example: before people travelled for weeks from one part to another on a horse carriage. Fast forward to the invention of air travel, reality has changed, and what used to take weeks now takes a day or two. This new reality was a paradigm shift, and new systems needed to be invented to meet the new paradigm, the horse carriage systems became completely obsolete. The second reason is a change in the method of inquiry by the customers as discussed in the bottle of water example above. Another possibility is that both forces can occur at the same time, according to (Gharajedaghi, 2011, p. 8).

This study will discuss broadly on the two forces of shift in paradigm and progression of economic value. Pine and Gilmore (1998, p. 98) present a model of the progression of economic value perception beginning from extract commodities, to goods, services and their model ends at experiences. Thus, the term economic value progression as used in variants within this study is meant to refer to a movement from: goods to services; services to experience and from experience to co-creation. This particular study focuses on the progression of economic value from

experiences and proceeds to co-creation, because co-creation is accepted as the next phase in the progression of economic value according to Fu and Lehto (2018, p. 982), and because co-creation is heavily centered within experiential designs (Campos, Mendes, do Valle, & Scott, 2016, p. 1309; Prebensen, Vittersø, & Dahl, 2013, p. 242).

It is possible for either force to operate independent of the other, as discussed in the examples. Within the current experience and co-creative economy of the 21st century (Fu & Lehto, 2018; Pine & Gilmore, 1998), consumers want to interact and create something new with the product, to create something personal and unique (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009, p. 311). Prebensen and Xie (2017, p. 167) have gone ahead to determine that co-creative participation in interactions can be physical and mental/psychological. This becomes important to us in examining consumer intentions and the strengths of their intentions in choosing a particular experience or in the analysis of an experience that has already occurred.

The motivation behind this study comes from a lasting interest of the researcher towards the experience economy, and the intriguing nature that consumers will pay more to experience something to which they cannot bring back home with them (Worldwide, 2019), an experience. They can only carry photographs, memento's and perhaps the experience that they can re-live as a memory. The study is important because the forces discussed are not dormant, and with time, a paradigm shift or a progression to a new era will occur. It is good logic to learn all we can now, as the current systems of operation could become obsolete. It is important to learn all we can to prepare and have more control of the market and prevent organizations from being shaken out of market or shutting down, both in the present and future.

This study will also look at the customer as a driver of the exchange process. Whether through a change in the method of inquiry or a change in paradigm, a great deal has to do with the customer

and how they are interpreting their wants and needs to the organizations and service providers. The study will look at customer interactions and creation of experiences with a product. From relevant literature, the mental or psychological participation can be studied. Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398) provide us with six dimensions of the customer experience which we are going to test as psychological components. The etymology of why these have been accepted as psychological components will be further discussed in chapter two.

The contributions of this study will be tested within six different psychological components. The attempt will be to understand the most important aspects of the psychological components, understand the relationships that surrounds them in order to provide service providers with a way of creating co-creative experiences and ensuring that they happen. The organizations will be able to understand the most important aspects of the co-creation experience within a paradigms lifetime enough to optimize and offer it to their clients, reducing costs on marketing and allowing for alignment of the most important co-creative components for maximum simplicity and efficiency.

1.1 Background

The aim of this thesis is to first: understand the interactions between the customer and the service provider within the current experiential and co-creative era; and second: to understand how the product is being requested of in a particular way today, than it was before. The interactions become their own unique economic offerings and the focus of all co-cocreation efforts (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018, p. 196). Within a co-creative economy, the interactions become like commodities. According to Fu and Lehto (2018, p. 982) co-creation signals a new era of the co-creative economy. Before this, we were in the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p. 97). The experience economy is characterized by delivery of fun and staged experiences (Fu & Lehto, 2018, p. 982; Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p. 99) while the co-creation era begins with the consumers playing

the central role in the creation of these fun and staged experiences (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009, p. 311).

Over time, the economic offering changed from offering experiences to co-creation experiences. To give an example, within a hotel set-up, the service provider takes it upon themselves to create the most lovely experience in a room, they check you into a special room constructed under water perhaps, and you can view the aquatic life and it is beautiful. You enjoy this and are able to create a personal experience with this room. Perhaps you have an artistic fit, in which you take pictures on your phone or even decide to start drawing the different fish that you see in this environment. A new experience emerges, that was never intended by the service provider.

Co-creation is a number of things: first, it is about joint creation of value by a company and its customers, allowing the customers to co-construct a service experience to suit their context; or even when the product is the same, co-creation allows the consumer to construct different experiences than was intended by the provider (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b). These reconstructions do not happen in space but are evidenced by the interactions that take place. Therefore, co-creation also involves and can be defined as one with an element of interaction (Grönroos & Voima, 2013, p. 133). Interactions between the firm and the consumers are the locus of value creation and value extraction (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a, p. 5). Within this study, we shall keep these two definitions of co-creation as they build upon each other.

People today want more personal experiences. This is a theme not unique to the hotel industry, but a current economic offering in the co-creation paradigm. To reconcile the two theories mentioned earlier which seem to be moving around each other, co-creation as a separate and unique economic offering is being offered because that is what the customer wants to create with the

product. For example, guests do not just want to eat at a restaurant, they want to be involved in the preparation process. Some restaurants offer hot plates on the table and guests can keep stirring till the food is ready. More mainstream restaurants have open kitchen concepts and guests can watch as the food is being prepared, and by so doing, they become part of the experience. On the other hand, what the customer wants has changed over time and today the customer through a change in the nature of asking or interacting with the product (Gharajedaghi, 2011, p. 8) has led to a paradigm shift. This for example is to say, you offer a customer a private service to set-up the dining table they just bought from you. Customers probably loved this and requested this service every time they came to the store. Now, they are no longer interested in that and would have much more fun and trigger co-creative experiences if you give them a manual with instructions of how to do it themselves.

In viewing these two forces within their natural environment, we engage a kind of systems thinking as discussed by Gharajedaghi (2011). Systems thinking is the act of putting a system in the context of a larger environment of which it is a part of, and then studying the system's role in that environment. There are five forces discussed by Gharajedaghi (2011), but in this study, we focus on the fifth and final force, the paradigm shift. This incorporates and occurs as an accumulation of all other forces (Gharajedaghi, 2011, p. 4), and has already been defined in this study. Systems thinking also allows us to have a view of the effects of both forces: the paradigm shift and the forces of economic value progression, within the natural environment and how they influence it.

To say that a consumer does not want a cheap or an effective product would be untrue. Rather, the consumer wants more than anything, to create an experience with the product, to co-create with the provider, as this brings some fulfillment. Delivery of memorable experiences is quite important

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in an organization within the experiential economy (Campos et al., 2016, p. 1309). Prebensen and Xie (2017, p. 166) show that people are happiest when in participation and that psychological participation is more important to people than physical participation. These interactions of co-creation can give people the personalized experience that they yearn for (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b). This has been proven to be more satisfying, leading to repurchase behavior among consumers (J. Lee & Lee, 2013, p. 133).

Few have taken to research about the specifics of the psychological aspects of the co-creation experience. Consumers will search for various experiences producing a diversity of feelings, either hedonic -experiences during familiar behavior that are pleasant; or eudaemonic - emotions such as interests associated with the pursuit of important goals (Prebensen & Xie, 2017, p. 167). This study has already aligned itself to look at the psychological aspects of the co-creation experience. The reason to this is that there are a number of psychological factors that could be associated with feelings of hedonism or eudemonism. Schmitt (1999) talks about the strategic experiential modules that managers can use to create experiences for their customers. He identifies five modules: sensory experiences (sense); affective experiences (feel); creative cognitive experiences (think); physical experiences; behaviors and lifestyle (act) experiences and social-identity experiences. Fornerino, Helme-Guizon, and Gotteland (2006, p. 8); Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398) also talk about the immersive consumption experience and come up with five dimensions: physical-behavioral, social, cognitive, sensorial-perceptual and the affective.

Gentile et al. (2007), after drawing from both previous theories comes up with some dimensions of the customer experience as follows: sensorial components, emotional components, cognitive components, pragmatic components, lifestyle components and relational components.

The two theories are similar in many ways, and the only addition is the pragmatic component in Gentile et al. (2007). They add the pragmatic after considering literature from the field of user experience (Battarbee & Koskinen, 2005, pp. 5,7; Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398).

This thesis will align itself with Gentile et al. (2007) in testing the psychological participation variances within the co-creation experience. This is because it incorporates both previous theories of experience creation and allows for testable hypotheses.

The purpose of this research will be to explore the psychological factors, to essentially come up with a hierarchy that tells us what the most important psychological component is. This is important to us because studies that focus on the psychological components of co-creation and create a hierarchy of the most important are not that common, and usually do not encompass the six components that this study talks about.

1.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

1.2.1 The Experience Economy

Theory of progression of economic value described by Pine and Gilmore (1998, p. 98) suggests a growth towards a new thing. They state that experiences sometimes occur when companies use services as the stage and the goods as props (images) to engage individual customers. This is in line with our definitions featuring co-production with clients and interactivity with the client and the service providers.

This individual creation of experiences is what co-creation is all about. That the same props (images) can be used by customers to create different yet memorable experiences. Experiences are born of processes that are found in management. According to Sewell and Brown (2009, p. 24),

every organization is composed of systems which must work together to create a process that is efficient and that customers are responsive to.

Take the example of a restaurant: For there to be any experience creation while guests are dining, there has to be cleaners who cleaned, people who fixed the light, heat, sound systems, and the restaurant must have designed a good service management system that allows the back of the house to work coordinated with the front, so the food is ready on time, the waiters/waitresses serve with a smile and on time, and leave the guest to create and co-create with their surroundings. Sometimes these systems can be guidelines or laws that staff follow, for example, 'at this restaurant, we always have to say -welcome to xyz, a heaven for your taste buds.' In other words, the experience part of the organization is supported by firm service systems.

Sasser, Schlesinger, and Heskett (1997, p. 7); Sewell and Brown (2009, p. 24) mention that being nice to people is just 20% of customer service, and that the most important part is designing systems that would allow you to do this work properly. The design and the service must align within the current economic paradigm to offer the customer what they want. The experiential economy has birthed co-creation, and we currently live in the co-creation paradigm (Fu & Lehto, 2018, p. 982). Goods and services are received better if they have a component to co-create with.

Perhaps co-creation as not only about the creation of individual experiences, but also about aligning the service design and managing it to perfection, to allow for the experiential, co-creation part of the entire service design. The desires of customers have also changed over time, as evidenced in the progression of economic value (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p. 98). Engaging customers in physical and mental processes can lead to memorability and focused attention (Campos et al., 2016, p. 1310). Physical participation includes body movements (Campos et al., 2016, p. 1327) while mental actions concern the cognitive functions of a person for example

information seeking and information sharing (Prebensen & Xie, 2017, p. 167; Yi & Gong, 2013, p. 1279). We know that psychological involvement in experience creation is the most important, and that even consumers partake in creating value differently depending on the situation (Prebensen & Xie, 2017, p. 168).

Table 1: Conceptual Framework of the Thesis

Shift of Paradigm
(Gharajedaghi, 2011)

Current Economic Offerings
(Pine & Gilmore, 1998)

These influence the product

How the product is requested by consumers -
How the product is prepared and offered by organizations
(Gharajedaghi, 2011) (Pine & Gilmore, 1998)

Product production happens within the current Era of experience creation in the 21st Century (Pine & Gilmore, 1998)

Era of experience creation advancing into a co-creation era

(Fu & Lehto, 2018)

Physical participation in Co-creation (Prebensen & Xie, 2017)

Mental/Psychological participation in Co-creation (Prebensen & Xie, 2017)

Psychological components
1) Cognitive
2) Pragmatic
3) Emotional
4) Sensory
5) Relational
6) Lifestyle
(Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998)

The conceptual framework of this thesis is presented above (Ref: Table 1 – Conceptual Framework of the Thesis). This framework shows that the shift in paradigm forces and the forces of current economic offerings both act on the product influencing how the product is requested of by the consumers, how the product is prepared and offered by the service providers, even to the systems in place to support the mentioned forces, the technologies adopted and so on. The product has to be fashioned in a way to ensure its compatibility and its palatability to the consumer and within the experience economy. By doing this, and by adopting systems to support the consumers demands, the consumer in a way seems to have some influence on the product being produced. This experience economy has progressed to a co-creative economic era according to Fu and Lehto (2018, p. 982). Co-creation is about participation, that is either physical or mental/psychological (Prebensen & Xie, 2017, p. 167). This study focusses on the psychological participation, by examining the six mentioned psychological components.

1.2.2 Co-creation oriented consumer

Consumers today have a variety of choices, from services, to products to choose from (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b, p. 5). A lot of people's works today can easily be done on our telephone devices. A major number of people can be classified as belonging to the high technology-and internet-oriented generations; they have the power of comparison and choice and are not easily satisfied (ERDOĞAN, 2013, p. 1). A company will try to create an experience for its customers, which strengthens their customer's image perception and goes a long way to improve loyalty and satisfaction (ERDOĞAN, 2013). But it is not easy to create a product for the consumer today. In a postmodern world, the dictates of the modernists with choices that were centered around sound rationale, have been replaced by emotions and imagery. The image is presumed to be the marketable entity and the product strives to represent the image (ERDOĞAN, 2013; Firat,

Dholakia, & Venkatesh, 1995, p. 45). Therefore, the experience creation takes precedence over everything else.

Consumption today is more about a steady flow of fantasies, feelings and fun rather than just fulfilling a need (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p. 132). Product identity, which did not matter in a modern world, is of great importance to the co-creation oriented consumer. Firat et al. (1995, p. 44) argue that consumers today constantly change their self-concepts and values and often ascribe to contradictory value systems, without feeling inconsistent, which is another reason why the consumer product today is so difficult to create in alignment with the current economic paradigm.

Value is only reflected as perceived by the consumer; therefore, companies today tend to take on a cartesian rationale: that products project images, a quint-essential postmodernist approach. With all these, what are the organizations to do? Well, the goal of experiential marketing is to create holistic experiences from integrating individual experiences (Schmitt, 1999, p. 53). But people have such different experiences, which makes it even harder for a service provider. In addition, to align an organization in regard to political or social standing, supporting everything from feminism to the LGBTQIA community, and so on; is a long list to comply with, that would still possibly offend someone holding a different view.

Schmitt (1999) is one of the researchers credited with coming up with different experiential models that marketers can use for customers, in order to distinguish their businesses. Some co-creation models will be discussed in chapter 2. These models were thought to lead to the creation of an experiential product that is acceptable to all.

1.3 Alignment of concepts used

We have discussed co-creation as a function of interaction (Grönroos, 1984, p. 133). The goal of the experience creation is that a customer will have lasting memories and will share them out on multiple platforms (Campos et al., 2016, p. 1310; Prebensen, Chen, & Uysal, 2018, p. 105). Tourist organizations strive to create good experiences in hopes of triggering feelings of happiness and satisfaction which have a positive effect on loyalty (S. Lee, Jeon, & Kim, 2011, p. 1115). Loyalty has a positive yet inconclusive relation to satisfaction but would mean that the client would not mind coming back or would not mind to freely recommend the place to another. Acts of satisfaction do not necessarily translate to contentment, however, there is some relationship to that as well.

In flow experiences, Csikszentmihalyi and Csikzentmihaly (1990) tell us that the best moments in an experiential consumption occur when one's mind and body are stretched to their limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something, a co-creative activity of some sort. A state in which one is so involved that nothing else seems to matter (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikzentmihaly, 1990; Hansen & Mossberg, 2013, p. 213). They further add that these optimal experiences add up to a form of mastery (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikzentmihaly, 1990), which is the consumer's perception of their own skills and competence (Prebensen & Xie, 2017, p. 167). In immersive experiences, we understand that a certain level of mastering or knowledge is required. Immersion and mastery are two states of timelessness (Hansen & Mossberg, 2013, p. 212). Bell and Lyall (2002, p. 4) talk about the sublime, a vastness that inspires across space and time, feelings of heroism, vastness, even fear at times. For example, a person skiing in the mountains on a bright sunny day can just stop in the vastness to look and take it all in, the expansive beauty of the white capped snowy mountains.

All these states are triggered by some deep emotional or cognitive actions that can generally be characterized as hedonic states or eudaemonic states. What is going on within the mind in response to all these remains unknown. It is not even clear if the same thought processes are responsible for triggering all these states. It is difficult to perform any study of the mind. However, this study will come close, by testing on the psychological components provided.

1.4 Defining the Scope of the thesis

This study is titled 'Exploring the dimensions of co-creation behavior in customer experience, looking closely at Guests' Hotel Check-in experiences. The hotel establishment is large and has many departments, from housekeeping, service, production department and so on. This thesis will focus on the reception or the front office/front desk of the hotel. This is the first point of interaction during check-in and it would be important to understand the perceptions around this, and how these potentially affect the entire hotel stay. This will be an exploratory study. This study takes steps in testing the psychological components that have already been discussed, in seeking to find the relation between them and co-creation. It begins by establishing what the psychological components are and comes up with the six factors used in this study by Schmitt (1999), Fornerino et al. (2006, p. 8) and Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398). These are the sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle, and relational components. These factors and why they are termed as psychological components, will be discussed in chapter two. Data will be collected through survey, and processed using factor analysis techniques, correlations and means and standard deviations and skewness and kurtosis.

In studying perceptions, it is usually a series of words or phrases that point to a psychological component like satisfaction, convenience, memorability, but cannot be well placed as either cognitive, sensory, and so on. In a way, this study will provide a lens to observe other

psychological components. Unpacking each component to its content through definitions and literature and the additional test results, will help us validly explain why a particular component is of more importance, why they relate to one or the other or why they do not, and be able to translate that to the natural world. The contributions of this study will have far reaching generalizable implications to hospitality service providers primarily. The data will help with optimization efforts and inform on what triggers actual guest co-creative experiences and what does not. Detailing within the findings can tell of other uncommon yet good to know items such as: do scents in the hotel help in any way, does soft music, or picking up guests as soon as they arrive from outside, or just waiting for them to walk into the lobby and up to the reception counter to check-in by themselves. The study will have far reaching implications to optimize the service designs of restaurants and service departments within the hotel, for example the bar and restaurants. Other non-hospitality related service providers can also gain good ideas and optimize them for their businesses for example: travel companies, gyms that hope to inspire morale in routines by psychologically involving their clientele, concert experience creators, phone stores, where clients interact with phones on display hoping to co-create before buying, and so on. Co-creation data will also trickle down to fields of tourism such as, adventure tourism, extreme sports and so on. With the knowledge of how to engage a client most optimally for co-creative experiences to occur, the service providers have tools that are limitless in capability.

The field of study for this thesis is psychology and sociology. This study includes only people who have checked-in to hotels within Norway.

1.5 Research Question and Hypothesis

Having defined co-creation within the parameters of joint creation and participation (Grönroos & Voima, 2013, p. 133; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b), it was important to combine these two factors in coming up with research questions. Neuman (2007, p. 25) suggests that it is important to learn the different dimensions you are testing on, to address specific research questions. The study wanted to know what the most important factor would be affecting joint co-creation and a test on interactivity/participation perhaps seen through influences within the relationships. The main research questions will be:

1) What is the most important psychological factor leading to co-creation experiences?

2) How do the psychological components influence the co-creation of experiences?

In this quantitative study, it was important to have an empirically testable hypothesis. This is because it was possible to infer some theoretical statements in regards to the possible outcome of our study (Neuman, 2007, p. 68). The following hypotheses were posited:

H1 =The psychological components will produce a component that stands in hierarchy as a major factor influencing co-creative behavior

H2 = Psychological components that positively correlate with each other and influence co-creative behavior will be present

H3 = Some of the psychological components are independent from the other components

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Literature Review

This chapter is going to examine some of the main research already done within the field of co-creation. It is divided into three parts. The first part will offer a link between experience and co-creation and talk about some of the terminologies used within the field. The second part will discuss some experiential-co-creation models. The third part will look at each individual component we will be testing and how we measured it.

2.1 Experience Economy and Co-creation Behavior

Numerous studies speak on the experiential nature of co-creation (Chathoth, Altinay, Harrington, Okumus, & Chan, 2013, p. 15). Unlike any experience creation process, co-creation presents different perceptions when it comes to the rewards that people get out of the co-creative interaction, such as a heightened sense of immersion (Bell & Lyall, 2002, p. 139).

Things become valuable because we value them (Prebensen, Chen, & Uysal, 2014, p. 2), not because they hold any specific value aside from what people ascribe to them. Vargo and Lusch (2008, p. 3) do argue out the idea that value is something produced for the customer by the service provider, and posit that co-creation value is only present if the consumer is a co-creator and until the offering has been used.

This aspect of value co-creation once consumption has occurred, brings with it the experience and perception aspects that come from using the offering, the value in use as one would call it (Prebensen et al., 2014, p. 3). In other words, value is created during usage where it is

socially constructed using experiences (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 94; Grönroos & Voima, 2013, p. 137; Prebensen et al., 2014, p. 3).

When companies are creating an experience, the process becomes an integrated one between host and guest in an atmosphere where they both share the same meaning for value (Prebensen et al., 2014, p. 3). This has been the case through-out the experiential paradigm. Co-creation presents not only a shared meaning for the same value, but the ability to form new, un-intended experiences.

Co-creation is interactive and tied in usage and consumption (Chathoth et al., 2013, p. 14; Vargo & Lusch, 2008, p. 4). So setting aside the shared and agreed upon standard for experience creation, co-creation is different as it offers unique value for each individual (Borg, 2003; Chathoth et al., 2013, p. 14).

2.2 Models of Co-creation

Here, we shall discuss three models of co-creation. One of the conforming items in co-creation models is the aspect of interaction. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a, p. 9) presents to us the building blocks of interaction as the building blocks that lead to co-creation. They present four aspects, dialogue, access, transparency, and risk benefits. They suggest that dialog between the consumer and firm; access and transparency to information for the guest can lead to an understanding of the risk benefits for the guest. In this instance, we speak about personal risk benefits like, 'should I change my medication before I go on this trip or not?

Zátori (2016, p. 386) presents the AIM Model of value co-creation, created using literature from Hidi and Renninger (2006), 'The four phase model of interest development'. In this, the four phases of inclusion are: triggered situational interest, maintained situational interest, emerging

individual interest and well-developed individual interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006, p. 111). In the AIM model, co-creation process in guided tours is triggered by provoking A-attention, by considering the cultural diversity of different customers and modifying accordingly; I – involving and activating through entertainment, social and emotional involvement through stories and narratives and finally, M-making them discover. Here stories and narratives can be changed to suit the purposes needed in the story telling process, whether to make customers discover, get involved or pay attention. The term storytelling in this case is used to explain the situation and what is planned to be done, and not necessarily an actual story. The findings of the AIM model showed that small group tour operators used the concept of co-creation the most (Zátori, 2016, p. 377), perhaps denoting that the number of people also matter for some specific co-creative experiences to occur.

E Gummesson, Mele, Polese, Nenonen, and Storbacka (2010) undertake a study where business models are seen as configurations of twelve interrelated aspects, including market, operational, offering and management viewpoints. According to their study, the effectiveness of a model to have value co-creation is defined as an internal fit between all the business models and an external fit between providers and customers (E Gummesson et al., 2010, p. 1). The business model framework also has three types of components: design principles, resources, and capabilities. The design principles guide the organization so that resources can be optimally integrated (E Gummesson et al., 2010, p. 6). The resources are important because it is the operation of such that is the fundamental basis for exchange, and all actors are resource integrators (E Gummesson et al., 2010, p. 6; Vargo & Lusch, 2008, p. 7). The capabilities are the firm's ability to utilize its resources effectively (Day, 1994, p. 38; E Gummesson et al., 2010, p. 7; Hunt & Morgan, 1995, p. 6; Morgan & Hunt, 1999, p. 281). These three components put against the four

dimensions of market, offering, operations and management (E Gummesson et al., 2010, p. 7), give us the twelve interrelated aspects that lead to value co-creation. The overall findings of this model is that firms can radically improve their value co-creation by having businesses with high degree of external and internal fit (E Gummesson et al., 2010, p. 1).

These models show how interactivity leads to value co-creation, and how co-creation has a firm root in service design systems, as posited in the example in chapter 1.2. In this thesis, as we test the psychological components, a major definer for co-creative experiences will be the interactivity or the relationships seen within the factors.

2.3 Psychology of co-creation

Current literature talks about the important role that consumers play, as resource integrators (Baron & Harris, 2008, p. 113; Prebensen & Xie, 2017, p. 167) but fails to tell us how consumers integrate these resources in the course of defining experiences and creating value (Baron & Harris, 2008, p. 113). The degree of participation is a factor in experiential consumptions and consumers that participate in the co-creation process are shown to be more satisfied than passive agents (Prebensen, Kim, & Uysal, 2016, p. 936; Prebensen & Xie, 2017, p. 167). Researchers have been concerned with how consumers subconsciously assess and evaluate against the value of something allowing for predictions (Rihova, Buhalis, Moital, & Gouthro, 2015, p. 357) and the thereafter effect of creating experiences with the items. It is just not clear how this uptake of information and processing then leads to co-creation of value.

We understand that participation in co-creative activities can be listed as either being physical or psychological in nature (Bertella, 2014, p. 115; Prebensen & Xie, 2017, p. 167). Psychological participation is more important than the physical participation (Prebensen & Xie, 2017, p. 166).

We seek to understand this psychological part of the consumer, regarding its co-creative value perceptions.

Fornerino et al. (2006, p. 8); Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398); Schmitt (1999) come up with the six components of the customer experience which will be used in this study as the psychological representations for co-creation -Sensory, Cognitive, Emotional, Pragmatic, Lifestyle and Relational components. These were chosen to be tested as psychological components specifically because they are widely accepted as experiential models (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Also, in following some relevant studies such as (Knutson, Beck, Kim, & Cha, 2009), it became clear that a study of these components could provide a lens that could help us look at all other psychological or experiential components. The assumption made is that all experiential components are psychological in nature. The following discussion explains more about the psychological components, the literature and why they can be defined as psychological components.

2.3.1 Sensory Component

In examining the sensory component, we draw literature from (Hultén, Broweus, & Van Dijk, 2009) that the five human senses affect human behavior. Sensory components position the human senses as the focus for all marketing activities that emphasize on value creation and co-creation (Hultén et al., 2009, p. ix). Sensory experiences are all about sensations and the brand soul, and refers to how an organization can try creating a personal touch through marketing (Hultén et al., 2009, p. xii), thus providing the opportunity for the consumer's mind to achieve a supreme sensory experience.

The sensory component is the most common (Hultén, 2011, p. 259) and has been majorly dominated by marketers in advertising endeavors. The idea is to have a firm's brand viewed.

Sensory marketing provides the organization with the ability to be viewed strategically, almost subliminally, with long term brand awareness creation (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 1,2). The interconnectivity of the senses is also a major pro for marketers. Smelling or touching something can trigger memories. Experiments done by researchers after the Great Japan Earthquake on victims who lost many precious mementos showed that using a device that produces specific smells seemed to encourage the remembrance of fond memories and allow communication between the affected (Kita & Nakatani, 2011, p. 128). If sensory marketing is done well, these memories can help solidify the good name of the brand with the consumer.

Some hotels use soft music and mild scents within the lobby, coupled with visuals for the eyes and sometimes, small snacks like candies and fruits are presented at the front office to indulge one's taste buds. Sometimes, hot towels/refreshing towels are offered which also involve the touch sense. The importance of these is greatly overlooked in their simplicity, but Kita and Nakatani (2011, p. 133) in their smell-based memory recollection experiment found the links between some of these, for example, smells and fond memories.

Sense marketing is able to provide a concept that is consistent but always fresh and new (Schmitt, 1999, p. 13), a so called cognitive consistency. For example, companies come up with a product that looks a certain way, perhaps a drink in a bottle. Over time, they can execute the very same drink, marketing it with different designs. The uptake of stimuli from our senses makes us feel a certain way. 'Feel' marketing does trigger certain emotions as it appeals to customers' inner feelings with the idea to create experiences that range from mildly positive moods linked with the brand or strong emotions of pride and joy (Schmitt, 1999, p. 13). In all these, we have to contend that it is a difficult task, since the stimuli we use to induce emotions and even the willingness to be involved or be a part of it often differ from culture to culture (Schmitt, 1999, p. 13). Nonetheless,

the senses present a solution that has been studied by some, and an enigma that is not fully understood.

Smell

It is said that a human being can remember more than 10,000 different scents, and that a scent experienced earlier is enough to associate with previous memories (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 7). Scents can contribute to experiences that are long lasting to the customer and build awareness of brand in the long run, and even temporarily. Some other scents are subtle but can still affect the individual unconsciously (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 7). This helps highlight the importance of the scent in hospitality marketing.

Sight

'*The eyes buy about 70 – 80% of what people actually buy, so what the eyes see is extremely important*' is a quote by CEO Jörgen Applelqvist, founder and owner of the Swedish fashion retailer Gina Tricot (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 9). Sight is the most rampant in use as far as sensory marketing is concerned. The picture a firm wants to convey contributes to its identity and its customer image (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 9). We see this in hotel receptions with colors and sometimes bright shining letters in calligraphy of the hotels name on the front desk, key card and so on.

Sound

This is usually considered when front office desks in hotels want to create a good atmosphere. But sound is just as potent a tool as any other sensory tool. Most people attach meaning to sound, and music is often used to shape a person's identity (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 8).

This tactic sees that customers react with feelings to music and videos, and in a front desk set-up, all sounds need to be accounted for, from switchboards, employees, and so on (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 8, 9).

Touch

Customers touching items can lead to them wanting to interact more with the items, a phenomenon that apparently leads to impulse buying (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 11). The touch sense is said to bring with it a 'form sense,' that tells us if objects are round, hard, and so on. The 'form sense' means that it is not necessary that one actually touches an object physically to experience its form (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 11). Some expressions of this are temperature, weight, and so on. These can be important factors to remember and keep constant in the front-desk of a hotel in regards to the temperature of the front desk, the textile used in engraving names on keycards, message boards, tables and surfaces, and so on.

Taste

Taste experiences can contribute to strengthening the image of a product by allowing for interaction (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 10). The only way to alure this sense is by actually giving food and drink, candies and so on (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 10). Hotels usually have these free complementary items at the front desk to help trigger this sense. This sense also depends on a kind of symbiotic relationship where smell, sight and touch interact leading to much stronger taste (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 10, 11).

2.3.2 Emotional component

This component involves the consumer's ability to generate moods and feelings regarding a product being offered. This helps the organization to create an affective relationship with their consumers (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). According to Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398), it is quite possible for a firm to produce products that are emotionally linked to the customers. Emotions by themselves represent another language that is universally spoken and understood (Consoli, 2010, p. 3). Emotions can be expressed through fear, surprise, disgust, sadness, happiness or anger (Consoli, 2010, p. 2; Ekman & Friesen, 2003).

Emotional marketing studies have shown how purchasing choices are a result of careful analysis of rational and emotional aspects (Consoli, 2010, p. 1). Psychology recognizes that emotional conditions play a major role in influencing every stage of decision making within the purchasing process (Consoli, 2010, p. 1). These emotional purchases if you will, are also necessitated by the fact that we live in a postmodern world that is conditioned by the need to consume symbolic senses (Rytel, 2010, p. 30), and since this represents part of the co-creative paradigm we live in, these symbolic features of exchange have a greater impact on consumers choices in the market.

The relation between the emotional component and the sensory component is not quite immediate and is rather mild. In small ways it can be seen in that it is the senses that absorb the information that is later synthesized to perhaps fall under the emotional component and evidenced by the emotional expressions earlier discussed. According to Consoli (2010, p. 1), an application of the emotional component when it comes to hospitality marketing could be in luxury goods, where the emotional aspects as prestige and brand become more important than other technical or

rational aspects such as price or functionality. Because of this, one may find that a consumer is willing and ready to pay a higher price for a product. Emotional intelligence as a quality is also revered in sales and marketing. In an experiment by (Kidwell, Hardesty, Murtha, & Sheng, 2011, p. 78) on the use of emotions by sales professionals in marketing exchanges to facilitate positive outcomes, they show that emotional intelligence is positively related to high performance in sales and high customer retention.

2.3.3 Cognitive Component

Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398) explains that the cognitive component is concerned with conscious mental processes and thinking, and that an offering may involve clients to engage their creativity or to problem solve. The connectivity between the cognitive, sensory and emotional is quite apparent, as it is information that has already been taken in through the sensory that is then processed in the cognitive mind, and perhaps has already elicited some emotional reaction as well. Firms wishing to market themselves with this need to be careful not to offer too much information which requires more brain processing power (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 14). Information within the front desk should also be carefully placed to allow just enough of the cognitive to be awakened without overcharging the mind with thought.

Human cognition works to take away all information that is irrelevant to a task a consumer might be trying to accomplish (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 14), for example, choosing between items. The cognitive component when triggered provides information, meaning and content for the individual continuously (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 21). The cognitive structure of humans provides situational context by providing information all around. For example, consider checking-in for an international flight. Assuming that one is a frequent flyer, one is aware that the bags will be

checked in first as the counter clerk also checks you in to your flight if you had not already done it online. The hand luggage and body checks come next, then through the duty-free shops and restaurants; passport checks are done at the end when boarding. Break up this process or consider someone misplacing a document perhaps the passport, and while at the final spot where the passport needs to be checked, the cognitive would be giving much information of where the person put it last, where it might have been misplaced in the airport, if they even carried the passport, what this could mean for them if they can't find the passport, logistics of cancelling a flight and whatever help they can be given by the security help at the airport.

2.3.4 Pragmatic Component

The term useability has been used by Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398) to describes the pragmatic component. This term, however, does not fully explain what the pragmatic component stands for. The pragmatic component is the only additional component to the experiential models from extant literature by Schmitt (1999) and Fornerino et al. (2006, p. 8) and we will be testing its efficacy as a psychological component. Literature on the pragmatic component seems to point to its importance in designing authentic experiences since brand originality or authenticity, has been shown to have content in social interactions or in our case, to have content in co-creative experiences (Esmaeli, Kheiri, & Farahbod, 2019, p. 227).

The pragmatic then speaks to authentic experiences based on functional or usable infrastructure. But this argument becomes further complicated as the two components are not mutually exclusive. An authentic experience can be staged, but the regard is always with the person perceiving it as either authentic or not (MacCannell, 1973, p. 589). Functionality of an authentic experience can be below per, take for example, climbing a hill on moist, moss filled rocks, and

scorching sunlight to see an ancient lost village. The functionality of the transportation component to this place (climbing on slippery moss filled rocks) may be regarded to some as unsafe, tiresome, or to others as fun; yet that experience could be the most authentic.

In our study and according to Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398), we take the pragmatic in all the dimensions described, to define useable qualities and authentic qualities.

2.3.5 Lifestyle Component

This component comes from an affirmation to a system of believes and values and the adoption of certain behaviors and ways of life (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Usually lifestyle marketing is done in a targeted way and involves segmenting the market on the basis of lifestyle dimensions and positioning the product to appeal to the interests and opinions of that particular group (Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012, p. 152).

Sometimes, the cultural and societal variables have a hand in establishing lifestyle (Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012, p. 154), and the group and individual expectations create a defined pattern of behavior that can be used by marketers to target their consumers. This is because a defined lifestyle pattern determines purchase decisions (Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012, p. 154). The lifestyle component does play a role in co-creative experiences as it determines the product or service consumed, activities based on interests and opinions, value systems, self-concepts and attitudes towards various product classes (Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012, p. 154).

In the most widely practiced form of lifestyle analysis also called psychographics, studies done consist of long lists of statements designed to capture relevant aspects of a consumer like attitudes, personality, and so on (Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012, p. 152). Psychographics are used to

provide more information to the marketers about the segments. In this study, a similar approach in the form of a survey was employed to test on this component.

2.3.6 Relational Component

The relational component involves the individual, and their social contexts, relationships with other people and relationship with their ideal self (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398) also mentions that an offering can leverage on the relational component by offering a product best suited for consumption with others. Relationship marketing denotes a desire by a consumer to reduce their market choices and engage a relational position with a specific provider (Sheth & Parvatlyar, 1995, p. 255), by patronizing the same provider. This could be partly because of the input of the provider in sustaining a good relationship with the consumer.

According to Sheth and Parvatlyar (1995, p. 255), consumers have a need to reduce their choices and patronize the same provider for reasons of consumer social influences: reasons of simplifying buying, reduce perceived risks and maintain cognitive consistency and psychological comfort. Organizations that tap into the potential of relationship marketing can have a customer for life. Relationship marketing is an approach to develop long-term loyal customers (Evert Gummesson, 2011, p. 5). This can be done by organizations by not only having a superior product, but also resolving the consumer issues of price, perceived risks, access, and so on (Sheth & Parvatlyar, 1995, p. 255). Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995, pp. 397, 398) mention that direct marketing both in business to business and business to consumer is a form useful for relationship marketing. This is because when producers and consumers directly deal with each other, this may lead to emotional bonding.

2.4 A Descripton of the six as Psychological Components

We define psychology as that which involves the mind and behavior (Johnston, 2007). We regard our components as psychologically inclined for the following reasons: the sensory component in general talks about the five human senses and how they affect human behavior (Hultén et al., 2009). It involves a taking in of information through the senses and tabulating it mentally to produce a response. The emotional component is about generation of moods and feelings that help create a relationship between the organization and the consumer (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). This happens within the mind. The cognitive component is concerned with conscious mental processes and thinking (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398) and may involve a consumers creativity in problem solving. This is also a mental task.

The pragmatic component talks about the concept of useability according to Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398), but in greater part speaks of originality and the creation of authentic experiences (Esmaeli et al., 2019, p. 227). Authentic experiences can be staged, but the regard is with the person perceiving it (MacCannell, 1973, p. 589). This makes it a mental task for consumers to determine the authenticity of an experience or its pragmatic use. The lifestyle component is an affirmation to a system of believes and values and the adoption of certain behaviors and ways of life (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). We take it as a psychological component because the decisions that are opted for in purchase by consumers, come from the adoption of behaviors and ways of life over a period of time, and the beliefs that either promote a purchase or reject it. These are mental tasks. The relational component is a psychological component as it involves the relationship that one has with their ideal self (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). It is a psychological component for the reason that relationships and their degrees are synthesized in the mind, and to have an ideal

relationship with oneself would require a synthesis of mental information to determine the ideal self and its relation with other people.

It was of importance to us to ascertain these six components as psychological components so we could prove that our testing components had not strayed from their intended parameters. It would also prove that breaking down each component with relevant literature into specific questions that test on that component, would not be an error and would be testing what we want.

The study will focus on the front office or the reception desk of the hotel. The relevance of this is to explore experiential and co-creative tendencies that occur within the very first conversation that guests have with the hotel staff. The exploratory design was also important because co-creation can be explained in very many ways. Exploratory designs help us to formulate and focus our research, as well as create some general mental pictures to aid in our understanding of the topic (Neuman, 2007, p. 38).

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Methodology

This chapter hopes to highlight the methods the researcher used in this study. The survey design will be discussed first. The design of the questions and how they fit into each component will also be discussed. Data will be run through an Exploratory Factor Analysis. The final loadings will be used to come up with weighted measures, that will help in giving a hierarchy to our components. Some correlation analysis will also be done to establish relationships. Mean, standard deviations, kurtosis and skewness will be used to discuss the lifestyle component

3.1 Survey Design

A questionnaire was designed with a total of thirty questions to test the components. The survey involved an initial pilot study offered to twenty respondents. This was done using a probability sampling technique with intervals. The intervals were done by looking at the names list of an Expat group on Facebook and picking every second person in the list to contact them. A total of twenty respondents were picked out of forty. Expat groups' purposes, among many are usually to provide instant resources and information for foreigners just moving into a new country. They are good places for such research as they are filled with professionals from different backgrounds. The results of the pilot study helped in adjusting the questionnaire. After correcting the questionnaire based on the pilot, the researcher accounted for the common method bias of ambiguity within the research questions as suggested by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff (2012). Their recommendation was that it is important for the respondents to understand the question as simply as possible so that they do not assign meaning to questions they do not understand. Second, the researcher balanced the positive and negative items. This was to control the acquiescence and disacquiescence bias, another form of common method bias, where respondents with a positive

affect tend to pick only positive items and those with negative affect tend to pick only negative items (Podsakoff et al., 2012)**.** The responses with these errors tend to give a measurement error within the factor analysis, therefore it was important to account for them. Third, the researcher included an additional category on the seven-point Likert scale, with a N/A – Not Applicable option for three of the questions, making the scale an eight-point Likert scale. This was done in response to feedback from the pilot study, where some respondents mentioned not being able to answer as they did not fit into any of the choices given.

The rest of the questions were on a seven-point Likert scale. The degree for answering was from 'extremely bad' to 'extremely good' for one section and from 'to no extent' to 'to a very great extent' for another section.

The lifestyle components were structured to have options of 'true', 'false' or 'sometimes' except for one question that had seven options to choose from. The questionnaire began by giving information about the study, what was being tested, the relevant authorities that had given permission and the person who undertakes the study. The questions on the survey were not arranged in order of their components but were mixed to allow for a natural flow while answering. Two sets of questionnaires are thus made available, one before the pilot study and designed directly from theory, the other incorporated with changes after the pilot study. Below is a representation of the first questionnaire, built from relevant literature. The second questionnaire is attached (See Appendix -Issued Survey).

Table 2: Questionnaire designed from relevant theory

Component	Operationalization within the survey	Author
Demographics Age: **(S_2)**	18-24 years 25-54 years 55-64 years 65 Years and over	(Agency, 2020) (Jon Epland, 2019)
Gender: **(S_3)**	Female/Male	
Educational Background: **(S_4)**	Secondary School or Lower, Post-secondary education/Apprentice Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent Master's Degree PhD	
Annual Household Income: **(S_5)**	Less than 339,000 NOK Between 339, 000 and 792,000 NOK Between 792, 000 NOK and 1,029,400 NOK Above 1,029,400 NOK	
Basic Information about your travels: **(S_6)**	How many round trips do you usually take each year, where you stay at a hotel? • 1-2 times • 3-9 times • 9 times or more **(S_7)** What is the purpose of your trips as answered in the previous question? • Business • Leisure • Both	

Sensory	• (S_8) perceived feeling about the appearance of the Lobby? • (S_10) How did the appearance of the Lobby make you feel? • (S_11) Perception of Different sounds and music • (S_12) Perception of different smells at the Lobby • Here, you can add information regarding the questions **(Open-ended question)**	(Kita & Nakatani, 2011) (Hultén et al., 2009) (Schmitt, 1999) (Fornerino et al., 2006)
Emotional	• (S_15) Rate speed and efficiency of check-in and how it made you feel? • (S_16) Rate conversation with reception during check-in and how it made you feel? • (S_34) If you were welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel? • (S_35) If you were not welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel? • (S_20) In the conversation you had with the reception, do you feel it could have been improved upon? • (S_21) Did you feel that the conversation set the tone for your stay?	(Consoli, 2010; Ekman & Friesen, 2003) (Schmitt, 1999) (Fornerino et al., 2006)
Cognitive	• (S_17) How would you rate your entire check-in experience at last hotel • (S_19) How would you rate the help you got to solve problem in a difficult situation? • (S_36) How would you rank your last check-in to all other check-in experiences?	(Hultén et al., 2009) (Schmitt, 1999) (Fornerino et al., 2006)
Pragmatic	• (S_22) Was the information provided easy to understandable and useful for your stay? • (S_23) Were the Hotel facilities and design of things functional and not complicated?	(Gentile et al., 2007)
Relational	• (S_24) Do you find it easy to converse with the reception if you need something? • (S_25) Do you like it when the hotel gives you special favors e.g a free city tour? • (S_26) Do you like it when the hotel gives you personalized service e.g finding your favorite drinking water brand for you? • (S_27) Do you actively try to keep a good relationship with the reception staff?	(Sheth & Parvatlyar, 1995) (Gentile et al., 2007)
Lifestyle	• (S_30) Do you stay at the same hotel every time? • (S_31) Do you stay at different hotel brands when you travel? • (S_32) Do you like to be associated with a particular hotel brand? • (S_33) Choose one item that best explains why you come back every time/year to the hotel?	(Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012) (Schmitt, 1999) (Fornerino et al., 2006)

The demographic age groups were created from the world fact book, under 'data from Norway' (Agency, 2020). The annual income data came from the household income and wealth statistics of statistics Norway (Jon Epland, 2019). These are important for this study as persons

with disposable income tend to have more travel intentions (Wang, Fang, & Law, 2018, p. 153), which is good in considering participants who have travels leading to hotel check-ins in Norway. Gender was Male/Female. Based on feedback from the study, the researcher was advised to add the category of 'other' to the gender in future research. Included were educational background questions and some basic information about travel frequencies and purposes.

The sensory component positions the human senses as the focus for all marketing activities emphasizing on value creation and co-creation (Hultén et al., 2009, p. ix). As such, the study used questions targeted at the human senses to test on the sensory uptake, such as the guests' '(S_11) perception of different sounds and music' (Hearing) or '(S_12) perception of different smells at the lobby (Smell)'. We also asked about the '(S_8) perceived feeling about the appearance of the lobby' (Sight), and '(S_10) how that appearance made the guests feel'. Within the original questionnaire, there was an open-ended question seeking clients to give further information if they had any. This question was not included in the final questionnaire as it could not be coded for a proper quantitative analysis. There are innumerable number of ways respondents could answer to this. There was also the risk that data provided would not fall into the sensory or any other component being tested and would not be useful.

The emotional component is all about the ability of a person to generate moods and feelings (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Often within the front office desk, there are many emotions that one has, based on the way they are received, the conversations they have, the speed of the entire check-in, and so on. To test this component, we asked the questions '(S_15) rate the speed and efficiency of the check-in' to understand how this made them feel. For example, were they delayed, was there a line to wait in during check-in, was it slow, was there only one attendant, and so on. These items can form impressions and induce emotions. We asked respondents to '(S_16) rate the conversation

they had with reception during check-in'; was it casual and free flowing or was it more mechanical, scripted, and not personal. We asked about, '(S_34) the feeling they had whether they were welcomed from outside by a hotel staff' and, '(S_35) the feeling they had if they were not welcomed by a hotel staff'. This was of importance as neuroscience posits that emotions are processed independently of conscious awareness (Pally, 1998, p. 349). Therefore, an act as simple as being received from outside by a hotel staff, or not being received from outside by a hotel staff, could have huge emotional implications. The implications, however, can only be noted in hindsight, such as when one is asked about the situation in the form of the question put in a survey. We also asked '(S_20) in the conversation you had with the receptionist, could that conversation have been improved upon' to understand their emotional sense about the conversation and finally '(S_21) did the conversation set the tone for your entire stay.' This was to understand whether the check-in experience was cemented in the mind of the guest and affected how they perceived other aspects of their stay.

The cognitive component is concerned with conscious mental processes and thinking and that clients may be required to engage their creativity or to problem solve (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). We asked '(S_17) how would you rate your entire check-in experience at the last hotel you stayed at' and '(S_36) how would you rank your last check-in to all other check-in experiences?' These two questions required that the guest examine factors at the hotel and at other similar hotels they may have stayed at to answer. We then asked, '(S_19) how would you rate the help you got to solve a problem in a difficult situation.' This question was used to test on the problem solving/creativity aspect of the cognitive component.

The pragmatic component talks not only about useability (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398), but also about the creation of authentic experiences especially within brands trying to foster

originality. This according to Esmaeli et al. (2019, p. 227) is because authenticity tends to have a hand in mediating social interactions and co-creative experiences. This component was tested by asking the questions, '(S_22) was the information provided easy to understand and useful for your stay' and '(S_23) were the hotel facilities and design of things functional and not complicated?' Question '(S_24) do you find it easy to converse with the reception if you need something?' was initially listed as a relational component question but later became a pragmatic component question. To explain further, the relational component for this question involved the individual and their social contexts, relationships with other people and with their ideal self. It presents itself as offerings that can be consumed with others (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398), making it quite possible to see the relational aspect between the guest and hotel staff within the question. However, there is an aspect of useability that becomes the whole point of the question. The question asks if the guest finds it easy to converse with the reception desk if they need something, not just about speaking to the reception in general. Thus, within the final questionnaire, this question is considered a pragmatic component question.

To test the relational component, questions asked were: '(S_25) do you like it when the hotel gives you special favors e.g., a free city tour' and '(S_26) do you like it when the hotel gives you personalized service e.g., finding your favorite drinking water brand for you?' These two questions show a level of relation between the guest and the hotel, that the hotel knows about the guest's personal idiosyncrasies and tries to offer more personalized services to them. The guest may then want to come back. The final question asked for this component is '(S_27) do you actively try to keep a good relationship with the reception staff'. This question wanted to identify a relationship between the hotel staff and the guest in general, not necessarily in an exchange event. It also helped us understand mediators of co-creative tendencies within a formal exchange relationship and

perhaps outside or in a less strict exchange environment. This is when the guest first arrives and is received quite formally, or after the guest has stayed a few days and the exchange relationship is more relaxed.

The lifestyle component comes from an affirmation to a system of beliefs and values and the adoption of certain ways of life and behaviors (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). The lifestyle component involves the creation of groups social-culturally, as people with similar lifestyles will tend to find it easy to be around each other (Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012, p. 154). This is why even marketing efforts for the lifestyle component target groups by appealing to their opinions and lifestyle dimensions (Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012, p. 152). To test this component, questions asked were: '(S_30) do you stay at the same hotel brand every time you travel' or '(S_31) do you stay at different hotel brands every time you travel.' These questions were geared at letting us know some of the reasoning behind the respondents' choice to stay at the same hotel or different hotels. The next question asked was: '(S_32) do you like to be associated with a particular hotel brand?' This question was testing to see preference in our respondents, which is a part of the affirmations to a system of beliefs. Lastly, the question '(S_33) choose one item that best explains why you come back every time/year to the hotel.' Respondents could only pick one out of seven responses.

These lifestyle component questions were geared solely at analyzing the routine travel and hotel behaviors as a way of life and their mediation into the co-creative aspects and interactions within the front office or during check-in. People have different sets of believes that influence their behavior, thus, it is expected that this component could change in order of importance within different groups.

3.2 Sampling Design

To attain statistical significance and for a good exploratory factor analysis, literature suggests to have a sample size of minimum three hundred respondents (Gorsuch, 1997, p. 542). Many other authors have suggested that about one hundred respondents are also sufficient (Kline, 1994; Pearson & Mundform, 2010, p. 359).

The main study was supposed to use the same probability sampling with intervals technique as the pilot study. This was to be done by approaching different people, institutions and individuals and asking them kindly to take a survey. This could not occur due to Covid-19 and the restrictions that were placed on society. A purposive sampling strategy was adopted, to get all possible cases that fit our criteria (Neuman, 2007, p. 278). Purposive sampling is appropriate in selecting unique cases that are especially informative (Neuman, 2007, p. 274). Cases as in this study, where we try to understand the co-creative behavior from respondents who have ever checked into hotels in Norway, stand to benefit from this technique.

3.3 Data Collection

Ideally, data was supposed to be collected by visiting an area with a lot of tourists, or tourist activities, having contact with them and asking them to kindly fill out our questionnaires. This would have involved the researcher and perhaps an extra person to help. Due to societal restrictions, the online survey was born. The survey was conducted on SurveyExact, an online system designed for this purpose, and provided by the University.

Data was collected in two ways. First, about three hundred survey links were sent as personal messages to social media Expat groups. The Social Media Expat Groups were chosen because they are mostly filled with many working-class professionals. An assumption was made that they have

checked into hotels at some point, either for work or leisure, and so they fit our sample. Of the three hundred surveys sent out, only forty-four were filled representing a response rate of 14.67%. From this group, there were six partially completed surveys and one without consent which were removed, bringing the useable total for the surveys in the social media group to thirty-seven.

The second way that data was collected was by sending out email links to PhD students at Norwegian Universities. The choice for PhD students was due to three reasons: First, they travel within the country for conferences/trainings/meetings necessitating hotel stays; second, they as students themselves would have some sympathy to participate in the survey and third; PhD students may have more time than others (e.g., professors) to complete a survey. Data was collected from four Norwegian Universities -University of Life Sciences (NTNU), Arctic University of Norway (University of Tromsø), The University of Oslo and The University of Agder. PhD students' contact information is readily available on the universities' websites. A total of one thousand, seven hundred and forty-four emails were sent out to this group.

Each respondent received a total of four emails, unless they opted out of the survey at the very beginning. The first email introduced the survey and the research being conducted, as well as fore-warn of the other three incoming emails. There was a steady number of responses after the very first email, with a response rate of about 13.1% – 15.4%. The second email sent was a reminder email, sent three days after the first email. There was recorded a surge of responses after this reminder of up to seventy new responses within that day, representing a response percentage of 18.4% of the total respondents. The third email (second reminder email) was sent six days later and as before, there was a surge of responses by about seventy to one hundred in a day (18.4% - 26.3%). On the seventh day, and because the survey was to be completed within a week as stated in the first email, the following emails were sent: a thank you email for those who had completed

the survey; a thank you and reminder email for those who had partially completed the survey and those who had not attempted at all. There was noted a surge of responses again of about 15.3%, and a lower number that trickled on to the next few days. The survey remained open even after the week of data collection was over, for about another week until there was noted no new responses.

Of the total surveys sent out, only three hundred and eighty-five were attempted, representing a response rate of about 21.8%. We removed the partially completed surveys and those to which respondents did not give consent yet opened the survey in a new browser and completed it. Consequently, we had altogether three hundred and thirteen complete surveys from the PhD students and social media groups. The Social Media Expat group only had thirty-seven useful responses, a very small sample size. Ideally, the study was to analyze the PhD students' group and the social media groups separately in order to compare, but the social media group number was too low to offer a good comparison, or to generalize. The social media group responses were removed from the study. The final number arrived at was two hundred and seventy-six, representing the PhD students only. This is the final number used in testing and computing.

3.4 Data Analysis

In reference to table 3: Descriptive Statistics below, the study had male and female respondents 52.9% and 47.1% respectively. The largest age group was from 25-54 years. The annual household income varied, with the highest percentage of 64.9% households earning between 339,000 NOK and 792,100 NOK. 5.1% earned less than 339,000NOK a year, 17.4% earned between 792,100 NOK and 1,029,400 NOK while 12.7% earned above 1,029,400 NOK per year. 49.6% of people travel 3-9 times a year, 47.5% travel once or twice a year and 8% travel more than 9 times a year. Most people represented by 63.8%, travel for both business and leisure, while 7.6% travel specifically for leisure and 28.6% for business purposes.

Table 3: **Descriptive Statistics**

Demographic Variable	Description	Numbers	Percentage
Gender	Female	130	47.1
	Male	146	52.9
Age	18-24	6	2.2
	25-54	266	96.4
	55-64	4	1.4
	Above 65	-	-
Educational Background	Secondary School or lower		
	Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent		
	Master's Degree		
	PhD	276	100
Annual Household Income	Less than 339,000 NOK	14	5.1
	Between 339,000 NOK and 792,100 NOK	179	64.9
	Between 792,100 NOK and 1,029,400 NOK	48	17.4
	Above 1,029,400 NOK	35	12.7
Travel Frequency	1-2 Times	131	47.5
	3-9 Times	137	49.6
	9 Times or more	8	2.9
Travel Purpose	Business	79	28.6
	Leisure	21	7.6
	Both	176	63.8

To analyze our data, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was done. EFA is usually taken up if there is an assumption that there is a linear relationship between some of the factors and the variables we are computing (Gorsuch, 1983; Yong & Pearce, 2013, p. 80). Within our study, we have six psychological components that we are testing. The table below represents the Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Table 4: EFA of five components

Component	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained
Sensory			
(S_11) Perception of Different sounds and music	0.738		
(S_12) Perception of different smells at the Lobby	0.747	1.275	7.966
(S_19) How would you rate the help you got to solve problem in a difficult situation?	0.599		
Cognitive			
(S_15) Rate speed and efficiency of check-in and how it made you feel?	0.801		
(S_16) Rate conversation with reception during check-in and how it made you feel?	0.703	3.980	24.874
(S_17) How would you rate your entire check-in experience at last hotel	0.845		
(S_36) How would you rank your last check-in to all other check-in experiences?	0.534		
(S_22) Was the information provided easy to understandable and useful for your stay?	0.507		
Emotional			
(S_34) If you were welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel?	0.808	1.145	7.159
(S_35) If you were not welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel?	0.660		
Pragmatic			
(S_8) perception about the appearance of the Lobby?	0.821		
(S_10) How did the appearance of the Lobby make you feel?	0.832	1.954	12.213
(S_23) Were the Hotel facilities and design of things functional and not complicated?	0.536		
Relational			
(S_25) Do you like it when the hotel gives you special favors e.g a free city tour?	0.804		
(S_26) Do you like it when the hotel gives you personalized service e.g finding your favorite drinking water brand for you?	0.816	1.345	8.405
(S_27) Do you actively try to keep a good relationship with the reception staff?	0.694		
			Total: 60.618

Tabachnick and Fidell (2007); Yong and Pearce (2013, p. 85) suggest that robust readings should be considered as those above 0.32. Our factors loaded higher than that, with the lowest loading being 0.507 and the highest at 0.845. Kaiser's criterion (rule of thumb) was used to decide which factors to extract; any factor with an eigenvalue of 1 or greater (Kaiser, 1960, p. 145; Yong & Pearce, 2013, p. 85). Five factors were identified. The lifestyle component was not loaded here because it did not follow the 7-point Likert scale design. The questions had three options to choose

from (3-Point Likert) plus an additional question with seven options to choose from. This question had no varying degree on scale (Nominal Scale). The lifestyle component will be explained using mean values, standard deviations, kurtosis, and skewness. The factor analysis showed a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy of 0.76 which is a robust reading for anything greater than 0.5 (Katrancı, 2015, p. 303; Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). Bartlett's test of sphericity was less than point 0001 and proves to be statistically significant.

The EFA revealed that some of the questions were no longer loaded within the same component as originally (See Table 4). These discrepancies are explained in the following ways. Within the sensory component, question (S_19) 'how would you rate the help you got to solve problem in a difficult situation,' moved from being a cognitive question to a sensory component question. This is perhaps because of the physical temporal nature of getting help, which involves the senses like touching for orientation, listening for directions, and so on. To give an example, if a guest gets to the front-desk and realizes they are missing their reservations, they may have misplaced them; a discussion ensues with the reception staff to see if they could maybe print out new ones. There would be information through talking (sound), a lot of touch as the guest continually searches for the reservations, an involvement of the sense of sight as they will need to look and depending on what kind of help they receive, the incident could be one to foster long lasting brand awareness, as is the aim of all sensory components.

The scenario explained above is not about cognition, as cognition resolves issues by providing conscious and current information for example: your documents are in your back pocket (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 21). Rather, the scenario of looking for lost or misplaced important documents becomes a sensory endeavor, with one's senses feeling like they are being pulled from all sides. In fact, it is possible for patrons in such situation to breathe out a sigh of relief once they find the

documents, or get the help they need, because the senses being activated for a while, do make one tired, like watching tv continuously, or listening to music continuously. It is quite possible to see this question as part of the sensory component.

Questions '(S_15) rate speed and efficiency of check-in and how it made you feel,' and question '(S_16) rate conversation with reception during check-in and how it made you feel' were emotional component questions that loaded on the cognitive component. The cognitive component is concerned with conscious mental processes and thinking and may involve clients creativity to problem solve (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). It becomes a mental task for the guest to rate the speed and efficiency of the check-in experience as well as rating the conversation with the reception staff. It is subjective as well, therefore, the guest would have to make a judgement call in answering these questions. Question '(S_22) was the information provided easy to understand and useful for your stay,' also loaded on the cognitive component from the pragmatic component. The question tests on the ability of the guest to determine whether they would agree or disagree that the information provided was useful and understandable towards their stay. This engages the guest in two ways, recalling information and whether it was easy to understand and useful, and if that helped towards their stay in any way. For this reason, this question exercises the conscious mental processes and thinking that the cognitive component is known for.

The emotional component loaded well with '(S_34) if you were welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel,' and '(S_35) if you were not welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel?' These two questions appear similar but are in fact quite different. Both questions are free choice questions (Giannakidou, 1998, p. 1). Within the two questions, answers could fall on the more positive leaning side, or the more negative side.

Buring and Gunlogson (2000) provide insights on the inner negation polar questions (INPQ) and the outer negation polar questions (ONPQ). This is simply negatively phrased questions and positively phrased questions. They suggest that generally, the behavior of a positive polarity question cannot occur in the scope of negative elements (Buring & Gunlogson, 2000, p. 4). There are exceptions off course, but they must agree to specific rules. The positive polarity can be assumed to be that being welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival is a good thing. In this question, the fact that positive polarity questions cannot occur in the scope of negative elements could be because the two would be testing on different things. Within the questions at hand, it is asked if the guest was received by the hotel staff and how this made them feel. It was noted that guests answered with overwhelming positive answers and extremely little negatively polar answers. To put this into perspective, the negatively worded answers should not occur in the scope of positive elements. We examined our responses for further understanding. We consider within the 8-point Likert scale that answers from 'fairly good', 'very good' and 'extremely good' will be considered positively polar while 'fairly bad', 'very bad' and 'extremely bad' will be considered negatively polar. For this analysis, responses from 'N/A -not applicable and 'neutral' which represent a percentage total of 50.4% or 139 respondents, will be overlooked as they cannot be placed as either positively or negatively polar.

Question '(S_34) if you were welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel?', had positively worded responses representing 46% of responses or 127 respondents. It had negatively worded responses totaling 3.7% or 10 respondents. The 3.7% could be engaged to either be valid or not (Fowler Jr, 2013, p. 15) as it is not logically consistent for a guest who had been welcomed by staff on arrival to then feel 'fairly bad' about it. The extreme negative responses for this question 'very bad' and 'extremely bad' were not recorded by respondents. We could say that

the 46% of responses overwhelm the 3.7% proving our theory that positively worded questions should not exist in the scope of negative elements (Buring & Gunlogson, 2000, p. 4).

The next question was '(S_35) if you were not welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel?' For this question 67% representing 186 respondents, responded to 'N/A' and 'Neutral'. We consider this to be a free choice items (FCI's) as well, and we expect the negative polarity questions to have influence on what we termed as the negative responses. FCI's have been thought of in more relation to NPI's -negatively polar items (Chierchia, 2006, p. 541; Giannakidou, 2011, p. 3). This represents part of the special rules earlier mentioned. This position has been criticized; however, this would explain our findings in our second question, with responses that were more spread out from positive to negative. 11.9% of respondents, representing 33 respondents answered to 'fairly bad', 'very bad' and 'extremely bad.' 20.7 % of respondents representing 57 respondents answered to 'fairly good', 'very good' and 'extremely good'.

It was quite plausible to see respondents answering on the positive as well, like 'fairly good'. It depended on the proclivity of a person to positivity, just as a statement to say they were not welcomed by staff but were okay, or for several other reasons. It was plausible, yet not expected that the responses towards the positive would increase towards the extreme positive of 'extremely good', although we should mention that this was an extremely small percentage of 1.1% or 3 respondents. It does allow our inference in free choice questions and negatively polar questions being related as we see the range of responses for this negatively polar question being across the range from positive to negative, like a free choice item (FCI). It is concluded that the emotional component questions are not testing on the same thing and are different questions, thus will be kept as such.

In the pragmatic component, question '(S_23) were the hotel facilities and design of things functional and not complicated?' was loaded as it was from original literature. Question '(S_8) perception about the appearance of the Lobby?' and '(S_10) how did the appearance of the Lobby make you feel?' were loaded as pragmatic components but initially thought to be sensory components. It was not difficult to see why these two questions were loaded here. The pragmatic component talks about useability (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398) and authenticity, or the importance of designing authentic experiences (Esmaeli et al., 2019, p. 227). The lobby arguably is the most pampered to disproportion, as it is the first thing a guest notices when they walk into a hotel. Kracauer (1999, p. 289) compares spheres of lesser reality in communities for example, religion and takes a critical path approach to it. He compares these lesser realities to the hotel lobby; an aesthetic that tends to a life bereft of reality. He further explains that the unity of the aesthetic construct and the manner it consolidates events, gives a voice to the inexpressive world, and meaning to themes. What is meant by these themes is to be translated and depends a lot on the reality evidenced by the creator.

In our study and in reference to Kracauer (1999), the lobby is considered to be representative of themes of a reality that is unattainable; the high ceilings, hundreds of mood lightings, expensive fixtures and statues made from stone, iron, ice, and many other materials., colorful walls and art that looks good on a lobby, but one would never get in real life, chairs and couches of different, color, design, material all at the same place and that may not be practical in a home set-up. Our two questions within the pragmatic test on what the guest's perception is as they enter the lobby towards the front desk. Do they feel it is unreal, welcoming, useable; or do they ultimately decide it is not authentic and go straight to their rooms. Both questions help us understand the pragmatic ideals of useability and authenticity.

The relational components were loaded within that same component and did not shift within the EFA.

3.5 Correlation analysis

From the EFA, the study had a total of sixteen items. To understand the strength of the relationships, and to show the association among variables in order to infer meaning or approach generalization, it was elected to use correlation logic (Neuman, 2007, pp. 389, 390). Correlation analysis is preferred in this study as it shows not only the strength, but the direction of the relationships within the variables (Pallant & Manual, 2007, p. 126).

The items to be run on the correlation table were quite many, and we ran the risk that the correlation table would be extremely bulky and not easy to follow. At this point, the study's focus was on describing the relationship within the five components, excluding the lifestyle component. Having three questions from the sensory to compare with five questions from the cognitive and so on, would prove quite voluminous and not easy to follow. It was decided to weigh the items and give a single compounded variable number for each component. So instead of describing relationships between sixteen questions in the correlation analysis which would total to about one hundred and twenty different relationships, we would be describing approximately ten relationships between the five components. By accounting for only significant correlations, the number of relationships to be explained would probably be lesser than has been stated, but still quite numerous. The process of giving a weight is the process of averaging the numbers (in this case the factor loadings) to a total of one, and then multiplying the weight and mean value and adding this to the weight and the mean of the next question until the questions for that particular

component are done. This leaves us with just one figure to represent one component. This will be demonstrated in the table below.

Table 5: Weighted Average Mean Table

Component	Factor Loading	Weight	Mean Value	Weighted Average Mean
Sensory				
(S_11) Perception of Different sounds and music	0.738	0.354	5.36	5.46
(S_12) Perception of different smells at the Lobby	0.747	0.358	5.53	
(S_19) How would you rate the help you got to solve problem in a difficult situation?	0.599	0.287	5.67	
Cognitive				
(S_15) Rate speed and efficiency of check-in and how it made you feel?	0.801	0.236	6.35	
(S_16) Rate conversation with reception during check-in and how it made you feel?	0.703	0.220	6.36	6.06
(S_17) How would you rate your entire check-in experience at last hotel	0.845	0.249	6.42	
(S_36) How would you rank your last check-in to all other check-in experiences?	0.534	0.157	4.87	
(S_22) Was the information provided easy to understandable and useful for your stay?	0.507	0.149	5.35	
Emotional				
(S_34) If you were welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel?	0.808	0.550	6.32	5.84
(S_35) If you were not welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel?	0.660	0.449	5.26	
Pragmatic				
(S_8) perception about the appearance of the Lobby?	0.821	0.375	6.23	
(S_10) How did the appearance of the Lobby make you feel?	0.832	0.380	6.03	5.90
(S_23) Were the Hotel facilities and design of things functional and not complicated?	0.536	0.244	5.20	
Relational				
(S_25) Do you like it when the hotel gives you special favors e.g a free city tour?	0.804	0.374	5.55	
(S_26) Do you like it when the hotel gives you personalized service e.g finding your favorite drinking water brand for you?	0.816	0.352	4.78	5.19
(S_27) Do you actively try to keep a good relationship with the reception staff?	0.694	0.299	4.79	

Table 5 above shows the five components and their factor loadings as obtained from the EFA. The weight column was obtained by summing up the factor loadings for each component individually and averaging them to a total of 1. By multiplying the weight and the mean value, then adding to the weight and the mean value of the next for all the items in that specific component, we were able to come up with the singular compounded figure, also known as the weighted average mean.

Example (Sensory Component):

Weight for item 1 in the component is: 0.738/ (0.738+0.747+0.599) = 0.354

Weight for item 2 in the component is: 0.747/ (0.738+0.747+0.599) =0.358

Weight for item 3 in the component is: 0.599/ (0.738+0.747+0.599) = 0.287

The composite variable sensory for the first observation (respondent) becomes:

0.354*answer for item 1+0.358* answer for item 2 +0.287*answer for item 3

0.354*K2(6)+0.358*L2(5)+0.287*T2(6) =5.636 (Adopted from excel table for the weighted measure of 1 out of 276 respondents in the sensory component)

By following the formula, this was done for all the two hundred and seventy-six respondents and for all the five components. The result was that five new compound variables were created from our sample size of two hundred and seventy-six respondents. The correlation table would have five components instead of the sixteen (five compounded variables). These five are the components that were used in the correlation analysis. The significance of this table shall also be seen in the results chapter, as the hierarchy of importance is discussed.

Table 6: Five Component Correlation Table

		Pragmatic Component	Sensory Component	Emotional Component	Cognitive Component	Relational Component
		Correlations				
Pragmatic Component	Pearson Correlation	1	.294**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000			
Sensory Component	Pearson Correlation	.294**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
Emotional Component	Pearson Correlation	.177**	.057	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.344			
Cognitive Component	Pearson Correlation	.483**	.366**	.152*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.011		
Relational Component	Pearson Correlation	.106	.106	-.089	.016	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.078	.078	.141	.790	
	N	276				
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

The correlation table above represents the five components and the relationships revealed. Kozak (2009, p. 86) asserts that students should not be taught any limits that are to help interpret correlation due to the problem of boundary values; for example, 0.49 is weak but 0.50 is strong. He asserts that correlation coefficient is part of statistics, a method of interpretation in which logic

plays an important role. In following this, the study employed the following notations to explain the findings of the correlation analysis r =.00-.19 'very weak', .20-.39 'weak', .40-.59 'moderate', .60-.79 'strong', .80-1.0 'very strong'.

The cognitive component had a moderate positive correlation to the pragmatic component at 0.483**. This was the strongest correlation noted within our correlation table. The cognitive component also had a weak positive correlation to the sensory component at 0.366**. There was a very weak, positive, and significant correlation between the cognitive component and the emotional component at 0.152*. There was also an insignificant/no correlation between the cognitive component and the relational component at 0.016 and significance levels of 0.790. The pragmatic component had a weak positive correlation to the sensory component at 0.294**, a very weak and positive correlation to the emotional component at 0.177** and a very weak and insignificant/no correlation to the relational component at 0.106, with significance levels of 0.078.

The sensory component had a positive and insignificant correlation/no correlation to the emotional component at 0.057, significance levels of 0.344 and a positive and insignificant/no correlation to the relational component at 0.106 and significance levels of 0.078. Lastly, there was a negative and insignificant/no correlation between the emotional component and the relational component at -0.089 and significance levels of 0.141.

3.6 Lifestyle Component Data Analysis

The lifestyle component was not included within the EFA because it did not follow the 7-point Likert scale design. Because of this, it was also not included in the weighting of the components and the correlation analysis. To analyze the lifestyle component, mean and standard deviations will be used, including readings of skewness and Kurtosis.

Table 7: Lifestyle Component Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mode	Coefficient of Variance (CV)	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
(S_30) Do you stay at the same hotel every time?	276	2.40	.573	2	0.239	-0.311	0.147	-0.768	0.292
(S_31) Do you stay at different hotel brands when you travel?	276	1.93	.944	1	0.489	0.131	0.147	-1.872	0.292
(S_32) Do you like to be associated with a particular hotel brand?	276	2.09	.535	2	0.256	0.081	0.147	0.407	0.292
(S_33) Choose one item that best explains why you come back every time/year to the hotel?	276	2.85	2.091	1	0.734	0.876	0.147	-0.782	0.292
Valid N (listwise)	276								

(Descriptive Statistics)

The table above shows the means, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness, and coefficient of variance for the lifestyle component. Since our questions range in number of options present for answering, the standard deviation is expected to differ greatly from one item to the next. To understand the strength of the deviation, we draw from mathematical knowledge on the coefficient

of variation by Hendricks and Robey (1936, p. 129) who posit that the coefficient of variation is the ratio of the standard deviation of some measurements to the mean: CV = Standard deviation/Mean. A coefficient of variance of >1 is considered a high deviation and a CV of <1 is considered a low deviation. To understand the Skewness values, we use a rule of thumb where <0.5 = Pretty Symmetric, <|0.5 – 1 =Slightly skewed and >1 = Very Skewed. A rule of thumb for calculating excess kurtosis would be subtracting it by three. In the table above, we have already determined that there is no excess kurtosis in the lifestyle component, thus, for greater accuracy and because of our relatively large sample size, kurtosis will be discussed as 0- mesokurtic, negative kurtosis as platykurtic and positive kurtosis as leptokurtic. The degree of subtracting three will not be used. Question '(S_30) do you stay at the same hotel every time' has a mean of 2.40 and a standard deviation of 0.573. The coefficient of variance (CV) is less than <1 at 0.239 and is considered a low deviation. This means that most people answered 2 (False) to this question and the distribution stayed close to the mean. The item had a pretty symmetric skew of -0.311 to the left, and a negative kurtosis of -0.768 which meant that the distribution plotted on a curve was platykurtic or rounder than pointy.

In regarding the works of Cindy Sin-Yi Tsai in the MorningStar.inc, a financial services and research firm in the United States of America (Cindy Sin-Yi Tsai, 2011), the organization published a paper on kurtosis of different assets. The list included investments from U.S and international equities. Once the excess kurtosis was obtained for the investments, the low end had items with excess kurtosis of -1.43 and 0.58. The high end had items with excess kurtosis of 9.33 and 22.59. Most investors believe that equity market resembles leptokurtic distribution, that is, returns are likely to be similar to the average return for the market as a whole, but occasionally deviate widely from the mean, this dramatic move being referred to as 'black swans'. Black swans

are less likely to occur in markets with platykurtic distributions. In regarding our question (S_30), the platykurtic distribution shows some fewer values in its lower tail, and a slightly heavier tail to the right. These kinds of distributions are liked by businesspeople as they are risk averse with no black swan events. For hotels, they provide an opportunity to market without the fear of much risk, to perhaps put in interventions to make guests stay at the same hotel.

Question '(S_31) do you stay at different hotel brands when you travel' had a mean of 1.93 and a standard deviation of 0.944. The CV was <1 at 0.489 and was considered a low deviation. This meant that most responses stayed along the mean, the most common response being 1(True). The item had a pretty symmetric skew to the right of 0.131 and a kurtosis of -1.872. This is a platykurtic distribution and has heavier tails. According to Cindy Sin-Yi Tsai (2011), we saw that platykurtic distribution reduces the risks of black swans, that is, returns that occasionally and in an unprecedented manner deviate heavily from the mean, leading to losses. In this question, we interpret this to mean that any intervention the hotel puts in to ensure guests stay at the same hotel has a very slight risk of backfiring on them and can mostly do good.

Question '(S_32) do you like to be associated with a particular hotel brand' had a mean of 2.09 and a standard deviation of 0.535. The CV was <1 at 0.256 which meant the deviation was very low. Most of the responses stayed along the mean. The most common response was 2(False). The skewness of this item was 0.081, which would be characterized as positive and symmetrical and a pointier positive leptokurtic kurtosis distribution of 0.407. We understand the black swans phenomenon and why some marketers prefer platykurtic distributions to avoid them. Some, however, who are more risk tolerant take on these kinds of leptokurtic distributions believing that the return will be close or as high as the mean and will make up for the lows. In our question, most guests said that they do not care for the hotel brand. This provides an opportunity for the hotel to

intervene with some measures, and although it may take some time, evidenced by the lows in tails on this distribution type, overall, it could be worth it.

Question '(S_33) choose one item that best explains why you come back every time/year to the hotel' had a mean of 2.85 and a standard deviation of 2.091. The CV was below <1 at 0.734 which meant the deviation was not that strong. The most common response was 1(Good service, food, amenities, atmosphere). This question had no varying degree or scale in answering. Nonetheless, the item had a positive slight skewness of 0.876 to the right which meant that the numbers were lower towards the right. It had a kurtosis of -0.782 which means it was a platykurtic distribution, it had heavier tails. The platykurtic distribution as mentioned before, is liked by marketers and investors especially by risk averse persons. In our question, this presents an opportunity for hotels to intervene with measures, perhaps standardizing the areas guests like more, and working on the weak points. The risk is quite marginal, safe to say that well thought out measures could only do good than bad.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

3.7.1 Reliability

Reliability and validity helps us to establish credibility and truth in our research findings (Neuman, 2007, p. 212). Reliability means consistency and dependability across time, subpopulations and in the presence of multiple indicators (Neuman, 2007, pp. 212, 213). We measured reliability using the split-half method. Data for the components showed that Part 1 of the split half had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.748 and part 2 had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.494.

Taber (2018) says that there is no clear way to interpret the Cronbach's Alpha as many give different recommendations. He makes recommendations on Cronbach's Alpha readings within

ranges, as from (0.45-0.98) as being acceptable. We justify continuing with this study on this basis. We also acknowledge that a lot of questionnaires, over a third in number representing over one hundred questionnaires, were cut out from the study. This has been shown to have an effect in lowering the Cronbach's sometime (Taber, 2018; van Griethuijsen et al., 2015, pp. 588, 589). This component has already been explained in detail using means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis (Refer Section 3.6 Lifestyle Component Data Analysis) . Being a representative group of PhD students, and this being an initial exploratory study, we expect that our measures can prove stability reliability across time. This would require a test-retest undertaking that was not possible within this initial exploratory study. We also hope that our measures will prove representative reliability, when applied to different groups of PhD students within Norway over time (Neuman, 2007, p. 212)

3.7.2 Validity

Validity means that an indicator is suitable for a particular purpose and may be unsuitable for other purposes, except that which it is intended for (Neuman, 2007, p. 215). The concept of this study to measure psychological factors leading to co-creation is validated by the robust factor loadings we have been able to attain and a reliable Cronbach's Alpha which proves internal consistency. Our Sampling adequacy and the reduction of the responses to a number we can fully extract from, further proves the validity of this study. Five different factors were extracted from the factor analysis which proves content validity, and that our factors were not all testing on the same item or cross-loading. The correlation analysis table has provided us information regarding the correlations within our components. The correlation helps us see the relationships and even predict some future outcomes regarding a hierarchy of the most important psychological

component. This shows some level of predictive validity. It accounts for the logical consistency that is partly revealed by the correlation analysis.

It is possible to see convergent validity within our correlation table. The cognitive components relate rather significantly with the pragmatic and sensory components, and this was theoretically expected. Within our lifestyle component, we can prove some divergent validity in the case of '(S_30) do you stay at the same hotel every time' and '(S_31) do you stay at different hotel brands when you travel'. In these two questions, it was not expected that if one answers positively to one, that they would then answer positively to the next. For question (S_30), the highest majority of 51.1% respondents answered 2(False), 44.6% to 3(Sometime) and 4.3% to 1(true). For question (S_31), the highest majority of 47.8% answered 1(True), 41.3% answered 3(Sometime) and 10.9% answered 2(False). There is a clear polar difference in the answering of these two questions as was expected. This item showed that our lifestyle measures were valid. The lifestyle component talks about an affirmation to a system of believes and values and the adaptation of certain behaviors and ways of life that enforce that (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). This can be seen in respondents hotel and travel choices as in questions (S_30) and (S_31), why they come back every time/year (question S_33) and if brand identity is of particular importance to them (S_32), to test on pointers of prestige. Having asked questions that are representative of the lifestyle component, this can be seen as a form of content validity for our measures (Neuman, 2007, p. 216).

3.8 Ethical considerations

Every precaution was taken to ensure that no harm was caused and all the guidelines for ethical research were followed. Permission for this study was sought from the Norwegian Government, through its data branch, the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD). The project was approved on 26th March 2020 with reference number 207550 (Refer: Appendix NSD Form). The nature of

the survey was initially to meet people in a touristic set-up and request that they take a survey but was later changed to be sent to people's email addresses. These people were unknown to the researcher, thus, a very thorough email with all the information about the study and the processing of personal data, was sent out first. There were also options for opting out. If a respondent clicked on the 'disagree to take the survey' button, they were automatically taken to the last page and their data was not collected. If they opened the survey in another device after rejecting it initially, it would be possible to take the survey, but the response was well noted from the researcher's side and such data was not used.

A few people emailed the researcher directly, demanding to be removed from the survey or that they were not happy about the email from an unknown person. In all cases, the response was polite and delivered in good time, the researcher obliged, apologized profusely and immediately took those respondents out of the survey. After completion of the data collection process, the survey was anonymized, and all contact information was no longer retrievable. There was also a formula to the broadcast emails, as repeat emails could become a nuisance and cause undue tension or anxieties to some people. The first email was sent to everyone, the second and third reminder emails, only to those who had not completed or attempted the survey, and the final thank you email to everyone.

When narrowing down the data to our current number, a lot of considerations were made. It took time to collect this data and respondents took their time to answer, so it would not be fair to just do away with it. To have the study generalizable, it was decided to have to do away with some of the responses to our current number of two hundred and seventy-six. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, all precautions were taken.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Results

This chapter provides the results that were found from the data. Some results have already been given in chapter three, this chapter will focus on describing the results with an intention to answer our research questions and provide answers to our hypothesis. The results will be discussed from the descriptive statistics, factor analysis, weighted tables, correlation analysis and the means and standard deviations of the lifestyle component. The rest of the results will be discussed with an in depth look at answering the research questions and either approving or disapproving the hypothesis.

Our demographics were the PhD students' groups. We consider this group to be more informed with a general understanding of most current issues in different fields, including hotels and the hospitality industry. Under Norwegian law, PhD students are salaried, and their salaries are the same with public sector salaries for those with a master's degree (Thune et al., 2012, p. 20). This ranges from 479,600NOK per annum gross income with salary increase depending on seniority. In addition, it was found that 49.6% PhD students representing 137 which is the largest group, travel 3-9 times a year. 47.5% or 131 respondents travel 1-2 times a year and 2.9% representing 8 in number travel more than 9 times a year.

4.1 Results Regarding the Research Questions

The first research question was, 'what is the most important psychological factor leading to co-creation experiences?' Within the weighted average mean and the correlation analysis, a hierarchy had developed. In the weighted average means, a statistical number that differed for all the five components was seen. The higher the number, the more importance was placed on that component.

It was found that the hierarchy in order from the most important to the least important goes from the cognitive component, pragmatic component, emotional component, sensory component, and the relational component. The idea of using the mean to show a hierarchy of the most important items in a list has also been demonstrated by Knutson et al. (2009, p. 51). In their study, they average the mean for each of their components to give a hierarchy. This thesis takes a step further and includes the weighted measures and the correlation tables to draw a significant hierarchy. The results will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter on discussion.

It was also possible to follow a hierarchy from the correlation table, however, this is done with caution, as correlation analysis only describes the direction and strength of linear relationships (Pallant & Manual, 2007, p. 126). Factors can relate strongly with each other but that does not automatically mean they are the most important to attest to a hierarchical relationship. For example: if there is a strong negative correlation between guests who are welcomed by staff on arrival to the hotel and guests who keep asking for special favors and free samples, this does not automatically mean that welcoming someone to the hotel is the most important factor in negating guests asking for special favors. There are other factors such as customer service interaction, room quality, food, entertainment considerations and so on. In this thesis, the hierarchy within the correlation analysis was as follows: cognitive component, pragmatic component, sensory component, emotional component, and the relational component. These results vary slightly in the third and fourth positions to the ones from the weighted average mean table.

Table 8: Hierarchy of Importance

Position on the Hierarchy	Weighted Average Mean Table	Correlation Analysis
First	Cognitive	Cognitive
Second	Pragmatic	Pragmatic
Third	Emotional	Sensory
Fourth	Sensory	Emotional
Fifth	Relational	Relational

The second research question asked, 'How do the psychological components influence the co-creation of experiences?' Co-creation is a function of interactions or participation (Grönroos, 1984, p. 133), it is divided into two: physical co-creation and mental co-creation and the mental participation has been shown to be the most important towards co-creation (Prebensen & Xie, 2017, p. 167). This thesis delves into the mental or the psychological components. The cognitive is concerned with conscious mental processes, thinking and the ability to engage clients creatively (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Participation mentally requires that the person be present within the interaction to participate and be a part of it. The component calling on the use of creativity at certain times also engages prior knowledge like mastery (Prebensen & Xie, 2017) and also involves the uptake of other senses at times, like the sensory component as one interacts within the scene of participation. This can be by looking, touching, smelling, hearing and so on.

The cognitive component also shows relationship with the emotional component that a participant can have an emotional reaction while in the participatory scenario. Cognitive interacts with the pragmatic component as the participants can judge the authenticity of the experience or

the useability of props being used within the co-creation experience. For example, imagine guests waiting to check into a hotel and are seated at the reception. They do not know each other but with the available chess board, they begin to play a chess game. If chess pieces are different from the traditional make, they may not be presumed as authentic by some seasoned players. The cognitive component is thus seen to influence the co-creative experience by allowing the participant to remain engaged in the activity, providing accompanying information or mastery (Prebensen & Xie, 2017) and activating on other psychological components like the pragmatic, emotional and the sensory.

The pragmatic component is about useability and authenticity (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). The importance of an authentic experience is subjective and can only be judged by the participant. Brand originality or authenticity has content in social interactions (Esmaeli et al., 2019, p. 227), therefore, organizations want to give their guests authentic experiences. Guests who want more meaningful interactions are the ones who seek out authentic experiences (Paulauskaite, Powell, Coca-Stefaniak, & Morrison, 2017, p. 619). This can help lead to the fostering of good client intentions towards an organization. The pragmatic component gears a guest towards a certain direction to find what is meaningful to them. For example, sharing in the culture of a tribe, participating in their traditional dances and so on. The pragmatic component influences co-creative experiences by allowing the guest to feel that they have fulfilled a need for something original and authentic, perhaps un-touched or un-changed by civilization. It could also help the need for useability in allowing the guest to take advantage of all that is provided for them. In the chess game example, even though the game is played every week by different tourist groups, the originality of the individual experience and what they create with it is what guests will be talking

about long after the game is ended. The impromptu action of starting a game unplanned, also adds to the authenticity. This is how the pragmatic influences co-creation.

The emotional component involves the consumer's ability to generate moods and feelings (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). It is recognized that emotional conditions play a major role in influencing every stage of decision making (Consoli, 2010, p. 1). Emotions are processed independent of conscious thought (Pally, 1998, p. 349). To arrive at this position, the cognitive which takes preeminence provides the conscious mental processes required for engaging in an activity. The pragmatic's response is in a postmodern world filled with symbolic consumption rather than utility, thus the guests can judge what is authentic or not based on the image it portrays to them as individuals. Emotions can be expressed through happiness, surprise and so on. In the chess game example, these emotions might be seen when a person is winning and they are seen to be happy, perhaps even gloat or show off a little. The emotional reaction can also be evidenced long after, as guests can process the information and remember or have the same emotional reaction long after the event is over. The emotional component influences co-creative experiences in that, if the emotions are positive, they may lead on to a desire for more, for coming back, and if they are negative, the experience may not be one to repeat.

Sensory component is concerned with the uptake of information from the five human senses, and also concerned with affecting human behavior (Hultén et al., 2009). It is the senses that the human body perceives its surroundings with. In co-creative experiences, the senses take in information that is processed to produce either emotional reactions, feelings of wellbeing and so on. Scents help in making experiences last longer (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 7), sight mostly the target for communicating an organization's image (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 9) can allow an organization to be viewed subliminally, sound can be used to attach meaning to things (Hultén et

al., 2009, p. 8), touch helps customers want to interact more with the item and that they don't have to touch an item to experience it but can have a 'form sense'. Taste can strengthen the image of a product by allowing interaction with it (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 10).

If an arm of sensory uptake, for example sight, is intrigued by an object, let us say a golden chess piece, the person will probably want to stretch out and touch or interact with it. It is not uncommon for people to want to smell it and even in a moment of wit, bite a golden piece as it was done in ancient times to find out if the piece was actually golden, or as Olympians do to date when they win a medal. The sensory influences co-creation of experiences by allowing for an uptake of information that is then processed to result into other experiences.

The relational component calls for an interaction with others or with one's ideal self (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). The relational influences co-creation of experiences by allowing for an interactivity between different patrons on a particular event, perhaps a chess game, from the previous example. However, people can create experiences as individuals on their own. Even with the example of a chess game, it is not uncommon for seasoned players to play the pieces against themselves, to see how they would resolve and win. This has the same capacity of producing those co-creative experiences as would be with other people. These influences have been summed up in the table below:

Table 9: Psychological components influences to Co-creative behavior

Component	Influences to Co-creative Behavior
Cognitive	• Allowing the participant to remain consciously engaged in the activity, • Providing accompanying information or mastery (Prebensen & Xie, 2017) • Activating other psychological components like the pragmatic, emotional and the sensory.
Pragmatic	• Helps fulfil a client's need for something original and authentic, • Helps the need for useability in allowing the guest to feel that they have fully taken advantage of all that is provided before them, especially in paid experiences.
Emotional	• If the emotions are positive, they may lead on to a desire for more of the same experience, for coming back intentions and fulfilment • If they are negative, the experience may not be one to repeat.
Sensory	• Allows for an uptake of information that is processed to result into experiences. • Allows for interaction with the medium of information uptake, for example seeing the chess table, touching the pieces
Relational	• Allowing for an interaction between different patrons on a particular event • Allowing people to interact with a medium for co-creating experiences like playing against themselves in a chess game and creating experiences on their own.

4.2 Reconciling the discrepancy between the emotional and sensory components

Our tests produced a hierarchy that we have taken as the most important psychological components in co-creative behavior to the least important component in co-creation. Both the weighted average means table and the correlation table gave a hierarchy (Refer table 8: Hierarchy of importance and table 6: Five Component Correlation Table). In both, the cognitive component and the pragmatic were in first and second place, respectively. In third and fourth positions, there arose a discrepancy. Weighted average means table showed Emotional and Sensory as third and fourth place. The correlation table inverted this to show the sensory and emotional components as third and fourth in position. In both, the relational component was the fifth in order of importance.

We attempt to account for the discrepancy between the emotional and sensory components in the weighted average table and the correlation analysis. We rely on relevant literature similar to this study where the mean or the average mean has been used in determining the hierarchy by Knutson et al. (2009, p. 51). In their study, they identify four factors that they term as dimensions of a hotel experience: benefit, convenience, incentive, and environment. By averaging the mean of each component, they identify the hierarchy. In common with that study, this thesis takes the most important psychological factors as those from the table of weighted average means (Ref: Table 5: Weighed Average Mean Table). The hierarchy therefore stands as: cognitive, pragmatic, emotional, sensory, and relational components.

The sensory component within the correlation analysis appeared before the emotional as third place. In describing correlation relationships between the factors, it is possible to see the sensory appearing to correlate more with other components than the emotional since the sensory is spread out into five senses, and is able to take in information even without our conscious awareness (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 1, 2). For example: imagine you are driving, and you glance at

a sign board as you drive to your intended destination. You do not take much note of it, but later someone asks you for advice about buying a new phone and the specifics they are giving, like the price, memory size, sound familiar to you. You don't know where you have seen or heard of this before, but then you remember the sign and tell them there is an advert along the road for a phone that meets that criteria, they can have a look at it. These represents the sensory taking up of information almost subliminally.

Emotional conditions, on the other hand, are very important because they play a major role in influencing every stage of decision making within the purchasing process (Consoli, 2010, p. 1). The closest interaction between processing information from the sensory by the emotional component, is through the cognitive. In everyday life, human beings seldom form emotional attachments to everything sensory. It could happen though not common, like tasting a new type of food and deciding you like it or touching a new fabric that feels strange and you do not like it. These are not common everyday life things. More often like in the phone advert example above, the person driving does not decide that they were happy or sad about seeing that advert as they drive by until perhaps, they are asked about it. When they are asked about it, it is no longer sensory but from memory, and memory is part of the cognitive functions that offers conscious mental processes (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398).

It is not clear if the vice versa is possible, where the emotional information is processed by the sensory component. However, we do see some emotional implications on the sensory for example: after a bad experience with a product, the consumer is very sensitive about that and similar products, and using their senses are more on the lookout for such bad products. The emotional component also processes information in hindsight or from memory at times. For example, in our example above with the phone advert on the road, if you asked the person how it

made them feel that there was a piece of information seemingly forced in their subconscious without their realization, they might think about it in the present and decide that it was invasive, offensive, dangerous, or they might not even have a reaction at all! The emotional component influences more of the decisions in purchase (Consoli, 2010, p. 1) and remains relevant for longer as we have discussed, with emotions being processed even in hindsight. There was therefore no correlation between the sensory component and the emotional component as seen in the correlation table (Table 6: Five Component Correlation Table), (4.5 Results of the Factor Analysis, weighted Average table and Correlation Analysis) and discussed in (Ref: 5.2.3 Emotional component). This further tells us that the correlation analysis is good for detecting relationships, but this should not be the basis for forming a hierarchy. These are the reasons why the emotional component takes preeminence over the sensory component within this thesis.

4.3 Results Regarding the Lifestyle Component

The lifestyle component's positioning is usually seen within groups, where people who share in a particular lifestyle tend to flock together (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Because the lifestyle of different groups differs, its relevance in choice is expected to vary between different groups, for example, between a group of budget travelers and a group of leisure travelers. Lifestyle can be seen in co-creation as it determines the purchase decisions, interests and opinions, attitudes towards various product classes and so on (Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012, p. 154). To measure this component and fix it in a hierarchy would require much more than measuring it as one of six psychological components. Furthermore, it is expected that it would change position in the hierarchy depending on the group. There are also major differences between the lifestyles of the PhD Students, one to the other. This as an example is evidenced by their responses to questions (S_33), (S_31) and (S_32). In chapter three, this study attempted to give meaning in terms of

skewness and kurtosis for this component. In this section, we shall major on the percentages and the number of respondents answering to a specific question.

For question '(S_30) do you stay at the same hotel every time?' saw that most people do not stay at the same hotel and chose the response 2(False) about 51.1% of respondents. If they stay, it is probably for various reasons, possibly only slightly including choice. This is evidenced by the choice of 1(True) at 4.3% in explaining that it is an extremely small number that chose to stay at the same hotel and 3(Sometimes) about 44.6% which shows that sometimes they stay at the same hotel, reasons unverified.

In question '(S_31) do you stay at different hotel brands when you travel?' most responses were at 1(True) that most people stay at different hotels at 47.8%. Second highest response was 3(Sometime) at 41.3% and finally 10.9% answered to false, which meant that these people do choose to stay at the same hotels.

Question '(S_32) do you like to be associated with a particular hotel brand' saw that most responses were at 2(False). Majority of respondents did not like to be associated with a particular brand at about 70.7% response rate. 19.2% sometimes cared for the association and 10.1% cared about being associated with the brand of a hotel.

Question '(S_33) choose one item that best explains why you come back every time/year to the hotel' had a distribution that was perhaps a bit more spread out than the rest. The most common response for why people come back was for 1(Good service, food, amenities, atmosphere) at 36.6%, 2(convenience) at 22.8% , 3(Work reasons/reasons they have no control over) at 17.4%, 4(Affordability) at 15.2%, 5(Self-fulfilment reasons) at 0.7% and 6(Brand identity) at 0.4%. The brand identity results for question (S_33) that rate lowest at 0.4%, seem to be

consistent with those from the brand identity question in (S_32), that most respondents do not care for brand association. The inference of these will be discussed in the next chapter. Table 10 below sums up the findings in percentages of the Lifestyle component.

The second research question was 'how do the psychological components influence the co-creation of experiences?' The lifestyle component answers this question as follows. Lifestyle is an affirmation to a system of believes, behaviors, adaptations and ways of life (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Influences on a person's lifestyle can come from society and culture and a defined lifestyle pattern determines purchase decisions (Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012, p. 154). For example, while one is travelling as a student on a budget, they can travel cheap, even sleep at airports for longer layovers instead of booking hotels. Once the person acquires a good fulltime job that pays well, they may not hold the same feelings about sleeping at an airport, they will book a hotel room, as lifestyle has changed. Another example would be in Norwegian society where individuals who have subscribed to a certain lifestyle, would not buy 'first price items', because they are cheap and considered to be of lower quality. These items do not uphold their subscribed status quo. The lifestyle component influences the creation of experiences by allowing patrons to only choose experiences that uphold their lifestyle choices across the board, in traveling (first class, economy), in shopping only for designer items, in experiences and co-creation (perhaps fine dining and socializing at exclusive places only).

Table 10: Summary of Lifestyle Component Findings

Question	Results in Hierarchy from Highest to Lowest
(S_30) Do you stay at the same hotel every time?	2(False 51.1%), 3(Sometime 44.6%), 1(True 4.3%)
(S_31) Do you stay at different hotel brands when you travel?	1(True 47.8%), 3(Sometime 41.3%), 2(False 10.9%)
(S_32) Do you like to be associated with a particular hotel brand?	2(False 70.7%), 3(Sometime 19.2%), 1(True 10.1%)
(S_33) Choose one item that best explains why you come back every time/year to the hotel?	1(Good service, food, amenities, atmosphere) at 36.6%, 2(convenience) at 22.8%, 3(Work reasons/reasons they have no control over) at 17.4%, 4(Affordability) at 15.2%, 5(Self-fulfilment reasons) at 0.7%, 6(Brand identity) at 0.4%.

4.4 Hypothesis Test Results

This study had three hypotheses.

H1 = The psychological components will produce a component that stands in hierarchy as a major factor influencing co-creative behavior

The cognitive component stood out as a major factor influencing co-creation behavior within the customer experience. This is shown by the table of weighted mean and the correlation analysis. This hypothesis is accepted.

H2 = Psychological components that positively correlate with each other and influence co-creative behavior will be present

The relationship between the psychological components has been proved by the correlation analysis. There is a moderate positive correlation between the cognitive and the pragmatic components, a positive weak relationship between the cognitive and emotional components and very weak and positive relationships between the cognitive and the sensory components. This hypothesis is accepted.

H3 = Some of the psychological components are independent from the other components. There was a negative but insignificant/no correlation between the relational component and the emotional component. The relational component showed that it did not correlate with any other component and seemed to operate independently. Very weak, positive, and insignificant/no correlations were measured within this component. They were between the relational component and the pragmatic, and the relational and sensory components both at 0.106 and significance levels of 0.078 each. There was also no correlation between the relational and the cognitive components. So, for this hypothesis, we say that yes, the relational component seemed to operate independently. This hypothesis is accepted. The table below shows the hypotheses tests done:

Table 11: Hypothesis Test Table

Hypothesis	Accepted/Rejected
H1 **-** The psychological components will produce a component that stands in hierarchy as a major factor influencing co-creative behavior	Accepted
H2 **-** Psychological components that positively correlate with each other and influence co-creative behavior will be present	Accepted
H3 **-** Some of the psychological components are independent from the other components	Accepted

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Discussion

In this chapter, the research findings will be argued out using relevant theory from the literature review. An attempt will be made to infer meaning to the relationships within the correlation analysis and the table of weighted average mean measures. This section will talk about the reliability and validity of our measures at first, and then discuss the six psychological components.

5.1 Overall Discussion of Reliability and Validity

The reliability of our test instruments is demonstrated by our measures and the logical consistency of our results. The relationships witnessed within the correlation and the importance levels presented in the weighted average means hierarchy, we believe, can be replicated within similar groups proving representative reliability. Regarding the lifestyle component, different groups of people have different affirmations. Thus, caution should be taken with the lifestyle component as it is believed that in different groups, this component is expected to shift in importance within a hierarchy.

The hierarchy formation between the weighted average measures and the correlation analysis table were for the most part similar. The discrepancy has been accounted for and our measures have proved logically consistent as they have allowed for predictive validity. Within the lifestyle component, we see divergent validity in the polar questions. It was not expected that if respondents answered overwhelmingly positively for one like '(S_31) do you stay at different hotel brands when you travel', they would answer overwhelmingly positive again for '(S_30) do you stay at the same hotel every time'. This was noted in our results and will further be discussed in this section, proving divergent validity.

5.2 Discussion of Psychological Components

5.2.1 Cognitive and Sensory Component

The cognitive component talks about conscious mental processes (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). It had a reading of 6.06, the highest within the weighted average means table. Hultén et al. (2009, p. 14) make the argument that in advertising and marketing, there are central elements and peripheral elements. The central elements include the message, logo and so on. The peripheral elements include everything else non-related to the message, that is design, texture, logotype and so on. The peripheral elements are seen as the 'evil parts' because they always compete with the message and are more likely to be accepted. These 'peripherals' are sensory component elements. The sensory talks about how the five human senses affect behavior (Hultén et al., 2009). The cognitive component very weakly and positively correlated with the Sensory component at 0.152*. The ability to be viewed with five different senses, almost subliminally and their ability to take in information whether the conscious mind is aware or not, account for the nature of how they relate with the cognitive. For example, when a guest looks at a hotel logo, they first notice the brilliant lighting on it perhaps, advanced artwork and design, and these may take away a little from the message in that the peripheral elements are more memorable than the message itself.

Hultén et al. (2009, p. 14) explains that the central elements emphasize on cognitive information, which requires more brain power that consumers are unwilling to take up. Marketing and advertising have however changed over time. The central elements are not necessarily to be detached from the peripheral elements anymore. Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann (1983, p. 135) did an experiment of exposing undergraduates to adverts of high and low product involvement. These adverts contained either strong or weak arguments for the products and featured either sports celebrities or average citizens as endorsers. The takeaway from this in our discussion is that the

adverts contained both central and peripheral messaging within the same advert. Even though one took to emphasizing either the central message or the peripheral. The subtle nature of viewing the sensory and cognitive hints towards our correlation between the cognitive and the sensory component. Within the actual component questions, it is possible to see the relationship between the cognitive component '(S_17) how would you rate your entire check-in experience at last hotel', sensory component's questions of '(S_11) perception of Different sounds and music' and (S_19) how would you rate the help you got to solve problem in a difficult situation'. To give a response to the cognitive question of rating the entire check-in, respondents would have to consider, among other things, some sensory factors such as the perception of sound, the help they got and so on.

The cognitive component was seen to correlate positively and significantly with the pragmatic and emotional components as well. Cognitive component correlated moderately with the pragmatic component at 0.488*. The pragmatic component talks about useability and authenticity (Esmaeli et al., 2019, p. 227; Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). It had a reading of 5.90 on the weighted average mean table, which was second in hierarchy. The task of the pragmatic would be to decide what is useable and what is authentic within the respondent's mind. Both are very subjective qualities and become mental tasks. This could explain the moderate positive and significant correlation between the cognitive and the pragmatic. If a guest is offered a chess board to play a game, from which the pieces were all made of glass, they might regard this as unusual and not the norm, since the pieces should be wooden. The entire game might even feel different by changing one 'authentic aspect', as regarded by the participant. The information processing that assesses all these is part of the conscious know how that the cognitive component is regarded for. It becomes such a big thing because people do not want to feel ripped off, spending their money, and giving their time to an inauthentic experience. Authenticity represents meaning, which is what

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most contemporary travelers/experience seekers appear to be seeking (Theobald, 2012, p. 402). This explains why the cognitive correlates rather strongly with the pragmatic component. An example in the questions would be the pragmatic's '(S_23) were the hotel facilities and design of things functional and not complicated' and the cognitive question of '(S_22) was the information provided easy to understandable and useful for your stay?' It is possible to see that the information provided to be useful, could have an effect in determining the pragmatic's usability and functionality of hotel facilities.

There was a weak positive relationship between the cognitive and the emotional component at 0.366*. The emotional component had a weighted average mean of 5.84, third in hierarchy. The emotional component involves the ability of a consumer to generate moods and feelings that help in relationship building with organizations (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Emotions can be expressed as sad, happy, angry, surprise and so on (Consoli, 2010, p. 2; Ekman & Friesen, 2003). Purchase choices are as a result of careful analysis of rational and emotional aspects and psychology does recognize that the emotional components do play a major role in decision making (Consoli, 2010, p. 1). The cognitive deals with conscious mental thought while the emotional influences these mental propositions. For example, a guest can choose to buy an Italian Pizza at a restaurant famous for that and will believe they received the best Italian pizza ever. The emotional attachment to the company will allow her to buy the same at a different branch and believe the same to be true, that they are receiving the best Italian pizza. Even if they physically go to Italy, they may still buy the pizza at a branch of the same restaurant, believing that to be the very best. The cognitive in all these is there to provide the conscious mental processes of information, that support this conclusion. It is therefore easy to understand the connection between the cognitive and the emotional. Furthermore, once the cognitive component processes information, usually,

people will have an emotional reaction to it. In our example on Italian pizza, the person buying the pizza can be assumed to always walk away happy and satisfied, knowing they got the very best, and that is why they keep returning. Within our component questions, it is possible to see how the emotional component questions of '(S_34) if you were welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel' and '(S_35) if you were not welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel?'; could relate with the cognitive question of '(S_36) how would you rank your last check-in to all other check-in experiences'. Perhaps if you had heavy bags and were not met and welcomed from outside, with someone helping you with the bags, you might not rate the check in very well.

There was no correlation between the cognitive and the relational components. The relational component talks about an individual and their social contexts, their relationships with other people and with their ideal self (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). This component was positioned as a psychological component in that relationships and their degrees are synthesized in the mind and to hold to an ideal self requires a synthesis of mental information. Discussions on self-image and product image congruity are in plenty. Consumers prefer products that portray or are congruent with their self-image (Landon Jr, 1974; Paulauskaite et al., 2017, p. 44). Birdwell (1968, p. 82) suggests that an automobile owner's perception of their car is congruent with a perception of themselves. A self-concept/image can be described as a human beings' interpretation of themselves according to Hattie (2014, p. 1). In an experiment by Hattie (2014, pp. 64, 65), a person would be asked to describe their actual self and then their ideal self. If the correlation showed increment in both the true self and the ideal self, it was considered evidence of the person's improvement in therapy sessions. Ekinci and Riley (2003, p. 210) found that the ideal self-concept is more influential than the actual self-concept in people's evaluations. Yet the ideal self is not real

per se. The implications of these in describing our correlation results are that the cognitive does not correlate with the relational because the cognitive continuously provides information and supports conscious mental processes derived eclectically but determine the real self. It provides for information processing that is actual and factual, thus, when testing on an ideal self that supersedes the real self in evaluation of services or in co-creative experiences, the relationships do not occur or concur. For example, consider the following questions, the relational component question of '(S_25) do you like it when the hotel gives you special favors e.g a free city tour', the cognitive component question of '(S_15) rate speed and efficiency of check-in and how it made you feel' and question '(S_22) was the information provided easy to understand and useful for your stay.' Getting special favors from the hotel is good but it does not help in rating the speed and efficiency of check-in or deciding whether the information provided was understandable and useful for your stay.

5.2.2 Pragmatic Component

The pragmatic component has been explained to mean useability and authenticity (Esmaeli et al., 2019, p. 227; Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). It fell second in our hierarchy of the most important aspects of the psychological component. The debate on authenticity ties the service provider to an obligation to deliver an interactive experience, that is seemingly tied to the brand's originality (Esmaeli et al., 2019, p. 227) and perhaps future purchase endeavors. The challenge for the service provider is that useability and authenticity are highly subjective qualities tied to the user experience. These qualities add up to a search for meaning. Most contemporary travelers are seeking meaning in their experiential endeavors (Theobald, 2012, p. 402).

The pragmatic correlated weakly and positively with the sensory component at 0.294**. The sensory talks about how the five human senses affect behavior (Hultén et al., 2009). It is the senses that interact with the visible world by touching, and seeing, smelling, tasting, and hearing. They represent the ways in which the pragmatic would interact with the outside world. The levels of sensation then synthesized would give information such as meaning, satisfaction and so on. To relate this further, we use examples of questions from this component. There is a certain logical consistency in correlation between the pragmatic question of '(S_23) were the hotel facilities and design of things functional and not complicated' and the sensory question of '(S_11) perception of different sounds and music.' This sensory perception of different sounds and music becomes useful in the pragmatics query on the hotel's facilities and designs (music systems included) being functional.

The pragmatic component also correlated very weakly and positively with the emotional component at 0.177*. The emotional component involves the ability of a consumer to generate moods and feelings that help in relationship building with organizations (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). An emotional reaction, whether during or after the co-creative experience is over, is expected. If the experience was not as authentic as advertised, or it did not lead to higher levels of experiences like immersion (Lunardo & Ponsignon, 2020, p. 1151), then the participants would have a negative emotional reaction, perhaps sad, dismayed, angry and so on. It could also influence their take on other aspects of the hotel in a negative sense. For example, in the emotional questions '(S_34) if you were welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel' and '(S_35) if you were not welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel'; these could have an effect in how you would perceive the pragmatic components question of '(S_23) were the hotel facilities and design of things functional and not complicated?' In a moment of whether one was

not received and had to carry heavy bags in, they might overgeneralize beyond the service part of not being received and decide that the entire hotel and its facilities are not functional or friendly to use.

The pragmatic component had no correlation with the relational component. Perhaps more concise would be that the useability and authenticity aspects of the pragmatic had no correlation with the relational. In the relational question '(S_27) do you actively try to keep a good relationship with the reception staff', this had no correlation with the authentic and meaning seeking nature of the pragmatic component as it is expected that the hotel staff will obviously be nice to the guests, they cannot display their anger or outrage with a guest no matter what they do, and even when the guest is on the wrong, they are still treated with respect as staff try to resolve the issues.

5.2.3 Emotional Component

An ability to generate emotions, moods and feelings is what the emotional component represents (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). The correlation between the emotional and cognitive components has been discussed. There was no correlation between the emotional component and the sensory component. The sensory talks about how the five human senses affect behavior (Hultén et al., 2009). While the processing of the sensory components happens at a moment's notice, when one immediately interacts with the item/offering; the generation of emotional reactions can take place much later, and in retrospect. Also, having an emotional reaction to the senses is not commonplace for human beings, but rather a seldom occurrence, unless in considering a child to whom everything is new. In theorizing this, adult human beings would live a very miserable life if they had to formulate an emotional reaction to everything the senses pick up. The sensory works to take in information, that is it. Processing information becomes either a cognitive, emotional, or

pragmatic component prerogative. The sensory does not hold emotions. For example, you walk into a hotel lobby and sit on a nice couch. You cannot tell what material has been used in making the couch, and you do not follow up to inquire. After your two weeks stay, you realize that the material was a form of animal leather. You immediately react in anger because you are a strict vegetarian and an animal rights protagonist and should have been warned about this. The sensory component took place two weeks ago, but the emotion was not yet manifested to date. This conundrum presents us with two ways of looking at it:

1) The sensory has no direct implication in itself that causes any emotional, cognitive, pragmatic or relational implications, its work is all about the uptake of information; for example, the tongue does not form emotional attachments, neither does the ear, nor the skin, the eyes or the nose in smelling.

2) The sensory component is the window into interaction with the world for all the other psychological components. By interaction with the world, the other components support the conscious mental processes (cognitive), that are needed to consider meaning, usefulness and authenticity (pragmatic), elicit emotional reactions (emotional) and so on. The delayed emotional responses that at times occur in retrospect also confirm this.

An example would be within the emotional questions '(S_34) if you were welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel' or '(S_35) if you were not welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel?' The validity of the logic that emotional biases can make things seem more out of place than they truly are is valid because an emotion is simply a reaction to a situation (Thoits & Kemper, 1990, p. 152). Emotional biases do affect emotional reactions and can be chaotic (Horowitz, Kerr, Park, & Gockel, 2006, p. 163)**.** However, the two emotional component questions above would have no effect on the sensory component questions of '(S_11)

perception of different sounds and music' or '(S_12) perception of different smells at the lobby.' The sounds and the smells are unmitigated by the emotion, they remain fixed as they were.

5.2.4 Relational Component

The relational component had no correlation with any other component. For accuracy purposes, we discuss that it had two very weak and insignificant correlations with the pragmatic and sensory components both reading at 0.106, significance level of 0.078. It had no recordable correlation with the emotional component and no correlation with the cognitive component at 0.016, significance level of 0.70. The component talks about the individual and their social contexts, relationships with other people and the relationship with their ideal self (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Relationship marketing is an attempt to develop long-term loyal customers (Evert Gummesson, 2011, p. 5). This is done by giving superior products, resolving consumer issues like perceived risks, price issues and so on (Sheth & Parvatlyar, 1995, p. 255). The objective of the relational to judge by an 'ideal self' is no mistake. Ekinci and Riley (2003, p. 210) found that the ideal self-concept is more influential than the actual self-concept in people's evaluations. This means that people hold themselves to a standard different from what reality is, perhaps a higher standard than reality. In judging our components with this, we see that it is not congruent to place an ideal on the sensory component's '(S_11) perception of different sounds and music' or '(S_12) perception of different smells at the lobby' since these are real smells and real music playing, within the moment of its occurrence it is not an ideal. There is also no relational aspect of the above two questions, for example, with the relational question of '(S_25) do you like it when the hotel gives you special favors e.g. a free city tour?'

We see these patterns for all the other components: The cognitive component's '(S_16) rate conversation with reception during check-in and how it made you feel.' In this, the conversation has already occurred and is not an ideal conversation set to occur. One is being asked to recall a reality and not test on an ideal. The emotional questions of '(S_34) if you were welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel' and the pragmatic question of '(S_23) were the hotel facilities and design of things functional and not complicated?' These both focus on testing a reality that occurred. In the processing of information, even within the correlations, the data the components give is upheld to a reality, the reality being the honest answers that were given by our respondents, of events that have already happened in reality and that were used to analyze our data. There is no ideal to be tested within these factors. While the relational components loaded well within the EFA, and did not skip factors, the relational components aspect of mitigating relationships within people within a form of ideal, that is not real, creates a problem for the correlations, and presents this factor as the least important within the co-creative experiences.

5.2.5 Lifestyle Component

The lifestyle component was not loaded in the EFA or the reliability test (Split-half method) as it used a different scale for its answers. The implication of this is that it did not load the same way as the rest, and the data from this component was not ordinal, but on a nominal scale. To answer the lifestyle questions, we refer to table 10 – Summary findings of the lifestyle component.

The lifestyle component is an affirmation to a system of believes and values and the adaptation of certain behaviors and ways of life (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). For question '(S_30) do you stay at the same hotel every time', 51.1% of our respondents answered false to this. 44.6%

answered sometimes and 4.3% answered that they do stay at the same hotel. This behavior is similar to that of budget travelers. In an examination of motivations on previous travel intentions by Paris and Teye (2010, p. 244), some motivations outlined were personal/social growth, budget travel, independence and new experiences. Cultural knowledge and relaxation were also noted as key within the study and among backpackers. Our PhD student group do not stay at the same hotels, but sometimes they do. They seem to be on the move when they travel, looking for new experiences as explained by theory, they do not settle. A majority present like backpackers or budget travelers. The majority percentage of 51.1% for those who do not stay at the same hotel was surprisingly close to the demographic frequency for those who travel 3-9 times a year. The number of those who stay at the same hotel of 4.3% seemed quite close to those who travel more than 9 times a year at 2.9%. The latter could be individuals in integrated programs where they are working and earning better, perhaps travelling to well defined routes and destinations every year and have already created a preference for where to stay.

For question '(S_31) do you stay at different hotel brands when you travel', 47.8% responded to yes, they do stay at different hotels/hotel brands, 41.3% responded that they sometimes stay at different hotel brands and 10.9% responded that they stay at the very same hotel brand. This question mirrored the first question in the lifestyle component. It made logical consistency that those who do not stay at the same hotel in the first question (S_30) with a percentage of 51.1% would answer nearly opposite in question (S_31) and answer true, that they do stay at different hotels. Their response rate was at 47.8% in the second question, quite close to the responses of the first question. As mentioned in in the first question, majority present like budget travelers or backpackers. The lifestyle of a budget traveler or backpackers, among many characteristics is that they do not stay in the same place for too long. They are always on the move looking for new

experiences within the time they have and within the length of the budgets that they have (Paris & Teye, 2010, p. 244).

Question '(S_32) do you like to be associated with a particular hotel brand' revealed some interesting truths, that most people approximately 70.7% do not hold an association with the hotel brand as something of importance. 19.2% sometimes care for the hotel brand and 10.1% do care enough to be associated with a hotel brand. In keeping with the marketing strategy for the lifestyle component, where marketers target groups of individuals who affirm to a certain set of beliefs and values (Sathish & Rajamohan, 2012, p. 154), we conclude rather unfortunately that perhaps the organizations are not doing enough to target people in regards to their lifestyles. Sheth and Parvatlyar (1995, p. 255) state that consumers do have a need to patronize the same provider for reasons of consumer simplified buying, reducing risks and so on. The element of developing a product that feeds and is appealing to the lifestyle of this PhD students' group is possible. However, for a majority who we could term as budget travelers, the main consideration was anything else other than the brand. Their choice of brand is nonexistent, except where it is possibly most convenient, with good service, affordable and so on. Therefore, it is possible to see why this group does not care about a particular hotel brand.

Question '(S_33) choose one item that best explains why you come back every time/year to the hotel' had seven options to pick from. Respondents could only pick one. The responses in order from highest to lowest were as follows: 1(Good service, food, amenities, atmosphere) at 36.6% was the largest group, 2(convenience) at 22.8%, 3(Work reasons/reasons they have no control over) at 17.4%, 4(Affordability) at 15.2%, 5(Self-fulfilment reasons) at 0.7% and 6(Brand identity) at 0.4% was the least in number of people selecting it. We already see an internal consistency between the brand identity in this question being the lowest ranking in reasons why the respondents

travel and the former question (S_32) that shows that a majority of over 70.7% of respondents do not care about the brand identity as a reason for travel. The first response of 1(Good service, food, amenities, atmosphere) that represents 36.6% of respondents is also quite logically consistent with the findings of this group as budget travelers. It has been shown that they are always on the move, looking for new experiences. A major part of looking for new experiences is maybe in cuisine; looking for better services within other hotels as the brand is not of much importance; looking for amenities from basics of clean rooms, toilets to lavish amenities like saunas, steam rooms; and good atmospheres that are perhaps vibrant with people, music, atmospheres that are social and just humming with life.

Convenience, as a reason why they travel, came second and work reasons/reasons or they have no control over came third. Fourth was affordability. In explaining the three, we have to remember that PhD students in Norway are salaried and earn around 479,600 NOK a year (Thune et al., 2012, p. 20). This is a substantial amount to say the least, but these are students. Saving is always a good idea so while they are considered budget travelers, their intentions unlike more established, higher earning persons is not to splurge on an expensive vacation. Nonetheless, they do have some spending room stemming from the amount they earn. Thus, we can see why convenience would be second. Perhaps before attaining the position where they earn more, travelling further to spend less in a particular city would have been considered, but now that they earn better, it is possible that while they still want cheap accommodation, they are not willing to go as far as before to get it, and would get a cheap accommodation in a convenient place within the same city.

Work reasons or reasons they have no control over came third. PhD students do travel for events such as scientific conferences. Choosing accommodations in such places may be through

recommendations that conference organizers give. A PhD student would then look at that and possibly pick the cheapest one they can afford without considering many unknown options. Fourth was affordability. While they are earning and have some leeway in spending, there is a limit they may not be willing to go beyond. Self-fulfilment reasons occur for example, when someone finally gets a chance to visit a place they have always wanted to, like the Bahamas. They may treat themselves to this when they complete their program, or when they complete a major milestone in their program and have managed to save up enough for this.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 Conclusion

This chapter presents the final thoughts, conclusions, implications, strengths and weaknesses and the recommendations for future research. It discusses this in reference to the intended purpose of the thesis and how the researcher was able to accomplish the task they set out to. The implications of this study will be discussed in reference to the questions within the survey. A discussion of strengths and weaknesses will ensue followed by a recommendation for future research.

The study set out to explore the dimensions of co-creation behavior within the customer experience. This was accomplished by testing amongst the six most widely accepted experiential models (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Experiential models were used because co-creation is firmly rooted within experiential designs. This is because it is about an experience that has already been provided and letting guests become co-creators in their own experiences (Campos et al., 2016, p. 1309; Prebensen et al., 2013, p. 242), thereby creating something new and personal.

In co-creation of experiences, this study identified six psychological factors and ranked them in hierarchy, as the most important experiential elements for consideration in any co-creative activity being planned. What this means is that anyone considering engaging people in a co-creative manner and ensuring the best experience for their clients could benefit by creating an offering that follows our hierarchy. That is, an offering that is cognitively engaging, pragmatically authentic and interactable with, emotionally engendering with just the right amount of sensory engagement for interaction with the offering. The offering also needs to be relational to some extent, that is, either with friends or with oneself (Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). Considerations of the lifestyle of the guests could work if the entire experience being created is for a people who

affirm to a similar set of beliefs. However, the lifestyle component, as has been discussed, is expected to shift within the hierarchy. Therefore, the level of importance a service provider should put in regarding this component should be at their discretion.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

The six components are the work of Fornerino et al. (2006, p. 8), Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398) and Schmitt (1999), in determining the most widely used and accepted elements of customer experience. This study has gone ahead to determine the most important of these components, the hierarchy, and the possible use for this information.

In a similar study by Knutson et al. (2009, p. 51), their study was composed of four components and not six like this study. However, in an examination of these four components and how they were tested, we found that the elements followed the criteria given within our hierarchy, from first to fourth place. We found this to be proof of concept regarding our hierarchy. Theory by Knutson et al. (2009) and their findings seem to be in line with this study's findings. This study confirms their theory.

This study not only provides a way to conceptualize the factors within defined psychological experience parameters, but it also helps conceptualize all other studies similar to this, now and in the future. It provides a hierarchy and insights into two additional components of relational and lifestyle.

6.3 Implications to the Hotel industry

The study had some implications directed to the hotel industry. The implications will be discussed per component. The study will use the questionnaire that was issued out in the survey, with all its

questions, even those that did not make it through the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). This is because the EFA is meant to reduce the factors. These questions were however designed from theory and hold much information for the hotel industry.

6.3.1 Cognitive Component Implications

In question '(S_15) rate speed and efficiency of check-in and how it made you feel', majority of people seemed to agree that the speed and efficiency of the hotel was good and acceptable. A small percentage were neutral, and an even smaller percentage were not happy about the speed and efficiency of the check-in. This to hotels means that there is some room for improvement, and perhaps special measures should be employed to mitigate the effects of a rather uneasy check-in. An unusual check-in could be someone who presents unprepared, maybe has to start looking for documentation in different bags; maybe a family with kids who have many questions and want some special items to better their stay, yet there is a queue and the reception wants to work fast. Perhaps the client could be handled by a separate staff entirely who could dedicate more time to their check-in as soon as it is clear that it is not a usual check-in. This could have follow-ups later after check-in.

In question '(S_16) rate conversation with reception during check-in and how it made you feel?', a majority of respondents agree that the conversations during check-in were good, a small percentage were neutral on this and an even smaller number say the conversations were bad. This indicates that hotels are not doing so bad, but there is room for improvement. Routine trainings and perhaps a script to refer to in case of one dealing with irate clients or at the risk that the reception staff have been offended and are aware that they run the risk of not being nice to guests unintentionally.

Most respondents in question '(S_17) how would you rate your entire check-in experience at last hotel', said the check-in at their last hotel was generally okay and uneventful. A small number were neutral about this and an even smaller number said it was bad. The numbers are overwhelmingly positive but there is always room for improvement. This question mirrors question (S_15) and the recommendations remain the same, that there is always room for improvement with check-in, especially in handling clients who might need more time and clarification to be comfortable.

In question '(S_36) how would you rank your last check-in to all other check-in experiences', majority of respondents said it was good, a small number were neutral or this did not apply to them. This was perhaps because they had not checked into previous hotels before or that they were not the ones responsible for the check-in. The lowest percentage of people answered that the check-in was bad. Constant trainings to always make a good first impression would improve on this outcome. Results for this question showed that there was a significantly large group of the neutral and the not applicable group that can be swayed to the good side and easily become lifelong clients, while ensuring that there are lesser and lesser grievances.

Question '(S_22) was the information provided easy to understand and useful for your stay', showed that a majority of respondents agreed that the information provided was useful. A small number were neutral on this and an even smaller number said it was bad. Perhaps the hotels could work to ensure that there is no miscommunication, maybe by offering virtual maps as well, interactive floor plans, and personal help wherever possible.

6.3.2 Pragmatic Component Implications

Questions '(S_8) perception about the appearance of the lobby' and '(S_10) how did the appearance of the lobby make you feel' combined in testing on the authenticity and the useability of the lobby area (Esmaeli et al., 2019, p. 227; Gentile et al., 2007, p. 398). The lobby has been known to be pampered to disproportion, distorting the authentic or useability nature intended (Kracauer, 1999, p. 289). The two questions (S_8) and (S_10) show most respondents agreeing to the authentic and useable nature of the lobby. A small percentage of responses from both questions were neutral on this and present an opportunity for the hotel to sway them to the positive side. The smallest percentage of both questions represented those who did not think that the lobby was authentic or useable. Perhaps the hotels can work to restructuring the lobby occasionally, to allow rotation and accommodating some simplistic everyday items.

In question '(S_23) were the hotel facilities and design of things functional and not complicated?', majority of respondents agreed that the design and facilities were useable. A small percentage were neutral, and an even smaller percentage were not pleased with them. The hotels could provide more instruction where needed, perhaps even virtual maps downloadable on the guest's phones. The design of construction should also be planned with the aspect of useability and authenticity in mind (where possible), with other considerations such as safety and so on.

6.3.3 Emotional Component Implications

Question '(S_34) if you were welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel', shows a majority number of respondents were happy about being welcomed on arrival by hotel staff. This is without including the about fifty percent who were neutral, and this did not apply to them. If hotels seek to foster more repeat clients, this neutral group provides good grounds for

targeted interventions. They could start welcoming guests, amongst other interventions, that add up to the entire experience that leads to clients who want to have a relationship with the hotel (Sheth & Parvatlyar, 1995, p. 255). The smallest percentage among all those who were welcomed did not like the experience, almost similar to question '(S_35) if you were not welcomed by a hotel staff on arrival, how did this make you feel?' with the smallest percentage of all who were not welcomed, having a bad experience. In considering the negatively polar answers to both questions, those who were welcomed were less unhappy than those who were not welcomed. The difference is more than three times, therefore, for hotels to welcome persons to the hotel is more likely to do good than bad. A larger percentage in question (S_35) were neutral or this did not apply to them. This presents an opportunity for the hotels to apply some remedial actions, among them, welcoming guests more.

Responses for question '(S_20) in the conversation you had with the reception, do you feel it could have been improved upon' were almost equal in percentage across the board, a third each. A third of respondents felt that the conversation could have been improved upon. A third of respondents were neutral on this issue and a third of respondents thought the conversation was okay. This information is telling the hotels that guests are not getting the optimal first conversation as they should. Hotels should focus to fix this first conversation perhaps with more training, scripts, amongst other interventions.

It is of importance to fix that first conversation because in question '(S_21) did you feel that the conversation set the tone for your stay,' a third of respondents agreed that the first conversation did set the tone for the entire stay. Slightly less of a third in number were neutral on this issue and a number slightly higher than a third were unaffected by that first conversation in a

manner likely to influence their stay. A good rule would be to optimize that first conversation as the guest is checking in, it can only do good.

6.3.4 Sensory Component Implications

In question '(S_11) perception of different sounds and music,' a majority of people are neutral on this while a small number perceive the sounds in the lobby as good. A very small number dislike the sounds in the lobby. It would be prudent for the hotels to manage all the sounds within the lobby, from the music, machine sounds, people on phone calls and so on.

Most people were neutral about the scents in the lobby. A slightly smaller number than that liked the scents in the lobby and a very small percentage of people did not like the scents in the lobby. A better way for hotels to use scents would be in association with a positive stimulus, and perhaps in combination with other sensory elements like taste. Question '(S_19) how would you rate the help you got to solve problem in a difficult situation' tested on the physical and temporal nature of getting help, that is, listening for direction, touching for orientation, and so on. Majority sensed that the help they got was good, a slightly smaller number than that were neutral, and a very small number were not happy about the help they got. Overall, over half the respondents were happy, and hotels should work to ensure that the procedures for providing help are in place, even following up afterwards, and asking if one needs help.

6.3.5 Relational Component Implications

Most respondents found it easy to converse with the reception if they needed something. A small percentage were neutral, and an even smaller percentage were not comfortable with such a conversation. Hotels could allow interactive platforms specifically for such help, and more training could always prepare the staff to be more fit to help. Most of the respondents liked receiving special

favors, a smaller number did not, and the smallest percentage of people were neutral about this. This could be left as a discretionary measure for the hotels to use, although in most, it seems to be positively received. Majority of respondents like receiving personalized service, a smaller number were neutral, and an even smaller number found it to be a negative thing. Perhaps the conundrum for the guest would be that they do not want to inconvenience or overstrain the staff which is why there is a large number for neutral and those against this in the findings. However, over half the respondents like it, so it can be another measure to be used at discretion by hotels.

Majority of respondents actively try to keep a good relationship with the front desk staff. A smaller number of respondents are neutral on this and an equal percentage to the neutral group, do not try to keep a good relationship with the front desk at all. Trying means they put in some personal effort. It seems that as far as maintaining relationships goes, the guest seems to help with this, and all hotels have to do is let them. However, hotels could have a system where they can identify lonely seeming clients and seek to engage them perhaps through their guest relations officer, and just check up on them. Discretion is still advised as not all guests found this to be a positive thing.

6.3.6 Lifestyle Component Implications

Majority of people do not stay at the same hotel. We see this in both questions '(S_30) do you stay at the same hotel every time' and '(S_31) do you stay at different hotel brands when you travel.' A smaller number of people in both questions, chose that sometimes they stay at the same hotels. The smallest percentage in both questions choose to stay at the same hotel. To hotels, this means that a lot of clients they have come for varied reasons, and actual intending repeat clients are extremely small in number. Hotels could work more on engaging the clients using the hierarchy

of measures defined within this study, bringing guests to higher levels of co-creation, where personal meaning is formed leading to intentions to revisit the hotel. It also signals to hotels, the need to create a package perhaps specific to these kinds of clients.

The findings above also support the fact that a majority of respondents do not care for the brand identity, as seen in question '(S_32) do you like to be associated with a particular hotel brand.' Clients are not being actively engaged to co-create any personal meaning for themselves with the hotel brand, thus, they have no intention to stay at the same hotels when they travel, and do not care for the brand either. This also speaks to the hotels to engage their clients within our hierarchy to have more repeat clients and guests who form meaning with the brand, choosing to be associated with it.

According to question '(S_33) choose one item that best explains why you come back every time/year to the hotel,' most people come back for the good service, food, amenities and the atmosphere. These present the interactive qualities of the hotel, and what guests come for more often. In diminishing order of importance, convenience ranked second. This tells hotels of the need for product availability, utility and that everything is laid out so the guests can find it. Third was work reasons/ reasons you have no control over. It is important for hotels to remember the needs of such clients, usually official or business-oriented travelers. They do not care for much in terms of experience and are usually in and out attending to matters, but the hotel can find a way to engage them even within their busy lifestyles. Fourth was affordability which mentions to hotels the need to create an affordable product. Fifth was other reasons for travel, sixth self-fulfillment reasons and seventh and ranking the least in percentage was brand identity. These last three are areas hotels can keep an eye on, not specifically to create something new as these represent very small numbers,

but rather to optimize the entirety of the experience to accommodate these last three groups as well.

6.4 Implications to Tourism and Other Fields

The findings of this study would be very informative to tourism service providers. This could inform the way they put together an experience. For example, if a tour operator is planning to take guests on a skiing trip, in following the results from this study, they should consider engaging them cognitively first. This would involve keeping them attentive, perhaps by planning a scavenger hunt before-hand. They could put items along the ski path for their clients to find, and spot, and within each is a small reward, and information giving along the way. This as an example, keeps their clients attentive and focused all through, however, other avenues of engaging the cognitive can still be sought.

Service providers would then engage their clients pragmatically. In the skiing trip example, if engaged in deep soulful discussions with each other, this provides the authenticity of connecting with a perfect stranger. It is unplanned, and that is one of the markers of authenticity. They would then ensure that the experience created is emotionally engaging, either bringing feelings of joy, happiness, excitement, fulfillment, and so on and that it also a sensory one, allowing for the five human senses to be activated in the intake of stimuli and in interacting with or within the experience.

The experience should also be relational involving others or involving one and their ideal self. This involves creating an experience that can be partaken of with others or fully engaging for one person to do on their own. The experience could be within the lifestyle of the group they are with, affirming to their beliefs or values, such as teambuilding activities. A standard experience

should consider the lifestyle components input but may not have to adhere to all lifestyles. It should just be standard but at the very least should not be in opposition to any lifestyle or alienating to guests.

The findings of this study also have implications to businesses such as technology shops/phone shops/gaming arcades and so on, where customers get to interact with the technologies on display before purchasing them. The findings provide a way for technology service providers to engage their clientele within their first interaction with technology, to not only highlight the best they have to offer, but to allow the clients to co-create something personal with that technology within a very short period of interaction with the item.

The findings could greatly inform the advertising and marketing world to create signs and posts that follow the hierarchy presented in this study, instead of severely focusing on the sensory components which are overused and do not guarantee success as far as co-creative interactions are concerned. Even online marketing and advertisements could take a cue by not only creating adverts that are attractive enough to be clicked on because they arouse the sensory component, but adverts that also engage with a person cognitively, pragmatically, emotionally, relational and lifestyle wise within that short encounter.

6.5 Strengths, Weaknesses and Limitations

This study had the opportunity to utilize widely used and accepted elements of customer experience by Fornerino et al. (2006, p. 8); Gentile et al. (2007, p. 398); Schmitt (1999). Saturation was reached within the very first week of issue of the survey after a successful pilot project. The survey had three hundred and eighty-five respondents in total. The nature of the survey was able

to reach a wide array of people within a very short period, and this was of huge implications to the study.

The data received was run through software like SPSS for the correlation analysis and the exploratory factor analysis. Excel workbook was used in coming up with new variables. Statistical methods of weighting measures came in handy and the overall concise nature of the tools used gave unimpaired results.

The ability to look across different components and understand their correlations and their ability to influence the entire guest experience was a special prerogative given by this study. The hierarchy of the most important elements in influencing co-creation within the customer experience provides a kind of a blueprint for any experience creator seeking to engage their clients.

One of the weaknesses of this study was the inability to place the lifestyle component within the hierarchy. This was because the component is expected to shift in place severally, depending on the group one is seeking to study. Even within the lifestyle of PhD students, it would not be accurate enough to envelope the whole group to a specific lifestyle and doing so with different groups has a slight inkling bordering on ethical issues. However, the lifestyle component gave results that exceeded our expectations and would prove quite useful for service providers and marketers in attracting and creating a product for different groups, as discussed in the implications section.

Another weakness was in trying to acquire information from organizations such as hotels and universities. The researcher had requested such institutions to send out the survey link to their people, students, and staff in the university and for hotels to their clients by posting the link on their social media sites. This request was denied by the university but the reasons why by law were

quite clear. Some of the hotels explained why they could not send the data to their guests but were accommodating enough to send it to their staff. Others refused and did not give any reasons. The researcher felt that it would be proper to have the support of hotels when conducting hotel research. These avenues were however not explored as much. The study relied on the social media expat groups and the emails to PhD students for data collection.

The researcher was also limited in part because the sending out of over one thousand, seven hundred surveys was not received positively by some. The very few harsh emails that came in response were a reason to evaluate the entire survey design and the message that was being put forward, the permissions from government and what was required of the researcher in these situations by law. Once it was clear that all considerations, ethical and otherwise had been made, the researcher proceeded with distributing the survey despite the negativity but remained cautious to adhere to respondents' requests.

Another limitation is perhaps seen in the representative sample. The data obtained from the PhD students' group was obtained by sending out survey emails to many respondents, a kind of broadcast email. The method approached randomization. The results from this data were used to generalize to all hotel guests. Perhaps the main consideration was people who have ever checked into a Norwegian hotel and who could fill out the survey. As already discussed in this section, getting guests right from the hotels was not forthcoming, but getting the sample of PhD Students was. Hotel guests are people from all walks of life, students, professionals and so on. Despite the group being only PhD Students, it does not take away from their relevant experience as hotel guests. Furthermore, this study confirms theory from Knutson et al. (2009), as discussed in (Refer, 6.2 theoretical implications) . Therefore, based on these considerations, we generalized in this study.

6.6 Future Recommendations

This study identified components which were tested and placed within a hierarchy that signified the most important aspects that influence co-creative behavior. The hierarchy requires further testing against other psychological experiential research. This would require a comprehensive literature review and the findings of this test would come close to determining what would ultimately look like a unification of the experiential psychological co-creative components, or an easier way to observe these components.

Brand identity came out extremely weak in our group of PhD students. Formulation of ties with a brand is usually a key step in fostering lifelong customers and it seems that hotels and their brands are not attracting guests at all. More research within this should be conducted to determine why guests do not care for the brand identity.

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8.0 Appendices

Issued Survey

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

This survey is designed to gain information on customer experiences by analyzing check-in experiences within a hotel setup. The study will have a focus on the co-creative aspects within experience creation.

To understand this topic better, I kindly ask that you take some time to fill out this questionnaire. It should take you about 6-8 minutes. The survey is anonymous and all data given will be held in strict confidence within the guidelines provided by the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD).

The data will be used for a master thesis publication, and for future publications within relevant journals in the near future. This aims at informing the entire hospitality and tourism industry as published information is usually put in the public's domain. As before, data will be held in the strictest of confidence and as per the guidelines given.

I will base my study on the front office/Reception within a hotel setup, so as you answer the questions, **keep in mind the <u>last time</u> you were checking in to a hotel in Norway**.

I kindly ask that you sign/tick below to show that you understand and agree to the terms.

Thank you in advance!

(1) ❏ Agree

(2) ❏ Disagree

<u>Demographics</u>

Age:

(1)	☐	18-24 years
(2)	☐	25-54 years
(3)	☐	55-64 years
(4)	☐	65 years and over

Gender

(1)	☐	Female
(2)	☐	Male

Educational Background

(1)	☐	Secondary School or Lower
(2)	☐	Post-Secondary Education/Apprentice
(3)	☐	Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent
(4)	☐	Master's Degree
(5)	☐	PHD

Annual Household income

(1)	☐	Less than 339,000 NOK
(2)	☐	Between 339,000 NOK and 792,100 NOK
(3)	☐	Between 792,100 NOK and 1,029.400 NOK
(4)	☐	Above 1,029,400 NOK

Basic Information about your travels

How many round trips do you usually take each year where you have to stay at a hotel?

(1) ❑ 1-2 Times

(2) ❑ 3-9 Times

(3) ❑ 9 Times or more

Continuation...

What is the purpose of your trips as answered in the previous question?

(1) ❑ Business

(2) ❑ Leisure

(3) ❑ Both

Great, you are more than halfway done with the questionnaire!

IMPORTANT: Please think back to **the most recent time** when you were checking in at the front desk/reception of a hotel. What caught your attention in terms of the aspects given below.

Please rate each question using a 7-point scale, from '**extremely Bad**' to '**Extremely Good**.'

	Extremely Bad	Very Bad	Fairly Bad	Neutral	Fairly Good	Very Good	Extremely Good
How was the appearance of the Lobby?	(1) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑

	Extremely Bad	Very Bad	Fairly Bad	Neutral	Fairly Good	Very Good	Extremely Good
How did the appearance of the Lobby make you feel?	(1) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑
How would you rate the different sounds that you heard at the reception/lobby, like the music?	(1) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑
How would you rate the different smells (scents/aromas) that you experienced at the lobby/reception?	(1) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑

Continuation...

	Extremely Bad	Very Bad	Fairly Bad	Neutral	Fairly Good	Very Good	Extremely Good
How would you rate the speed and efficiency of your check-in experience?	(1) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑
How would you rate the conversation you had with the receptionist during your check-in experience?	(1) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑
How would you rate your entire check-in experience at the last hotel you stayed at?	(1) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑
Think of a time when you were checking-in and had to problem solve for yourself due to unforeseen circumstances (For Example: lost identity information, lost credit card, lost reservation number or no booking confirmation). -How would you rate the help you got	(1) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑

	Extremely Bad	Very Bad	Fairly Bad	Neutral	Fairly Good	Very Good	Extremely Good
from the reception to assist you in the above mentioned difficult situation?							

In this section, please select ' **N/A**' if this does not apply to you

	Extremely Bad	Very Bad	Fairly Bad	Neutral	Fairly Good	Very Good	Extremely Good	N/A
If you were welcomed by a hotel staff when you arrived at the hotel, how did this make you feel? (Please select N/A if this does not apply to you)	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑
If you came to the reception by yourself and were not welcomed from outside by a hotel staff, how did this make you feel? (Please select N/A if this does not apply to you)	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑
How would you rank your last check-in experience in comparison to all the other check-in experiences you have ever had before? (Please select N/A if this was your first hotel check-in experience)	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑	(8) ❑

Please rate each question using a 7-point scale, starting from '**To no extent**' to '**To a very great extent**.'

	To no extent	To an extremely little little extent	To a little extent	Neutral	To some extent	To a large extent	To a very great extent
In the conversation you had with the receptionist during check-in, do you think that the conversation could have been improved upon?	(3) ❏	(1) ❏	(2) ❏	(4) ❏	(5) ❏	(6) ❏	(7) ❏
Did the conversation you had with the receptionist during check-in set the tone for your stay at the hotel?	(3) ❏	(1) ❏	(2) ❏	(4) ❏	(5) ❏	(6) ❏	(7) ❏
We assume that you were given some kind of information during your check-in, for example, directions to your room, restaurant, pool, and so on. Was the information provided easy to understand and useful for your stay?	(3) ❏	(1) ❏	(2) ❏	(4) ❏	(5) ❏	(6) ❏	(7) ❏
Were the hotel's facilities including the design of things, the technologies (lights/elevators/etc), and other things in the hotel easy to use, functional and not complicated?	(3) ❏	(1) ❏	(2) ❏	(4) ❏	(5) ❏	(6) ❏	(7) ❏
When you are staying at a hotel, do you find it easy to come back and have a conversation with the reception staff, in case you need something?	(3) ❏	(1) ❏	(2) ❏	(4) ❏	(5) ❏	(6) ❏	(7) ❏

Continuation...

	To no extent	To an extremely little little extent	To a little extent	Neutral	To some extent	To a large extent	To a very great extent
Do you like it when the hotel gives you special favors, for example, a complementary spa day/a free city tour?	(3) ❑	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
Do you like it when the hotel gives you personalized service, like finding your favorite brand of drink for you, even though it may not be available at the hotel?	(3) ❑	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑
Do you actively try to keep a good relationship with the the front office/reception staff?	(3) ❑	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(4) ❑	(5) ❑	(6) ❑	(7) ❑

Please answer true, false, or Sometimes to the following:

	True	False	Sometime
Is it true that you stay at the same hotel/hotel brand, every time you travel?	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑
Is it true that you stay at different hotels/hotel brands when you travel?	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑
Do you like to be associated with a particular hotel brand where you usually stay when you travel?	(1) ❑	(2) ❑	(3) ❑

Final Question

Choose one item that best explains why you come back every time/year, to the hotel?

(1) ❑ Good service, food, amenities, atmosphere?

(2) ❑ Convenience?

(3) ❑ Affordability?

(5) ❑ Brand Identity?

(4) ❑ Self-fulfillment reasons?

(6) ❑ Work reasons/reasons you have no control over?

(7) ❑ Other

Please remember to press the button below to submit your responses We appreciate you for the time you took to contribute to this questionnaire.

Thank you!

NSD Form

ΝSD NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA

NSD's assessment

Project title

Exploring the dimensions of Co-creation Behavior in Customer Experience

Reference number

207550

Registered

03.02.2020 av Kevin Munene Njue - kevinmnjue@gmail.com

Data controller (institution responsible for the project)

Universitetet i Stavanger / Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet / Norsk hotellhøgskole

Project leader (academic employee/supervisor or PhD candidate)

Jinghua Xie, jinghua.xie@uis.no, tlf: 51834521

Type of project

Student project, Master's thesis

Contact information, student

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Project period

08.01.2020 - 31.08.2020

Status

26.03.2020 - Assessed anonymous

Assessment (1)

26.03.2020 - Assessed anonymous

It is our assessment that this project will not process data that can directly or indirectly identify individual persons, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 26 March 2020, as well as in correspondence with NSD. As a result, the project does not need an assessment from NSD.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO IF YOU ARE GOING TO PROCESS PERSONAL DATA?
If the project is changed in such a way that you will process personal data, you will need to notify this to NSD by updating the Notification Form. Wait for a reply before you start processing personal data.

END OF FOLLOW-UP

As the project will not be processing personal data, we end all further follow-up of the project.

Good luck with your project!

Contact person at NSD: Simon Gogl

Data Protection Services for Research: +47 55 58 21 17 (press 1)