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What Happens After Consumption? Role of Autobiographical Memory Experience, Nostalgia and Evangelizing

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the research work is to widen the possibilities of autobiographical memory experience in the service marketing literature. The focus is on the role of autobiographical memory experience in post consumption stage. By theory driven approach the study explores the relationship with overall customer experience on Autobiographical Memory Experience, Nostalgia and Word of Mouth Behavior. Very little research has been done on autobiographical memory's impact on information processing (Baumgartner 1992). A study on 355 theme park consumers revealed that the core customer experience would influence the autobiographical memory experience, nostalgia and word of mouth behavior. This article initially focuses on the complexity of services, consumption experience stages and how the post consumption stage is being formed, further it explores on the role of behavioral intentions. Due to the complexity of services and the fading memory of unpleasant experiences (Cason 1932, Barlow 1955, Thomson 1985 and Walker, Vogl, & Thompson 1997) Managers and Researchers must understand the influencers of autobiographical memory experience, since it is a very important factor, which impacts the evangelizing nature of customers.

Keywords: Nostalgia, memorable experience, autobiographical memory, word of mouth.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”
– Maya Angelou

1. INTRODUCTION

Service marketers face different challenges than those who market products and goods. The reason behind the complexity is the very nature and the uniqueness of the Services i.e. intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability of production and consumption (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). There are three

different type of goods: search goods, experience goods and credence goods (Rathmell, 1966; Zeithaml, 1981). A consumer can identify the attribute of the Search goods (Cloth, Jewelry, and Furniture etc) before consuming or using them and he can identify the attribute of Experience goods (restaurant meals and vacation) only after purchase and consumption. But even after consumption, it's tough to identify the quality or attributes of credence goods (medical diagnosis, automobile repair). Marketing literature has tools to measure the quality of Goods and Services (Parasuraman et. al., 1985). Much research has been conducted with the help of those tools. But critical review has been pointed out on the inability of measurement tools capacity to measure those attributes (Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2005).

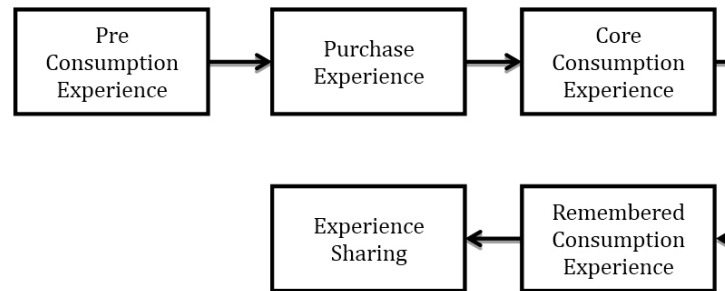
Every Goods and Services provides experience (A BMW car provides its owner driving experience). Every consumption activity provides experience. Favorable and unfavorable customer experiences seem to be more and more important in forming quality perceptions (Edvardsson, 2005). Pine and Gilmore (1999) said that all experiences are memorable. So by the memorable factor it can be identify that the service is good or not. A study (Sherman, 1991) suggested that cherished objects and other memorabilia as "reminiscentia,". So it can be argued that the emotional event can induce the memorable cognitive factors which is autobiographical memory experience.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recently, researchers are interested in delineating the impact of experiences on post-consumption variables such as satisfaction and behavioral intentions. However, most of these studies have treated experience as a higher-order construct; (Ayob, Wahid, & Omar, 2013; Grace & O'Cass, 2004; J. Joško Brakus, Bernd H. Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Loureiro, 2014; Triantafillidou & Siomkos, 2013), implying that the different dimensions that comprise consumption experience have the same effect on the dependent variables like satisfaction, Perceived Quality, Perceived Value, Image and Loyalty. Very few research studies have been performed on Nostalgia and the author did not find any article related to remembered experience in marketing literature.

Research on consumption experience entered in to the Marketing literature in 1982 by Holbrook and Hirschman's historical Article (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). During these 3 decades, numerous articles have been published to measure the value of experience. After the four stages of Consumption Experience (Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2004), (Carù & Cova, 2003) provides more understanding to Experiential Stages of Consumption.

- The pre-consumption experience, which deals with searching products, planning the shopping, day-dreaming about the shopping, foreseeing or imagining the purchase experience;
- The purchase experience which derives from choice of product or services, payment which includes waiting in the ques, packaging of products, the encounter with the service staff and the service scape;
- The core consumption experience, including the feeling, the satiety, the satisfaction/dissatisfaction, the irritation/flow, the transformation;
- The remembered consumption experience and the nostalgia experience activates photographs to re-live a past experience, which is based on accounts of stories and on arguments with friends about the past, and which moves towards the classification of memories.



Hence it can be argued that even remembering and recalling the previous experience is also one of the stages of consumption which leads to post consumption activities like nostalgia, word of Mouth and repatronize Intention (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) Amalia Triantfillidou (2013). Scanty researches have been done on post consumption experience stage, especially in the cognitive factors of customers.

The post consumption experience stage includes Enjoyment (Holbrook 2000), Entertainment (Holbrook 2000), learning new skills (Poullsson and Kale 2004), nostalgia (Holbrook and Schindler 2003), fantasizing and evangelizing (Holbrook 2000).

3. THEORY BUILDING AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Consumption Experience

Recent definitions of customer experience include that “The customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer’s involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, and spiritual)” (Gentile et. al. 2007). It induces the response of customer’s cognitive, emotional, social, and physical responses.

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According to the Theory of nature of the Past, (Mead 1929) the past experience is stored in memory. In his Philosophy of the present (Mead 1932) says “The past in that sense is in the present; and, in what we call conscious experience, its presence is exhibited in memory” and in his paradoxical wisdom he said that the past is revocable. Edwardson in his Guru’s view noted that “the service experience is defined as the service encounter and/or service process that creates the customer’s cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses which result in a mental mark, a memory (in line with Johnston and Clark 2001)”. All experiences are memorable (Pine and Gilmore 1998). Some experiences are more emotion loaded than others. When the intensity of emotional experience increases, the more likely it is to be remembered, and it can be long lasting. “If someone has a really good or bad experience, they are going to remember it for a long time” (Le Doux, 1996).

3.2. Autobiographical Memory Experience

Remembered experience is manifested in the demand form Memorabilia (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Triantafillidou & Siomkos 2013). For Remembered consumption experience, the author would like to borrow the concept from experimental psychology, called Autobiographical Memory Experience. “The properties of autobiographical memory include recollection, belief in the memory’s accuracy, vividness, linguistic/narrative form, rehearsal, and age” (Jennifer et.al 2004).

It is defined as “memory of information related to self” (Brewer 1986); memory about one’s own life (Neisser 1988); episodic memory (Tulving 1972); personal memory (Brewer 1986; Brewer & Pani 1983) It also defined as “memory of the self-interacting with others in the service of both short-term and long-term goals that define our being and our purpose in the world” (Conway et. al. 2004; Fivush 2008; McAdams 1992, 2001; Pillemer 1998). “It is a human form of memory that moves beyond recall of experienced events, to assimilate perspective, interpretation, and evaluation across self, other, and time to create a personal history” (Fivush 2011).

The work of Baum Gartner (1992) shows the impact of autobiographical memory in information processing.

There are two categories of Autobiographical reminiscence; oral and silent reminiscence (Havighurst & Glasser, 1972). Oral reminiscence is talking about the previous encounters and experiences and silent reminiscence in thinking and reliving the previous experiences. The author strongly believes that oral reminiscence leads to word of mouth behavior. According to Richins, 1984 (cited in Sundaram et. al., 1998). “WOM is a ‘form of interpersonal communication among consumers concerning their personal experiences with a firm or a product’ or a service”, Anderson said that Word of mouth could be the outcome of Consumers experience. Otto and Ritche said the experiences are shared later. An emotional event is also more likely to result in mental rumination, social sharing (Rime, 1995) and emotional disclosure (Pennebaker, 1995), further reinforcing the effect of “word of mouth” (Zeithaml, 1981). This replicated and extended the earlier findings of Cason (1932) and Barlow (1955), who also found the intensity of unpleasant memories to fade more quickly than that of pleasant memories. Since the long lasting capacity of the pleasant memories makes consumers remember and recall the previous favorable experience, share it with others and spread positive word of mouth.

3.3. Nostalgia

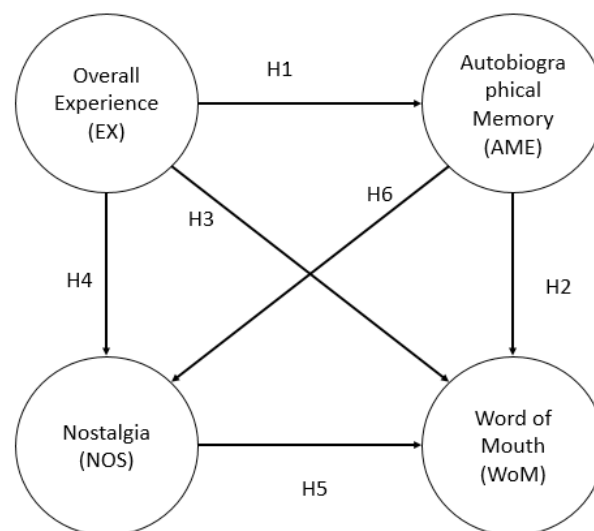
“Nostalgia is an affective process that can go along with autobiographical memory” (Batcho, 2007; Leboe & Ansons, 2006; Sedikides, Wildschut, Arndt, & Routledge, 2008; Wildschut, Sedikides, Arndt, & Routledge, 2006). Nostalgia is a complex emotion and Autobiographical reminiscence is a cognitive activity. Davis (1979) defines Nostalgia as “a positively toned evocation of a lived past” and Holbrook (1993) defined it as “one’s internal longing for a past event”. Since nostalgia is the outcome of personal experience, it can be proposed that the customer experience has a positive effect on the nostalgia experience. Since nostalgic feel or experience is a state of mind, it can be argued that nostalgia experience is an antecedent of word of mouth behavior. Bruwer J & Alant(2009)proposed that when intensity of nostalgic experience can increase the intention to discuss the experience with other tourists.

Thus, the following hypothesis can be made

- H1:** Overall experience positively influences Autobiographical Memory Experience.
- H2:** Autobiographical Memory is positively associated with Word of Mouth.
- H3:** Customer Experience is positively linked with Word of Mouth Behavior
- H4:** Customer experience influences nostalgic experience
- H5:** Nostalgic experience has strong direct relationship with word of mouth behavior
- H6:** Autobiographical Memory Experience influences Nostalgic Experience

3.4. Research Model

In the light of above discussion, a model has been suggested showing the relationship between various constructs.



Note: EX, Overall Experience; NOS, Nostalgia Experience; WoM, Word of Mouth Behaviour; AME, Autobiographical Memory Experience;

3.5. Measures

The initial item pool of the survey was collected with the support of existing literature and expert opinions. Autobiographical Memory Experience was measured by a 14 items scale, which was developed by Jennifer et. al., 2003. Nostalgia intensity was measured using Holak and Havlena 1998. WoM was measured by 4 items which was developed by Harrison Walker 2001. The scale of Oh et. al., has been adopted for the overall experience scale. All items were measured using seven point Likert scale.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Sampling

Theme park visitors has been identified as the target audience as it is believed that they can be ambiguous than other service customer. The instrument was tested with the help of two professors and 5 research scholars. Initial pilot study has been done with 20 university students and few modifications has been made in the

Table 1
Constructs and Source of scale

<i>Latent Construct</i>	<i>No of Items</i>	<i>Sources</i>
Overall Experience	4	Oh et. al., 2007, Hosany S, Martin D (2012)
Autobiographical Memory Experience	14	Jenniffer et. al., 2004,
Nostalgic Intensity	4	Holak and Havlena 1998, Amalia Triantfillidou (2013).
Word of Mouth Activity	4	Harrison Walker (2001), Amalia Triantfillidou (2013).

nstrument. A well-established shopping complex has been chosen for collecting data using the mall intercept method. The researcher first approached the respondent to qualify and check his or her interest to take part in this survey. Primary data collections took place for four days and in total 395 data were collected with a paper based questionnaire. Out of which 40 were removed for suspicious patterns and data inconsistency. The analysis of the demographic variable is given in Table 1. The respondents were between 21 and 56 years and the mean age for the respondents was 28 years. The sample comprised of 60% Male and 40% female. In addition, the data was distributed normally.

4.2. Harman’s Single Factor Test for Common Method Bias

Harman’s single factor test (Podsakoff et. al., 2003) was carried out to identify the biasness of respondents as a criterion and predictor variable is gathered from the same person. Findings revealed that the single factor is 35.30% variance, which is less than 50% and it is acceptable. It can be concluded from the statistical test that, common method bias is not significant.

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Gender		
Male	216	60.8
Female	139	39.2
Age		
18-24	85	23.9
25-34	80	22.5
35-44	71	20.0
45-54	62	17.5
55+	53	14.9
Missing	4	1.1
Education		
School Certificate	40	11.3
Diploma Certificate	116	32.7
Under Graduate Degree	76	21.4
Post Graduate Degree	81	22.8
Professional	42	11.8
Salary		
Less than 3000\$	42	11.8
3001-5000 \$	48	13.5
More than 5000\$	109	30.7
Missing (not interested to reveal)	156	43.9

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Visited Time		
< Less than a year back	17	4.8
1-2 Years	37	10.4
2-3 Years	90	25.4
3-4- Years	57	16.1
More than 4 Years back	154	43.4

Table 3
Descriptive and Standardized regression weights of final scale

<i>Items $\alpha=.900$</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Stand. Loading</i>
Recollection			
While remembering the event, I feel as though I am reliving it.	4.80	1.33	.578
My memory is based on details specific to my life, not on general knowledge that I would expect most people to have	4.84	1.22	.675
While remembering the event, I feel that I travel back to the time when it happened	4.77	1.10	.811
As I think about the event, I can actually remember it rather than just knowing that it happened	5.18	1.18	.840
Accuracy			
While remembering the event, it comes to me in words or in pictures as a coherent story or episode and not as an isolated fact, observation, or scene.	5.04	1.22	.619
I believe the event in my memory really occurred in the way I remember it and that I have not imagined or fabricated anything that did not occur	5.08	1.19	.634
Vividness			
While remembering the event, I can see it in my mind.	4.95	1.12	.485
While remembering the event, I can hear it in my mind	4.85	1.10	.511
While remembering the event, I know the setting where it occurred	4.99	1.15	.537
Linguistics			
My memory comes in pieces with missing bits	5.30	1.06	.627
While remembering the event, it comes to me in words	5.13	1.26	.568
Rehearsal			
Since it happened, I have thought or talked about this event	5.05	1.11	.654
This memory has previously come to me “out of the blue,” without my trying to think about it.	5.07	1.18	.620
<hr/>			
<i>Over all Experience $\alpha =.841$</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Stand. Loading</i>
Experience was stimulating	5.62	1.48	.674
Experience was exciting	5.31	1.59	.569
Experience was enjoyable	5.69	1.48	.675
Experience was interesting	5.42	1.58	.401
Nostalgic Intensity $\alpha =.799$			
I felt a longing for the past experience	4.82	1.22	.420
The experience is highly nostalgic	4.95	1.13	.535

Items $\alpha=.900$	Mean	SD	Stand. Loading
The experience is a very gratifying one for me	5.95	1.25	.471
I have very little desire to re-experience the past	5.05	1.20	.582
Word of Mouth $\alpha=.873$			
I mention this theme park to others quite frequently	5.18	1.15	.613
I've told more people about this theme park than most other theme parks	5.15	1.20	.716
I seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about this theme park	5.42	1.20	.659
When I tell people about this theme park, I tend to talk about the it in great detail	5.69	1.23	.506

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

After data collection, the reliability of the data has been checked and it underwent a number of evaluative procedures like correlation analysis and regression analysis. Then the data was subjected to factor analysed, followed by Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for each construct. According to Hair et. al. (1998) the collected data was tested using the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity. KMO compares the size of the observed correlation coefficients with the magnitude of the partial correlation coefficients and is calculated as a value between 0 and 1. A value close to 1 indicates a large number of interrelations among the variables. The sampling adequacy was measured as 0.916 according to Kaiser-Meyer Olkin. Bartlett’s test has given significant result.

Only items with sufficient correlations ranging between 0.40 and 0.80 were retained and considered sufficient for conducting CFA. The analysis was initiated for AME which has 14 items the age of the memory failed to predict any significant influence with other items. Based on the modification indices, the Goodness of Fit and Comparative fit Indices were above 0.90 criterion.

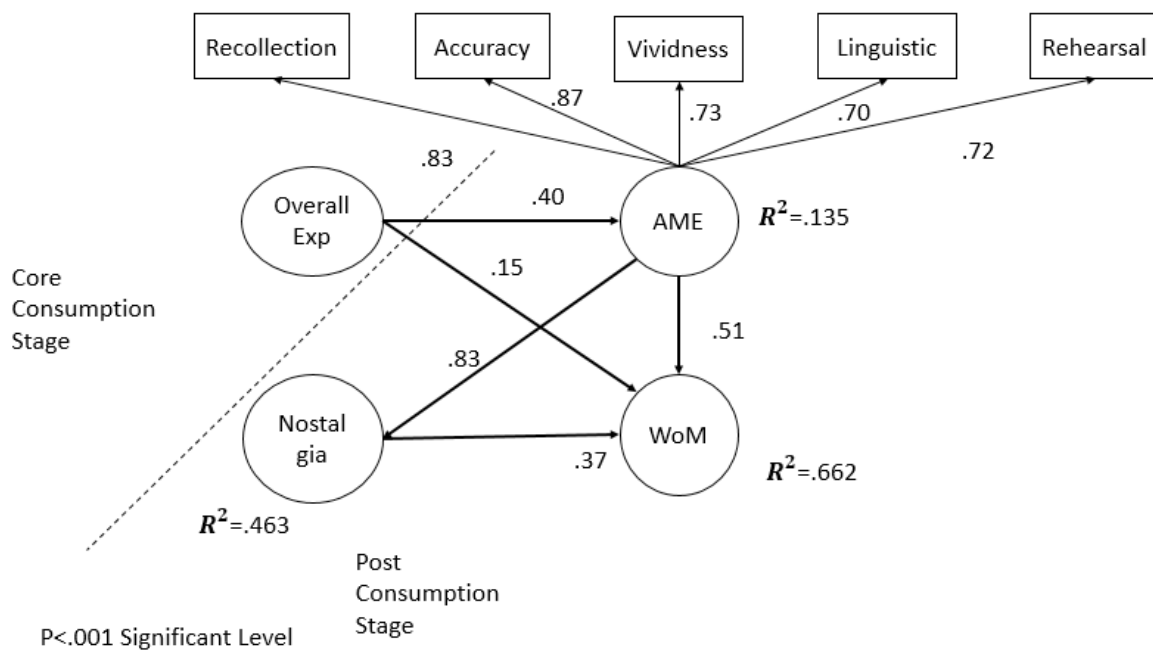


Figure 3: Structural Equation Modeling

Table 4
Standardized Regression Weights

			<i>Estimate</i>
REC1	<---	A	0.528
REC2	<---	A	0.643
REC3	<---	A	0.837
REC4	<---	A	0.849
VIV1	<---	B	0.692
VIV2	<---	B	0.739
VIV3	<---	B	0.718
REH1	<---	C	0.801
REH2	<---	C	0.795
ACC1	<---	D	0.844
ACC2	<---	D	0.758
LING1	<---	E	0.814
LING2	<---	E	0.765
			9.783

Table 5
Variances

	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>C.R.</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Label</i>
A	0.492	0.098	4.996	***	
E	1.046	0.129	8.092	***	
B	0.666	0.098	6.773	***	
C	0.905	0.116	7.83	***	
D	1.065	0.127	8.383	***	
e1	1.272	0.102	12.472	***	
e2	0.875	0.074	11.847	***	
e3	0.361	0.044	8.25	***	
e4	0.343	0.044	7.805	***	
e5	0.724	0.068	10.587	***	
e6	0.678	0.07	9.719	***	
e7	0.691	0.068	10.138	***	
e8	0.504	0.071	7.115	***	
e9	0.465	0.063	7.351	***	
e10	0.431	0.075	5.771	***	
e11	0.542	0.062	8.792	***	
e12	0.532	0.076	6.969	***	
e13	0.605	0.07	8.664	***	
	8.023				

Table 6
Correlation Table

	LING2	LING1	ACC2	ACC1	REH2	REH1	VIV3	VIV2	VIV1	REC4	REC3	REC2	REC1
LING2	1.000												
LING1	.622	1.000											
ACC2	.445	.474	1.000										
ACC1	.495	.527	.639	1.000									
REH2	.290	.309	.234	.261	1.000								
REH1	.293	.312	.236	.263	.637	1.000							
VIV3	.328	.349	.313	.348	.395	.399	1.000						
VIV2	.337	.359	.322	.358	.407	.410	.530	1.000					
VIV1	.316	.336	.302	.336	.381	.384	.497	.511	1.000				
REC4	.324	.345	.293	.327	.450	.453	.436	.448	.420	1.000			
REC3	.320	.340	.289	.322	.444	.447	.430	.442	.414	.711	1.000		
REC2	.245	.261	.222	.247	.340	.343	.330	.339	.318	.545	.538	1.000	
REC1	.202	.215	.183	.203	.280	.282	.271	.279	.261	.448	.442	.486	1.000

4.3. SEM Results

A structural equation analysis was conducted for testing the hypothesis. Fig. 3 shows the structural equation model for the proposed hypothesis. From the analysis Goodness of fit has been found almost in line with the recommended limits. χ^2/df : 2.097, p: 0.000, CFI: 0.936, TLI: 0.927, IFI: 0.936, RMR: .078, RMSEA: 0.061 and PCLOSE: 0.075). The above figure displays the estimated SEM model. According to Browne and Cudeck, 1993 we can accept the RMSEA value of less than 0.08. Our hypothesis testing concluded that the overall experience is a weak but significant influencer of AME ($\beta = 0.40$) felt by theme park visitors and AME is a strong influencer of WoM ($\beta = 0.51$). Thus H1 and H2 are accepted. Unexpectedly the overall experience is influencing the WoM ($\beta = 0.15$ with insignificant value). Thus H3 is rejected. AME has strong influence on nostalgia experience ($\beta = 0.83$) and Nostalgia has significant influence on WoM behaviour ($\beta = 0.37$). Thus H4 and H5 are accepted. There are possibilities that overall experience has strong impact on WoM through AME and AME through Nostalgia. So it can be argued that AME and Nostalgia act as a mediator between overall experience and WoM behaviour.

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Advertisers have started using nostalgic concepts in advertisements. As consumers usually make decisions from a set of brands that they recall from their memory, it is very important that Marketers have to understand that they have to provide the experiences that should long last in their memory. Research showed that perceived quality, Perceived value, Performance, Brand Personality, brand image and Brand attitude has cognitive elements. Bolton and Drew (1991, p. 377)

The present research work verified the Autobiographical Memory Experience scale, which was developed by (Jennifer et. al., 2003) in the context of Theme Park Experience. Furthermore, the study also analyses the relationship between experience, autobiographical memory experience, word of mouth and Nostalgia. The study proposed that the Customer's over all experience would influence the autobiographical

memory experience and nostalgic intensity. The autobiographical memory experience and nostalgic intensity will influence the word of mouth behavior. Interestingly the customer experience is not directly affecting the word of mouth behavior. The author explained the Remembered Consumption Experience to the Marketing Literature as the cognitive elements plays the major role in Word of Mouth behavior.

Furthermore, the theme park marketers can provide memorabilia to its visitors. By designing the core customer experience, the marketers can fix the memorabilia factors. In addition, it can be claimed that AME is one of the best way to measure the favorableness of the service, as people will forget the physical settings, equipment, employee service and core offering of theme park too. But they will remember the feel that was provided by the theme park.

6. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The rudimentary limitation of this study is associated with the data collected through the questionnaire and the representation of sample, as it might have measurement error. It is probable that the audience who took part in the survey were prone to complete the questionnaire. Since the study is context specific (i.e. theme park), future investigation possibly will examine the autobiographical memory experience in other tourism settings. As the research work is conducted in India the findings may not suitable for other countries, hence detailed research replicating other countries will be appreciable. Future researchers can focus on the role of Destination Image and Personality on Autobiographical memory experience. Further testing the mediating relationship of pleasure between the core customer experience and autobiographical memory experience also can be advocated. An experience will occur “*when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event*”. Future research can be established on the role of service scape (Grace, D., & O’Cass, A. 2004, Danaher and Mattsson 1998, Zomerdijk L.G and Voss C.A. 2010), core service (Grace, D., & O’Cass, A. 2004, Zomerdijk L.G and Voss C.A. 2010), employee service (Grace, D., & O’Cass, A. 2004 Zomerdijk L.G and Voss C.A. 2010), and fellow customer (Zomerdijk L.G and Voss C.A. 2010) with AME.

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