



Increasing experiential value and relationship quality: An investigation of pop-up dining experiences

Scott Taylor Jr.^{*}, Robin B. DiPietro, Kevin Kam Fung So

School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, University of South Carolina, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Pop-up restaurants
Experiential value
Relationship quality
Behavioral intentions
Involvement
Variety seeking
Generations

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the relationships between experiential value-relationship quality, and relationship quality-behavioral intentions within the context of the growing pop-up restaurant industry (pop-ups). The current study also assessed the moderating roles of generation, variety seeking behavior and involvement regarding dining out. Results indicated that the experiential value of pop-ups is leading to increased levels of relationship quality, as reflected in satisfaction and trust toward pop-ups, and this is leading to an increase in behavioral intentions, specifically intention to spread positive WOM, return intentions and an increased WTP for a meal at a pop-up. Furthermore, significant differences were found between groups based on generation, variety seeking and involvement. Findings are discussed in terms of both academic and practitioner implications.

1. Introduction

In recent years, diners in the United States have been visiting restaurants with increasing frequency (Anon., 2016). This increase in dining out has, in turn, influenced diner expectations. More specifically, it has led to an increased desire amongst diners for unique and memorable dining experiences (Jin et al., 2012; Walls et al., 2011). To accommodate these desires, the foodservice industry is seeing some significant trends emerging. One trend that has been recognized by members of the American Culinary Federation is the pop-up restaurant or pop-up dining event (National Restaurant Association, 2016). These events, further referred to as pop-ups, are indicative of this growing trend of providing interesting experiences and foods. They typically offer guests new experiences, often including dining in a unique location, along with sampling an unexpected menu provided by an established or up-and-coming chef with whom they may have the opportunity to interact (Eaton, 2014; Anon., 2014a, 2014b).

By providing these experiences, the pop-up industry is seeing strong growth, as has been noted by companies such as Eventbrite and Dinner Lab Inc. (Eaton, 2014; Krummert, 2015; Anon., 2014a, 2014b). According to Eventbrite, an online marketing and ticketing company that helps organize events worldwide, pop-ups experienced an 82% growth in 2014 (Anon., 2014a, 2014b). Pop-ups tend to draw in consumers of the Millennial generation, as well as experiential diners, or those individuals who crave exciting dining experiences along with great meals (Anon., 2014a, 2014b). Some diners are seeking out and visiting pop-

ups because they provide an increased level of experiential value that traditional restaurants aren't providing.

The importance of experiential value is well documented in the hospitality literature. Previous studies have indicated that creating value by enhancing the consumer experience signifies an effort to increase relationship quality (Han and Ryu, 2009; Hyun, 2010; Wu and Liang, 2009), which influences consumer behavior and loyalty (Hyun, 2010; Jin et al., 2013; Mathwick et al., 2001).

Although the relationships between experiential value, relationship quality, and consumer behavior have gained attention in the hospitality and tourism literature, there remains a gap in the literature regarding how such theoretical relationships hold across various consumer characteristics (Jin et al., 2013), and to date there has been little academic research conducted to investigate these relationships in relation to the unique nature of pop-ups. Considering that consumer behaviors often differ depending upon various consumer characteristics (Han and Ryu, 2006; Jin et al., 2013), it is important to assess how theoretically relevant consumer characteristics may affect the direction as well as the magnitude of these relationships. Therefore, building on prior research (Jin et al., 2013; Mathwick et al., 2001; Wu and Liang, 2009), this study sets forth to assess how experiential value contributes to the formation of relationship quality and behavioral intentions. More specifically, the current study seeks to assess pop-ups as compared to traditional restaurants. It also examines the potential moderating roles of consumers' generation, variety seeking behavior and involvement with dining out. The ensuing section reviews the literature relevant to this investigation.

^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: stt@email.sc.edu (S. Taylor), rdipietr@mailbox.sc.edu (R.B. DiPietro), kevinso@hrsm.sc.edu (K.K.F. So).

2. Review of literature

Although pop-ups are emerging as a recent trend in the foodservice industry, there has been limited academic research published on the topic. Over the past decade, the retail industry has experienced a similar trend with the rise of pop-up retail that can be used as the foundation for defining pop-up restaurants and pop-up dining experiences (Gordon, 2004; Kim et al., 2010).

2.1. Pop-up retail

Pop-up retail has been described as entailing highly experiential, brand or product focused marketing environments that exist for a short time and are typically smaller venues that foster interaction between guests and brand representatives (Gordon, 2004). A key feature of pop-up retail is their temporary nature, where a store appears and disappears quickly (Kim et al., 2010). The core goal of pop-up retail is the focus on experiential marketing techniques and often sales do not occur in these new retail settings (Gordon, 2004; Niehm et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2010). Experiential marketing involves strengthening the brand's essence through a set of tangible and interactive experiences that has evolved through a change in consumers' preference for engagement in the marketplace (Gilmore and Pine, 2002; Anon., 2004).

2.2. Pop-up restaurants & pop-up dining events (Pop-ups)

Drawing on definitions for pop-up retail, the practitioner literature provides similar definitions for pop-up restaurants, suggesting that they are temporary occurrences that allow guests to try new and different dishes from chefs who are seeking to share their food in a non-traditional and less financially burdening environment (Bruni, 2011; Coffey, 2012; Eaton, 2014; Anon., 2014a, 2014b).

These events allow chefs to test new menu items that cater to a different kind of guest. Zach Kupperman, co-founder of Dinner Lab Inc. refers to pop-ups as 'social dining' where the focus is on feedback from the guests to help chefs develop menus for future use (Eaton, 2014). An Eventbrite survey indicated that pop-up dining events draw the experiential diner – an individual who craves a new and exciting dining experience and not just an amazing meal (Anon., 2014a, 2014b). This definition of the experiential diner is closely related to Finkelstein's (1989) definition of the existential diner who is devoted to trying new foods and innovative dining experiences. Both definitions indicate that these diners are individuals who are actively seeking new and novel dining experiences and foods.

Based on these definitions, it is evident that variety seeking is a core goal for customers visiting pop-ups, especially as these events can have hefty price tags. Dinner Lab Inc., a prominent members-only program that hosts pop-up events in 24 U.S. cities charges over \$125 for annual memberships and roughly \$50-\$60 per event. (Eaton, 2014). Eventbrite found that customers would be willing to spend an average of \$98 for a ticket to a pop-up (Anon., 2014a, 2014b).

Considering the information provided above, along with the growing demand for new and unique dining experiences, the following section provides background on the concept of experiential value (Mathwick et al., 2001; Jin et al., 2013).

2.3. Experiential value

The overall consumption experience is an important aspect of consumers' value perceptions, especially within service industries (Keng et al., 2007; Mathwick et al., 2001). In this sense, Holbrook (1994) defines consumer value as a preference judgement. Similarly, Wu and Liang (2009) support that value is derived from product or service usage. However, to fully understand how consumers value products and services, researchers have suggested that a multidimensional conceptualization of value perceptions is needed as it allows for specific

dimensions of value to be perceived in relation to each other rather than in isolation (Mathwick et al., 2001; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). Building on the seminal work of Holbrook (1994, 1999) and the typology of consumer value, Mathwick et al. (2001) developed the experiential value scale (EVS). Mathwick et al. (2001) note that experiential value perceptions are based on interactions involving either direct usage or distant evaluations of goods or services that provide the basis for consumer preferences. Jin et al. (2013) adapted the scale to fit within a restaurant setting. The scale consists of four dimensions related to consumers' perceptions of experiential value: aesthetics, escapism, service excellence, and customer return on investment (CROI) (Jin et al., 2013; Mathwick et al., 2001), which are discussed next.

Aesthetic value refers to the congruence and unity of physical objects regarding visual appeal and entertainment in terms of overall performance (Jin et al., 2013). Visual appeal represents the relevant visual aspects of the environment, whereas entertainment is the aspects of the service or environment that arouse the consumer (Jin et al., 2013). Escapism refers to an aspect generated by the consumer themselves and involves having fun, whereas service excellence represents the degree that services meet customer expectations (Jin et al., 2013; Keng et al., 2007). The fourth dimension, CROI, refers to the relative amount of utility the customer receives from a transaction in relation to their money, time, and effort (Jin et al., 2013; Mathwick et al., 2001). Whereas the original scale included four dimensions, when considering the foodservice industry, for the current study a fifth dimension, food and beverage excellence, was added since food and beverages are fundamental components of the dining experience. This dimension relates to the extent to which the food and beverage consumed during the dining experience meet customer expectations.

Based on the framework provided by Jin et al. (2013) the current study seeks to assess the influence that these five dimensions of experiential value have on relationship quality at pop-ups compared to traditional restaurants. Furthermore, this study seeks to assess the subsequent influence that relationship quality has on various aspects of behavioral intentions. The following sections present the theoretical support for linkages between relationship quality and the other constructs investigated in this study.

2.4. Relationship quality

Relationship quality refers to the strength of the relationship between a consumer and the service provider as determined by the consumer, and it has been conceptualized as a higher-order construct that consists of trust and satisfaction (Crosby et al., 1990; Kim et al., 2006). Trust provides comfort to customers and refers to the level of confidence a customer has in a service provider's integrity and reliability (Jin et al., 2013; Moorman et al., 1992) whereas satisfaction refers to the ability of the service provider to meet customer expectations (Jin et al., 2013).

Previous studies within the foodservice industry have shown that various aspects of experiential value positively influence consumers trust and satisfaction (Jin et al., 2013). The three most influential aspects of the dining experience regarding satisfaction are food quality, service quality, and the service environment (Ha and Jang, 2010; Han and Ryu, 2006, 2009; Jin et al., 2013). Furthermore, Jin et al. (2013) found that aesthetics, service excellence and CROI all had significant positive influences on relationship quality. Interestingly, escapism had a significant negative influence on relationship quality. However, given the specific context of pop-ups and the reliance on unusual or unexpected dining venues and overall experience (Anon., 2014a, 2014b), the current study proposes that each of the five aspects of experiential value will have a positive influence on relationship quality of pop-ups compared to traditional restaurants. Thus, based on the findings of the studies outlined above the following hypotheses are proposed to investigate the relationships between the five dimensions of experiential value and relationship quality:

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7418968>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7418968>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)