



VALUE CO-CREATION SIGNIFICANCE OF TOURIST RESOURCES

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Abstract: How important are individual tourist resources for the overall value of tourist experiences? This study argues for including tourist resources as a value-adding element in tourist experiences. Service quality measures typically include the value of (1) personal service, (2) the surrounding natural environment and (3) other tourists. They do not typically include the value of individual tourist resources. A survey with 505 respondents was conducted. The study reveals that tourist resources, in addition to personal service, environment and other visitors, enhance the experienced value of a trip significantly. These findings are discussed in light of the service-dominant logic, identity and self-worth theories and the imperative of including the customer resources in understanding of experience value. Practical implications are also presented. **Keywords:** tourist resources, time spent, effort, involvement, value perception. © 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

Tourists travel because they want to, and not because they have to. They travel to pursue personal interests, enjoy other environments and nurture personal needs and wants. This simple, but major, aspect of travelling matters. The time and effort people put into tourist travel are therefore valued differently from other goods and services. Nevertheless, tourists' role and resources in terms of value creation have attracted little research. Accordingly, the present work explores tourist inputs in value co-creation and tests the effect of those inputs on overall experience value.

The new service-dominant logic (S-D logic) of marketing (Grönroos, 2006; Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2006, 2008) acknowledges the consumer, i.e., the tourist role in value creation and co-creation. This logic includes the idea that in the process of value co-creation, the consumers—in addition to firms and organizations—act as resource integrators (Arnould, Price, & Malshe, 2006; Dabholkar, 1990; Holbrook, 1996, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2006). Likewise, value is centered in the

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experiences of consumers (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Prebensen & Foss, 2011; Richards & Wilson, 2006). Hence, the foundational idea in the S-D logic is that the service encounter is a value exchange process of value between the customer and the service provider. This perspective holds that the consumers and their skills and knowledge, depicted as operant resources, contribute to value creation by integrating physical, social, and cultural resources (Arnould et al., 2006).

The present work argues that since experience-based consumption to a large extent focuses on hedonic value for the customer (Holbrook, 2005), the time and effort spent on such travels (before, during and after) are operant resources in such co-creation situations. Caru and Cova (2007, p. 7) observe that it is “widely accepted within an experiential perspective that consumers are not passive agents reacting to a stimulus, but instead, the actors and producers of their own experiences...”. Experience value for the tourist, then, lies in being at the destination and taking part in producing and enjoying various experiences while there (Sandström, Edvardsson, Kristensson, & Magnusson, 2008).

Planning, discussing and choosing vacation travels might be seen as positive activities in themselves, enhancing the overall experience value of tourist trips (Hoch & Deighton, 1989). They should therefore not be treated solely as costs in consumer behavior. Furthermore, travelling involves encountering unfamiliar scenes and people, rendering coping and co-creating valuable experiences as situational and dependent on the skills and knowledge of the tourist (such as socializing, discussing, receiving information, re-scheduling planned activities) (Prebensen & Foss, 2011). Consequently, the more the customer puts into a tourist experience, the more that person experiences positive and memorable experience value (Kim, Brent Ritchie, & McCormick, 2012). Kim et al. (2012, p. 14) developed a scale of memorable tourist experiences (MTE) based on the premises that “affective feelings, such as being sociable, pleasant, happy, irritated, guilty, sad and worried” (cit. Larsen & Jensen, 2004; Wrutz et al., 2003) affect the tourist experience. Despite these efforts to acknowledge experience value in tourism with the new service-dominant logic (see Vargo & Lusch, 2004), there is still a need to recognize “customer value” and the costs and benefits customers bring to value co-creation processes in tourism.

Co-creation of experiences, as a theoretical construct, considers the consumer an active agent in the consumption and production of values (Dabholkar, 1990), and regards customer involvement as essential for defining and designing the experience. In addition to participation and involvement, co-creating experiences during a vacation involves interaction with other people (e.g., host and guest) and with products and services in various servicescapes (Bitner, 1992), and results in increased (or decreased) value for themselves and others, in that it is an “interactive, relativistic, preference experience” (Holbrook, 2006, p. 715). This perspective emphasizes the emotional state of consumption (Kim et al., 2012).

A tourist trip may also function as an opportunity for tourists to shape (create) their identity or self-concept (Rosenberg, 1979). In such cases, visiting a certain destination has a symbolic value for the tourist. Research describes instrumental actions in two different ways (Holt, 1995): the journey or a certain destination (1) functions as a means to extend one's self, i.e., self-extension processes (Belk, 1988) or (2) reorients their self-concept to align it with an institutionally defined identity (e.g., Solomon, 1983; Zerubavel, 1991). When a consumer participates in co-creating experiences, for instance, Miller (1987) claims that unique niche products are easier for the consumer to identify with than mass-produced consumption objects. Identity altering or self-realization processes can also be a result of a "feeling of loss" (Giddens, 1990, p. 98). It is claimed that those who cannot realize their authentic selves in everyday life may use tourist trips as a means to reach this goal (Wang, 1999). Co-creating valuable experiences then may be a function of such identity altering processes.

Tourist perceptions of value and quality have been investigated both overall and in terms of single elements of service quality (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1988), servicescapes (Bitner, 1992) and experiencescapes (O'Dell, 2005). Additionally, recent tourism research (Gallaraza & Saura, 2006; Williams & Soutar, 2009) has added the relationships between satisfaction and intentions as well as dimensions of tourist-perceived benefits and costs. The impact of the physical surrounding of servicescapes for customers and employees, along with the service provided (e.g. Parasuraman et al., 1988), involves people differently in terms of how they create and co-create their own and others' tourist experiences.

Analyzing servicescapes and personal services in terms of involvement and of time, effort and money, will provide theoretical and empirical knowledge about value creation in tourist experiences. This knowledge will help tourist providers to focus on the drivers of overall value for the tourist, and thus help firms enhance their overall value as well (Brock Smith & Colgate, 2007).

Vargo and Lusch (2004, p. 2) claim that "resources are not: they become". The present work adopts this perspective and asserts that "experience value becomes through co-creation processes". Spending time together with family and friends, enjoying good food in a restaurant surrounded by beautiful nature, or having a physical experience walking up a mountain could be seen as utilizing resources in producing and consuming highly worthwhile and memorable experiences (Kim et al., 2012). The time, the effort, or even the money spent are important resources that contribute to how tourists become involved in host-guest interactions. The paper thus views the tourist as a participant in the value creation process by bringing various types of customer resources and efforts into the experience value scene.

Tourist-Perceived Experience Value

The experience value in the consumption concept is difficult to define and measure (e.g., Holbrook, 1994; Woodruff, 1997; Zeithaml,

1988). Various efforts have been made to address this, however. Most researchers define value as the results or benefits customers perceive in relation to the total costs they have expended (which include the price paid plus other costs associated with the purchase). Baier (1966, p. 40) defines value as “the capacity of a good, service, or activity to satisfy a need or provide a benefit to a person or legal entity” and thus it includes any type of exchanged and co-created value of tangible or intangible character. Butz and Goodstein (1996) define customer value as the difference between what customers receive in relation to the purchase (benefits, quality, worth, utility) and what they pay (price, costs, sacrifices). This results in a product-related attitude or emotional bond that is used to compare what competitors offer (Gale, 1994).

Customers who perceive that they receive “value for money” (Zeithaml, 1988) do seem to be more satisfied than those who receive less value for money. Nevertheless, this research falls short in that it excludes value as a highly personal, idiosyncratic construct which may vary widely from one customer to another (Holbrook, 1994; Zeithaml, 1988). Likewise, it regards customer input or resources as mere perceived costs that reduce the overall value for the customer rather than adding value.

Tourists consume a bundle of food, lodging and other experiences during the journey, with different levels of service quality offered by a range of firms. All in all, these products, services, and experiences are produced and consumed in a timeframe, with a certain amount of effort, and at a certain price, that more often enhances the value because tourists prefer being present, being involved and participating in the value creation process. Finally, sometimes they even prefer to pay higher prices in a spirit of conspicuous consumption (e.g., Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996).

Tourist value as a construct resides within an evaluation framework, in terms of time, space, and costs (Crotts & Van Raaij, 1994). The value of a tourist journey or experience probably resides in the sum of many experiences. Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) suggest that consumers buy or use a certain product, service or experience rather than another by integrating their sense of cost and benefits in their value concept. In a similar way, Williams and Soutar (2009) incorporate value for money, as a cost, into a functional value component. Woodruff (1997, p. 141) claims that value perception is “a customer’s perceived preference for, and evaluation of, those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer’s goals and purposes in use situations”. Building on Woodruff’s “perceived preference” for a tourist who prefers to spend time and effort on a tourist trip (planning, discussing, deciding, travelling and being), the time and the effort might be regarded as a value for the tourist as well as a cost.

The present research thus explores the construct of perceived tourist value by including the personal tourist factors in the value construct. People want to be involved, they like to spend time and effort on a tourist journey, and sometimes they even enjoy spending money to

do so. The present work thus presents a slightly different angle on the definition of experience value in a tourism context:

Experience value is comprised of the benefits the tourist perceives from a journey and stay in a destination, including those assets or resources that the tourist, other tourists and the host bring to the process of co-creating experiences.

Value Dimensions in Tourist Experiences

A tourist experiences various servicescapes (Bitner, 1992), and the service encounters include a communication process between the host and guests that adds values to the process. For the customer, the symbolic value, described as an “interactive, relativistic preference and experience” (Holbrook, 2005, p. 46) is often of even greater importance in tourism than the functional value (Kim et al., 2012).

Ulaga (2003) claims that “customer value is perceived uniquely by individual customers; it is conditional or contextual (dependent on the individual, situation, or product); it is relative (in comparison to known or imagined alternatives) and it is dynamic (changing within individuals over time)” (Ulaga, 2003, cited in Smith & Colgate, 2007, p. 8). The interactive facet of an experience value deals with the involvement of people and objects (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The relativistic value facet indicates that value is comparative (among objects), personal (across people), and situational (specific to the context).

Service quality is the tourist’s subjective assessment of the interaction with the host and how well his/her service needs have been met (Dabholkar, Shepherd, & Thorpe, 2000; Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988). Typical service interactions are not limited to relationships between humans only, as the atmosphere and physical surroundings are shown to be of importance to consumer perception (Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2002; Bitner, 1992). SERVQUAL is used as a quality framework by Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) and is probably the most widely used quality scale within marketing and tourism studies. The main constructs in SERVQUAL deal with the customer’s perception of the host in terms of reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness, and the physical environment of the servicescape (Bitner, 1992).

Tourists visit places for many reasons and enjoying the surroundings and nature are strong pull motivations for visiting certain places (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Gartner, 1993; Meng, Tepanon, & Uysal, 2008; Um & Crompton, 1990).

In their book on the experience of nature, Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) reveal the importance of the environment and the surrounding nature in tourist experiences. Hence, nature and surrounding environments are hypothesized to affect the perceived benefits of a journey.

The relationships between a guest and other guests (familiar and unfamiliar) are also shown to be of importance in consumer experience (Fisk et al., 2010; Grove & Fisk, 1997; Grove, Fisk & Bitner, 1992; Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Turley

and Milliman (2000) reveal that the presence of other people is seen as having a negative influence on atmospheric perceptions. Nevertheless, the company of other guests can be evaluated positively as well (e.g., Lovelock, 1996; Prebensen & Foss, 2011). In fact, going into a cafe or a restaurant with no other guests present might even be perceived as boring and uninteresting. Thus, short queues and fast service might not outweigh the atmospheric elements of other people's presence. Hence, the present work includes other people's presence, and suggests that tourists meet and mingle not only with hosts, but also with other guests, in various atmospheres and physical surroundings, and that these might together influence the tourist experience of both positive and negative values.

Tourist involvement refers to the overall subjective feeling of the personal relevance of the experience (e.g. Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Richins & Bloch, 1986; Zaichkowsky, 1985), and should therefore be considered as a positive dimension in experiences for the tourist as well as for the firm. The tourist level of involvement with an object, situation, or action is thus determined by the degree to which s/he perceives the concept to be personally relevant. An activity is consequently regarded as personally relevant when a tourist perceives it to be self-related or in some way instrumental in achieving personal goals (Celsi & Olson, 1988). The personal relevance of a tourist journey, then, is represented by the perceived value of the experience through the received benefits. The present work hypothesizes that increases in tourist involvement will affect overall value perception positively.

Tourists spend money, time, and effort while travelling during their vacation because they want to do so. They are a major resource in the co-creation of value. It is likely that people who spend time, effort, and money on something that they like to do (hiking in the mountains versus washing floors) find it more valuable to spend their resources on their desires and are therefore liable to engage in co-production (Etgar, 2008).

Based on this analysis of the literature, the present work outlines the relative importance of the value construct in a tourism setting, and further investigates the relative importance of the dimensions of the value construct to the overall value perception of a tourist experience. Specifically, the study examines the following hypothesis:

1. Tourist experience value includes service quality, perception of the surrounding nature, other guests, and the tourist's resources, which include involvement, money, time, and effort.
2. Each value dimension will have a direct, positive, and significant association with overall experience value.
3. The interactive values such as involvement and the tourists' assets (time, effort, and money) will have a greater influence on overall value than the service quality dimensions and the surrounding nature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Population

A group of tourists visiting two different nature-based attractions in Northern Norway were involved in the study. These tourists could be viewed as typical nature-based tourists, in that nature-related elements always score highest in surveys regarding tourist motivation for visiting Norway (e.g., Mehmetoglu, 2005, 2007; Prebensen, Larsen, & Abelsen, 2003). The tourist attractions chosen for the present study were the North Cape plateau, attracting approximately 420,000 tourists every summer (440,000 visitors yearly), and the coastal cruise (provided by Hurtigruten), which offers a cruise along the Norwegian coastal line between Bergen (south-west) and Kirkenes (north-east) throughout the year. The coastal steamer has around 1,500,000 passengers per year and approximately 70% are international tourists.

Data Collection

A survey was selected as the data collection method using structured questionnaires measuring tourist perception of quality (SERVQUAL), perception of other guests, the surrounding nature, personal involvement, value for money, and the time and effort spent on trip elements. Subjects visiting the North Cape plateau or the coastal steamer during a period of four weeks in July 2010 were asked to answer the questionnaire. In total, approximately 750 questionnaires were handed out and 505 respondents participated in the survey, a response rate of approximately 67%. Altogether, 255 respondents were interviewed during a visit to the North Cape, and 250 on the coastal steamer. A total of 252 females and 212 males responded (41 missing), representing 16 different countries, with a mean age of 50.28 (SD = 18.07) years. The demographics correspond roughly with tourists in Northern Norway (SSB, 2010).

Measurements

The variation of overall experience value was measured by the question “How would you evaluate the overall experience on the...*...”, where * represents the North Cape or the coastal steamer respectively in the questionnaire. The overall experience value is adopted from Gallaraza and Saura (2006) and measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = extremely bad; 7 = extremely good value).

The SERVQUAL measurement was adopted from Parasuraman et al. (1988) and 21 out of the 22 original items were adjusted to the two various tourist attractions, and measured on a seven-point Likert scale by asking the respondents to consider their perception regarding the attraction described in the statements, the possible answers ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree”.

The tourist involvement scale was adopted from two different scales: the 16-item scale tested and developed by Gursoy and Gavcar (2003) was adopted in its entirety and seven items were adopted from Kyle, Absher, Norman, Hammitt, and Jodice's (2007) scale.

The "presence of other guest" construct was based on previous research and included three items: (a) "It was too crowded at this tourist site *"; (b) "Other tourists made the experience better"; and (c) "Other tourists spoil the experience". Because the internal stability of these three items was very low in our data (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.50$), we decided to remove item (b) (whose correlation values were only 0.08 and 0.11 for items (a) and (c) respectively). We then created a composite variable based on the mean score of items (a) and (c), with a Cronbach's $\alpha (\alpha) = 0.76$, and treated item (b) as a separate "positive presence of others" variable.

The surrounding nature item was measured by one item: "It is the surrounding nature that makes this experience valuable". The dimension including traditional costs such as money, time, and effort was measured by one item each. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale.

Costs as resources were measured by asking the tourists to respond in terms of the following: "For the price you paid for this trip at * would you say that it is..." (seven-point scale ranging from "very poor" to "very good"), "For the time you have spent on the visit/voyage with the * would you say it is..." (seven-point scale ranging from "not reasonable at all" to "very reasonable"), and "For the time and resources you have put into this visit/voyage, would you say it is..." (seven-point scale ranging from "not at all worthwhile" to "very worthwhile"), in order to measure value for money, time, and effort respectively.

Data Analyses

Data were analysed with SPSS version 19.0, IBM, 1989–2010, and Mplus version 5.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2007). Prior to analysis of the data, skewness and kurtosis were inspected. All variables had values in the acceptable range of a normal distribution, defined as values lower than |2| for skewness and lower than |7| for kurtosis (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). Some of the study variables had substantial numbers of missing values (varying between 68% for the item "The employees get adequate support from Hurtigruten to do their jobs well" and 91% for the item "The physical facilities are visually appealing") and we decided to replace the missing data values with imputed values calculated by the estimation maximization algorithm (e.g., McKnight, McKnight, Sidani, & Figueredo, 2007).

Exploratory factor analyses were conducted in SPSS with the maximum likelihood estimator and Promax rotation. To determine the numbers of factors to be retained, we used the so-called parallel analysis (PA) strategy (e.g., Lautenschlager, 1989). Rather than using a fixed eigenvalue to determine the number of factors to be

retained such as the K1 criterion—which suggests keeping all factors with eigenvalues greater than one—the PA takes sampling error into account when suggesting how many factors to extract. The reason is that eigenvalues fluctuate around 1.0 as a function of sampling error, which means that the K1 criterion tends to overfactorize factor models. In the PA a random set of variables—equal in number and sample size to the observed data—is created. The randomly created data are then factorized and the eigenvalues from the randomly created data are compared with those produced by the observed data. Factors are retained whenever the eigenvalue for the actual data for a given factor exceeds the eigenvalue for the related factor for the randomly created scores (Thompson, 2004, p. 36).

In our last analysis, a structural equation model (SEM) was fitted to a subset of the study variables, using maximum likelihood estimation. To evaluate the goodness-of-fit of the model, we used chi-square (χ^2), confirmatory fit index (CFI) and root mean square of approximation (RMSEA).

RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

Factor analysis was performed to test the SERVQUAL and the involvement measurements in a Northern Norway tourist experience setting. The 21 SERVQUAL items were entered into a factor analysis, and the parallel analysis suggested that all 21 items belonged to the same factor. Hence, in subsequent analysis we used a single mean score variable comprising all the 21 SERVQUAL items as the measure of service. The Cronbach's alpha for the SERVQUAL composite variable was $\alpha = 0.97$. In order to be able to create a latent SERVQUAL in a subsequent structural equation model, we also computed four SERVQUAL parcels, simply by making three mean score variables based on five SERVQUAL items, and one mean score variable based on six SERVQUAL items (see Little, Lindenberger, & Nesselroade, 1999, for the parcel procedure in SEM analyses). All of these parcels had Cronbach's alphas above 0.90, except one, for which the alpha was 0.85. The item wording and factor loadings of the SERVQUAL inventory are presented in Table 1.

We next subjected the 23 involvement items to a factor analysis, retaining the four factors with eigenvalues exceeding the eigenvalues for the randomly created variables, as suggested by the parallel analysis criterion. Four composite scores were then computed as mean scores for the variable in each of the four factors: self-presentation; attraction; identity; and risk probability, with $\alpha = 0.77$; $\alpha = 0.83$; $\alpha = 0.77$; and $\alpha = 0.75$ for the four involvement subscales respectively. The item wording, factor loadings, and the factor correlations of the involvement inventory are presented in Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations and Pearson product-moment correlations for the study variables. The two rightmost columns present the means and standard deviations for the imputed variables, and the last two rows present means and standard deviations for the variables with missing data. For means and standard deviations, the differences between the two analyses are trivial, with the largest discrepancy being 0.002 for a few of the variables. For the standard deviations, the largest discrepancy was found for the positive presence of other variables (1.52 vs. 1.65 for the imputed and not imputed variables, respectively). The mean value of natural surroundings received

Table 1. Item Wording and Factor Loadings for the Service Inventory (N = 505)

Items	FL
1. Northcape/Hurtigruten has up-to-date equipment	.52
2. The physical facilities are visually appealing	.55
3. The employees are well-dressed and appear neat	.71
4. When the employees promise to do something by a certain time they do so	.74
5. When you have problems, the employees are sympathetic and reassuring	.85
6 .The employees are dependable	.86
7. Northcape/Hurtigruten provides its services at the time it promises to do so	.86
8. Northcape/Hurtigruten is on time	.78
9. Northcape/Hurtigruten informs customers exactly when services will be performed	.81
10. You receive prompt service from the employees	.84
11. The employees at Northcape/Hurtigruten are always willing to help customers	.88
12. The employees at Northcape/Hurtigruten are never too busy to respond to customer requests promptly	.80
13. You can trust the employees	.88
14. You feel safe in your transactions with the Northcape/Hurtigruten's employees	.88
15. The employees at Northcape/Hurtigruten are polite	.87
16. The employees receive sufficient support from Northcape/Hurtigruten to do their jobs well	.78
17. You receive individual attention at Northcape/Hurtigruten	.72
18. The employees at Northcape/Hurtigruten give you personal attention	.76
19. The employees at Northcape/Hurtigruten know what your needs are	.81
20. Northcape/Hurtigruten has your best interests at heart	.81
21. Northcape/Hurtigruten has convenient operating hours	.72

Note. FL = Factor loadings estimated by maximum likelihood factorization.

Table 2. Item Wording, Factor Loadings and Factor Correlations for the Involvement Inventory (N = 505)

Items	Factors			
	SP	Att	Iden	Ris
1. Travelling like this (*) is one of the most enjoyable things I do		.87		
2. Travelling like this (*) is very important to me		.89		
3. Travelling like this (*) is one of the most satisfying things I do		.91		
4. I enjoy discussing experiences like * with my friends		.42		
5. Most of my friends identify themselves in some way or another with this type of travel (*)		.30		
6. You can tell a lot about a person by the vacation destination he or she chooses	.58			
7. Travelling like this (*) says a lot about who I am	.75			
8. Travelling like this (*) means others see me the way I want them to see me	.71			
9. When I choose a vacation destination (here: *) it is not a big deal if I make a mistake	.25			
10. It is really annoying to purchase a vacation that is not suitable				.22
11. If after I have bought a holiday my choice proves to be poor, I would be really upset.				.38
12. Whenever one buys a holiday one never really knows whether it is the one that should have been bought				.63
13. When I face a variety of holiday choices, I always feel a bit at a loss	.21			.61
14. Choosing a vacation destination is rather complicated				.74
15. When one purchases a holiday one is never certain of one's choice				.78
16. The holiday I buy gives a hint of the type of man/woman I am	.90			
17. The holiday you buy tells a little bit about you	.92			
18. It gives me pleasure to purchase a holiday			.59	
19. Buying a holiday is like buying a gift for myself			.73	
20. A vacation is something of a pleasure to me			.76	
21. I attach great importance to vacations			.76	
22. One could say that holiday destinations interest me a lot			.59	
23. A vacation destination is a topic that leaves me totally indifferent			-.35	.24
Attractiveness	.44			
Identity	.42	.38		
Risk probability	.36	.02	.13	

Note. Maximum likelihood factorization; SP = Self-presentation; Att = Attractiveness; Iden = Identity; Ris = Risk probability; Only factor loadings > 0.20 are shown.

Table 3. Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations (DS) for the Study Variables with Missing Data Imputation (Above the Diagonal; N = 505) and for Variables without Missing Data Imputation (Below the Diagonal; N = 369-451)

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	Mean	SD
1. Value	1.00	.18	.41	.27	-.01	.45	-.08	.02	.23	.23	.42	.53	5.65	1.08
2. SelfPres	.20	1.00	.51	.35	.31	.18	.06	.16	.17	.12	-.02	.15	4.06	1.25
3. Att	.45	.50	1.00	.36	.13	.33	.05	.16	.30	.11	.22	.35	4.79	1.09
4. Identity	.28	.33	.35	1.00	.12	.33	.02	.04	.23	.06	.14	.21	5.41	0.97
5. Risk	-.01	.30	.10	.11	1.00	.05	.27	.14	.06	.05	-.06	-.03	3.90	1.15
6. Service	.44	.18	.33	.36	.05	1.00	-.04	.10	.31	.23	.30	.30	5.62	0.92
7. Crowd	-.08	.05	.06	.02	.29	-.04	1.00	.10	.12	.04	-.08	-.11	3.53	1.46
8. PPO	.02	.17	.17	.04	.14	.11	.11	1.00	.05	.13	.00	.07	3.66	1.52
9. Nature	.25	.16	.31	.25	.04	.32	.13	.05	1.00	-.03	.17	.12	6.16	1.16
10. Price	.23	.11	.12	.07	.04	.24	.04	.16	-.03	1.00	.21	.28	3.75	1.57
11. Time	.41	-.02	.23	.14	-.08	.32	-.09	.00	.19	.20	1.00	.48	5.40	1.35
12. Res	.53	.17	.37	.22	-.04	.32	-.12	.09	.13	.28	.48	1.00	5.39	1.10
Mean	5.65	4.08	4.79	5.43	3.92	5.65	3.54	3.67	6.16	3.75	5.41	5.39		
SD	1.14	1.36	1.16	1.06	1.29	0.97	1.64	1.75	1.26	1.66	1.42	1.16		

Note. Method used for data imputation was estimation maximization: Value = Overall value; SelfPres = the involvement subscale of Self-presentation; Att = the involvement subscale of Attraction; Iden = the involvement subscale of Identity; Ris = the involvement subscale of Risk probability; PPO = Positive presence of others; Nature = nature makes the experience valuable; Res = Resources. Significant correlations in bold type.

the highest overall score (M = 6.16), followed by overall value of the experience (M = 5.65) and personal service (M = 5.62).

Turning to the correlations, all significant coefficients among the imputed variables were also significant among the non-imputed variables, and all the non-significant correlations among the imputed variables were also non-significant among the non-imputed variables. Differences in effect size between the two data sets were in other words triv-

Table 4. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients (B), Standard Errors (S.E.), Standardized Regression Coefficients (Beta) t-Values and p-Values for a Multiple Regression Analysis with Overall Value as the Dependent Variable (N = 505)

Independent variables	B	S.E	Beta	t-Value	p-Value
Self-presentation	-0.01	0.04	-.01	-0.30	.776
Attraction	0.18	0.04	.18	4.16	.000
Identity	0.06	0.04	.05	1.31	.192
Risk perception	-0.02	0.04	-.02	-0.45	.653
Service	0.22	0.05	.19	4.67	.000
Crowded	-0.02	0.03	-.03	-0.92	.356
PPO	-0.04	0.03	-.05	-1.48	.139
Nature	0.05	0.04	.06	1.49	.138
Price	0.04	0.03	.06	1.69	.092
Time	0.11	0.03	.13	3.27	.001
Resources	0.31	0.04	.31	7.41	.000

Note. Adjusted R² = 0.41; PPO = Positive presence of others.

ial, with the largest discrepancy being 0.03 (between Service quality and Identity).

Multiple Regression

A multiple regression analysis was deployed to assess the overall experience value by the other study variables. The overall regression model was highly significant ($F [11,493] = 32.32, p < 0.001$) and explained 41% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.41$). **Table 4** shows that attractiveness (a sub-dimension of involvement) predicts overall value uniquely ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.001$) and so does the service variable ($\beta = 0.19, p < 0.001$). Similarly, time and resources contributed uniquely explained variance to the model as well, with standardized regressions weights being $\beta = 0.13$ and $\beta = 0.31$ respectively (both p 's < 0.001).

Structural Equation Model

In our final analysis we developed a causal model that included the variables that significantly accounted for variance in the overall value variable in the multiple regression analyses (**Table 4**). The multi-item measures (attractiveness and service) were modeled as latent variables, and the one-item measures (overall value, time, and resources) were modeled as manifest variable. See **Figure 1** below.

The model and its estimated standardized path coefficients (betas) are graphically presented in **Figure 2** below and show that service, involvement, resources, and time are all modelled as predictors of overall value. Service is further taken to predict involvement, resources, and time. Finally, and in line with the idea that co-creation is a consequence of active participation in producing tourist experiences such as involvement, resources and time use are modelled as predictors of attraction (as a sub-dimension of involvement). As is the case with most other SEM analyses, the directions of the causal paths in our model are assumed and not empirically tested (e.g., **Bollen, 1988**). The model depicted in **Figure 2**, which has four indicators making up the service factor, and four making up the involvement factor (two of the error terms in the indicators in the involvement factor were freed up to be correlated with each other) fitted the data reasonably well, with $\chi^2 (46, N = 505) = 114.62$ ($p < 0.001$), CFI = 0.98 and RMSEA = 0.05 [CI = 0.04–0.07].

Figure 2 shows that all the predictor variables in the model directly influenced the overall value variable, with $\beta = 0.23$; $\beta = 0.32$; $\beta = 0.14$; and $\beta = 0.20$; for service, resources, time, and involvement respectively (all = $p < 0.001$). Additionally, both resources and time were directly affected by the perceived level of service ($\beta = 0.29$ for resources and $\beta = 0.31$ for time; both = $p < 0.001$). Service ($\beta = 0.21, p < 0.001$) and resources ($\beta = 0.30, p < 0.001$) further affected involvement directly, whereas no significant effect was found from time use to involvement

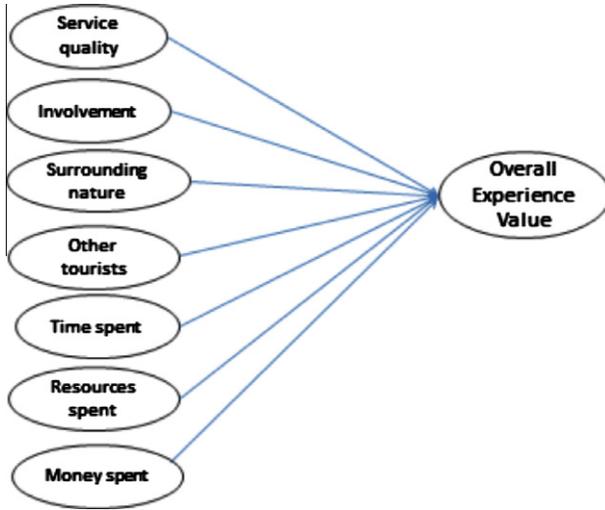


Figure 1. Model of Tourist Operant Resources on Overall Experience Value

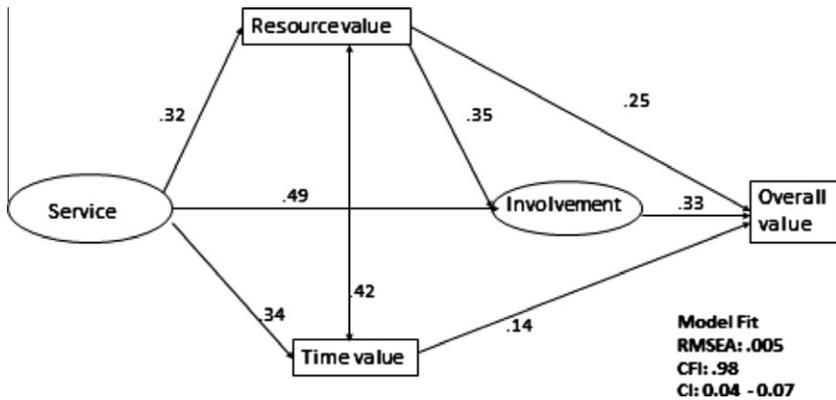


Figure 2. Model of Tourist Operant Resources Effect on Overall Experience Value

($\beta = 0.04$, $p = 0.484$). Time and resources were moderately correlated ($r = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$).

DISCUSSION

This article explores tourist resources as value-adding elements in tourist experiences in addition to service quality, the surrounding nature, and other guests, and subsequently tests the variables on overall experience value. The major finding is that the tourist resource base— involvement, time, and effort, along with attraction quality

(one of the service quality factors)—explains significant variance in overall experience value. This result indicates that the co-creation of value is, to a large extent, about tourist participation in producing the experience through involvement and the spending of time and effort in producing the experience.

That being so, tourist resources such as involvement, time, and effort, are important inputs in our measures of overall experience value. They should not be treated solely as tourist cost factors. One of the fundamental ideas in the service-dominant logic suggested by Vargo and Lusch (2004) is the idea that people participate in producing their own well-being, and in tourism they do so because it is appealing to the tourist. Since time and effort affect overall experience value positively, the present work supports the idea of Vargo and Lusch (2006, p. 54) that operant resources—the knowledge and skills that provide good experiences—matter. It is because they influence tourist well-being that they should be considered as operant resources.

Involvement is also about tourist participation in the production of one's own well-being. Altogether, two of the five involvement factors, self-identity and attraction involvement, explain substantial experience value variance. This suggests that tourists are concerned about amassing pleasurable experiences while in the role of a tourist (Kim et al., 2012), and they are motivated to express the importance of their experiences to others. Self-identity and attraction values might be seen as fundamental tourism motivations, particularly for those travelling off the beaten track (e.g., adventure) (Desforges, 2000). For many tourists, work and everyday life entail obligatory and monotonous routines in which individuals may find it difficult to pursue self-realization (Giddens, 1990).

A tourist experience might help people to realize identity fulfillment. For example, nature-based tourists in Norway report finding their alternative or extended selves by visiting specific attractions in the cold, rural High North, and therefore hold a self-identity as different and unique tourists (Prebensen et al., 2003). The findings of the present study are in accordance with those of Haggard and Williams (1992), who suggested that leisure activities offer identity-affirming opportunities. They are also in the spirit of Melnick (1993) and Wakefield (1995) regarding the symbolic nature of the tourism environment.

“Nature” proved to be the most important experience element for the tourists in this study, confirming other studies on Norway as a nature-based destination (Larsen, Brun, & Ogaard, 2009; Mehmetoglu, 2005, 2007; Prebensen et al., 2003). The fact that nature is important for tourists but does not seem to affect overall experience value might reflect the well-known dual factor theory, hygiene versus motivation factors, first presented by Herzberg (1959). Nature—when it is as expected, in terms of its breathtaking, beautiful, or stunning form—might be taken for granted and hence not affect experience value while people are actually in the environment. If the nature is disappointing, however, according to Herzberg's dual theory, the dimension can be expected to have a negative impact on the experience value.

The finding in the present work seems to correspond with the suggestion of Chan and Baum (2007) that true satisfiers are related, primarily, to intangible elements, whereas dissatisfiers are primarily related to tangible elements.

The fact that nature does not explain overall trip value variance may be an artifact of nature being a strong motivator for travelling to Norway in the first place. When tourists are surrounded by nature as they expected it to be and participate in co-creation of experience value on top of that, they are more focused on the experience of the moment, their involvement in it, their time and effort in being there, and the personal service at the attraction. Since the personal service factor received a fairly high score in addition to affecting overall experience value, providers should aim to develop their products to allow tourists to optimize the nature experience and facilitate their participation in co-creation processes in order to help them feel unique and special.

Interestingly, in our data set, other guests were not reported as being very important for individual tourist experience quality as part of the experience value. It could be that because the region of Northern Norway is relatively sparsely populated it is not typically a destination characterized by crowds. As a result, the presence of other tourists may have a less direct impact on tourist experiences and therefore have a minimal effect on their overall sense of experience value.

As Belk (1988) suggests, people employ many self-extension processes; visiting certain tourist attractions might be one of them. Allowing themselves access to the object's symbolic properties might be an important part of the value construct in tourist experiences, a kind of self-extension. Tourists visiting Northern Norway have already been reported to use attractions there to enhance their identity (Rosenberg, 1979), essentially using the symbolic nature of the attraction to enhance the trip value.

The present results may also reflect aspects of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and social categorization theory (Turner, 1985), which includes two components: (1) personal identity (identity related to a person's individual sense of self), and (2) social identity (identity related to groups to which a person belongs or is affiliated). These theories claim that situational demands can activate particular aspects of identity which, in turn, have an impact on the way an individual thinks, feels, and/or behaves. Thus, individuals can respond to the context in ways consistent with their personal identity or with one of the many possible aspects of their social identity. For example, a tourist visiting nature-based attractions in the High North may see him/herself as a nature-based tourist and/or part of a tourist group heading for special tourist experiences (Brewer, 1991; Deaux, 1996).

Furthermore, individuals seek to maintain positive self-worth (Dunning, 2007; Steele, 1988; Tesser, 2000). They strive to maintain positive self-views not only via the individual self but also via the social self (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Self-image congruence (Sirgy, 1986) involves matching consumer self-concept (actual self, ideal self, etc.) with the user image (or 'personality') of a given tourist experience. Visiting certain attractions in Northern Norway may function as a means of

restoring feelings of self by being different from other tourists or not being a typical tourist (Prebensen et al., 2003).

CONCLUSION

This study outlines important aspects of the experience value construct in tourism, and tests the effect of various experience elements on overall experience value. In particular, it outlines and tests dimensions traditionally seen as costs for the tourist effecting negatively on overall evaluations (e.g., time and effort spent by the consumer), as positive valued in a tourist context effecting overall evaluations positively. Tourists' personal resource base, e.g., involvement, time, and effort, outperform traditional service quality measures and explain a substantial proportion of the variance in overall experience value. Yet only two of the involvement measures, one of the service quality measures (personal service), and the time and effort spent on the trip, have a significant effect on overall experience value. The study results show the importance of acknowledging tourist operant resources (Vargo & Lusch, 2008) as important value-enhancing variables in tourist experiences.

As self-identity and attraction involvement significantly affect overall experience value, it can be speculated that tourists are concerned about whether the choice of vacation experience is in line with or even extends their self-image (Desforges, 2000; Sirgy, 1986). Visiting specific nature-based attractions in the cold, rural High North may reflect an identity as different and unique tourists (Prebensen et al., 2003), reflecting the tendency people have to see themselves as better or different from the group (mean) they belong to. This effect is depicted as the "the self-serving bias" phenomenon (Koenig, 1997).

The results of the present study also illustrate the socio-cognitive processes by which tourists may internalize the symbolic functions of co-creating experience value, and further explain the social psychology underpinning of tourist behaviour. Being involved and participating actively in tourist experience reveals the tourist's skills and knowledge in addition to his or her motivation, interest and preferences. Hence, taking part in value co-creation of tourist experiences may be part of a number of different motivations in diverse situations (Holt, 1995). As Schouten (1991), for instance, claims, much of the dynamism of consumption stems from consumers seeking to reinvent themselves in order to take on desired roles or to participate in desired social worlds. Also of importance may be indicating that while playing and enjoying in the moment is of importance in tourism motivations such as strengthening identity and image formation.

The present work reveals that despite surrounding nature being of huge importance to tourists visiting Northern Norway, it does not affect overall experience value. Authors put forward different explanations for this result, e.g., that nature may reflect Herzberg's hygiene

factor (1959), that nature functions as a stage or scene, or that being in nature over time makes it less exciting. Accordingly, future studies should include tourist perceptions of nature in different situations and time frames.

In that tourist involvement, time, and effort affect the explained variance in tourists' overall value perception positively, they should be treated in future research as resources as well as costs. Likewise, the industry should acknowledge this in the way they develop products to attract tourists. The results from the present work indicate that businesses interested in providing highly valued tourist experiences would benefit from involving tourists to a greater extent in the co-creation of tourist experiences, focusing particularly on tourist self-identity and attraction values. In order to attract people to visit Northern Norway, nature should figure prominently, as should the role of the tourist in this environment as being unique and different from the role of typical mass tourists elsewhere (Prebensen et al., 2003).^A

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