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"There and Back Again":

An Examination of Consumers' Experiences of Fantasy Stories Told Through Servicescape Atmospherics

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of

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To Gigi, for inspiring me to delve deep into the world of fairies.

“If marketing is more like storytelling, we can
count on more engagement from potential customers."
- Ardath Albee, Author, Marketing Strategist

Abstract

The importance of fantasy as playful and imaginative consumption has been long noted by consumer researchers, often seen as the creation of extraordinary worlds that engage the consumers and provide them a pleasurable diversion and escape from the ordinary. While companies are increasingly coming to realise the value of fantasy and storytelling in engaging consumers and changing their emotions, behaviour, and brand perceptions, however, extant research in marketing are limited to brands and servicescapes that are marketed with an authentic story about the brand's history or cultural stories. In addition, extant research focus on consumers' engagement with stories presented in forms of texts, movies, and advertisements, with limited research conducted on the effects of storytelling through servicescape atmospherics. This thesis examined whether consumers experience narrative engagement in servicescapes that are designed based on fantasy stories, and how engagement with stories in servicescapes influences consumers' emotions, behaviour, and brand personality perceptions. As consumers' responses to a story differ depending on the story character they empathise with, this thesis, further, examined how empathy with positive (versus negative) story characters affects consumers' subsequent responses in fantasy designed servicescapes.

A sequential mixed-methods research design was employed in this thesis to address the research questions. Accordingly, the thesis begins by an exploratory qualitative enquiry conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with retail design experts in Study 1 to understand circumstances in which implementing a fantasy story for design will be worth the effort, how the servicescape atmospherics are manipulated to present a given story, and the affective, behavioural, and brand responses designers aim to evoke in consumers in fantasy servicescapes. The researcher conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with consumers in Study 2 to understand their experiences of engagement with stories, and subsequent responses in a fantasy designed servicescape. Based on the findings from the first two qualitative studies, the extracted propositions, together with existing scales and constructs in the literature, were replicated as part of the survey in Study 3 to examine the relationships between the servicescape atmospherics and consumers' experiences of narrative engagement, their emotions and behaviour, and brand personality perceptions in a fantasy servicescape. Study 3, also, examined how consumers' empathy with positive (versus negative) story characters influences their subsequent responses.

This thesis contributes to environmental psychology, storytelling, narrative engagement, empathy, as well as the branding literatures and the findings have strong implications for retailers, design practitioners, and brand managers in terms of *why*, *when*, and *how* to use fantasy stories for designing servicescapes.

Theoretically, the current thesis is the first to examine consumers' engagement with and affective, behavioural and brand experiences in servicescapes that are designed based on a fantasy story. Based on the perceptions of both, the design experts as well as consumers, the researcher integrated narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009) and empathy with characters (Van Laer, 2011) with Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) SOR framework and brand personality (Aaker, 1997) and made a significant contribution by developing a framework that can help future studies examine consumers' experiences of fantasy stories in servicescapes. The results of the three conducted studies were consistent in suggesting that consumers experience narrative engagement in servicescapes that are designed upon a fantasy story, and that the narrative presence dimension of narrative engagement can, by itself, explain the process underlying the effect of stories told through the atmospherics on consumers' emotions, behaviour, and brand personality perceptions.

Regardless of the character type (positive versus negative) the servicescape highlighted, consumers engaged to the same extent with the story, and experienced more positive and less negative emotions as a result of engagement with the story. Engagement with stories, further, positively affected consumers' behavioural intentions. Higher levels of empathy with a story character, however, negatively affected consumers' behavioural intentions, regardless of the character the servicescape highlighted. Accordingly, the design experts recommend using fantasy elements at a moderate level for design to attract not only fans but also non-fan consumers to the servicescape, enhance consumers' engagement with the retailer's offer, and increase return intention. Moreover, engagement with the story in the servicescape highlighting the negative character positively affected brand personality, with higher levels of empathy with the negative character strengthen brand personality. Featuring negative characters in a servicescape thus results in stronger brand experience. Finally, while product and service providing businesses both, benefit from using stories for their servicescape design, story-based designs were found to be most effective when the story is congruent with and therefore, supports the products or services offered.

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Table of Contents

Abstract v

Acknowledgements vii

Table of Contents ix

List of Tables xv

List of Figures xix

Chapter 1 Introduction 1

1.1 Research rationale 1

1.1.1 Servicescape atmospherics 2

1.1.2 Storytelling servicescapes 3

1.1.3 Fantasy servicescapes 5

1.1.4 Narrative engagement 6

1.1.5 Storytelling brands 9

1.1.6 Empathy with story characters 10

1.2 Research questions 11

1.3 Research overview 13

Chapter 2 Literature Review 17

2.1 Introduction 17

2.2 Environmental psychology 18

2.2.1 Stimuli: Servicescape atmospherics 18

2.2.2 Organism: Affective states 21

2.2.3 Response: Approach and avoidance behaviours 23

2.3 Storytelling 25

2.3.1 Storytelling servicescapes 26

2.4 Fantasy 29

2.4.1 Genre 30

2.4.2 Subgenre 31

2.4.3 Storyline 31

2.4.4 Characterisation 31

2.4.5 Fantasy servicescapes 32
2.5 Narrative transportation 33
2.5.1 Narrative transportation: Antecedents 38
2.5.2 Narrative Transportation: Outcomes 46
2.6 Empathy with story characters 51
2.7 Narrative engagement 54
2.7.1 Narrative understanding 55
2.7.2 Attentional focus 56
2.7.3 Emotional engagement 56
2.7.4 Narrative presence 56
2.7.5 Narrative engagement: Outcomes 58
2.8 Storytelling brands 60
2.9 Research questions 63
2.10 Chapter summary 65
Chapter 3 Methodology 71
3.1 Introduction 71
3.2 Research paradigm 72
3.2.1 Research ontology: Realist 72
3.2.2 Research epistemology: Positivist 73
3.3 Research method: Mixed-methods 79
3.4 Chapter 4, Study 1: Qualitative 80
3.4.1 Exploratory research 81
3.4.2 Qualitative research strategy 81
3.4.3 Semi-structured in-depth interviews 83
3.4.4 Participant selection criteria 84
3.4.5 Data collection procedures 86
3.4.6 Data analysis: Content analysis 86
3.5 Chapter 5, Study 2: Qualitative 89
3.5.1 Exploratory research 90
3.5.2 Qualitative research strategy 90

3.5.3 Semi-structured in-depth interviews 91
3.5.4 The Green Dragon Inn 92
3.5.5 Participant selection criteria 93
3.5.6 Data collection procedures 96
3.5.7 Data analysis: Content analysis 97
3.5.8 Reporting Study 1 and Study 2 findings 97
3.6 Chapter 6, Study 3: Quantitative 98
3.6.1 Quantitative research strategy 99
3.6.2 Respondent selection criteria 100
3.6.3 Data collection procedures 101
3.6.4 Stimuli 102
3.6.5 Data analysis 105
3.7 Ethical considerations 108
3.8 Chapter summary 108
Chapter 4 Study 1 111
4.1 Introduction 111
4.2 Types of consumer experiences in servicescapes 112
4.3 Types of stories told through servicescape atmospherics 117
4.4 Encouraging and discouraging reasons for telling stories 121
4.5 Circumstances in which designers consider telling stories 126
4.6 Servicescape atmospherics effective in telling a story 128
4.6.1 The extent to mimic a story in servicescapes 132
4.7 Affective responses designers evoke in servicescapes 134
4.7.1 Affective responses in fantasy servicescapes 137
4.8 Behavioural responses designers evoke in servicescapes 140
4.8.1 Behavioural responses in fantasy servicescapes 145
4.9 Brand responses designers evoke in servicescapes 147
4.9.1 Brand responses in fantasy servicescapes 152
4.10 Chapter summary 153

Chapter 5: Study 2 157
5.1 Introduction 157
5.2 Servicescape atmospherics effective in telling the story 158
5.2.1 Story mimicry in the servicescape 171
5.3 Consumers' experiences of narrative engagement 175
5.3.1 Narrative presence 175
5.3.2 Attentional focus and narrative understanding 179
5.3.3 Emotional engagement 187
5.4 Consumers' affective responses 188
5.5 Consumers' behavioural responses 192
5.6 Consumers' brand responses 203
5.7 Empathy with story characters 206
5.8 Chapter summary 207
Chapter 6 Study 3 213
6.1 Introduction 213
6.2 Proposed conceptual framework 214
6.3 An examination of the research questions and hypotheses 217
6.3.1 Servicescape atmosphere 217
6.3.2 Narrative engagement 221
6.3.3 Affective responses 224
6.3.4 Brand personality and consumer behaviour 226
6.3.5 Consumer behaviour 227
6.3.6 Empathy with story characters 228
6.4 Method 229
6.4.1 Data collection procedure and sample 230
6.4.2 Stimuli 230
6.4.3 Scales 230
6.5 Data screening and cleaning 237
6.5.1 Dealing with missing data 237
6.5.2 Assessments of normality and outliers 237

6.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) 238
6.6.1 Measurement development..... 239
6.6.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of each construct 241
6.6.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of all constructs..... 244
6.6.4 Examination for Common Method Bias (CMB) 247
6.6.5 Measurement models Reliability and Validity..... 251
6.6.6 Overall measurement model fit 252
6.6.7 Overall measurement model invariance 255
6.7 Structural Equations Modelling (SEM) 258
6.7.1 The proposed structural model..... 259
6.7.2 Global fit..... 261
6.7.3 Direct effects 261
6.7.4 Control variables..... 267
6.7.5 Multi-Group effects 268
6.7.6 Specific indirect effects 276
6.7.7 Moderation tests..... 280
6.8 Chapter summary..... 284
Chapter 7 Conclusions 289
7.1 Introduction 289
7.2 The theoretical significance of this thesis..... 289
7.2.1 Research question 1..... 290
7.2.2 Research question 2..... 291
7.2.3 Research question 3..... 293
7.2.4 Research question 4..... 295
7.2.5 Research question 5..... 296
7.3 Contributions..... 298
7.3.1 Theoretical contributions..... 301
7.3.2 Managerial implications 304
7.4 Limitations and future research..... 309
7.4.1 Limitations 309

7.4.2 Future research 310
7.5 Chapter summary 315
References 317
Appendices 363
Appendix A: Study 1 interview guide and questions 363
Appendix B: Study 2 interview guide and questions 367
Appendix C: Study 2 Hobbiton Movie Set approval 371
Appendix D: Study 3 survey guide and questions 375
Appendix E: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) 383
Appendix F: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) 391
Appendix G: Structural Equations Modelling (SEM) 423
Appendix H: Human Ethics Notifications 431

List of Tables

Table 2. 1. Archetypes, story gist and brand examples 61

Table 3. 1. Study 2 participant demographics 94

Table 4. 1. Types of consumer experiences in servicescapes 112
Table 4. 2. Types of stories told through servicescape atmospherics 120
Table 4. 3. Encouraging reasons for telling stories 125
Table 4. 4. Discouraging reasons for telling stories 126
Table 4. 5. Circumstances in which designers consider telling stories 128
Table 4. 6. Servicescape atmospherics effective in telling a story 129
Table 4. 7. The extent to mimic a story in servicescapes 133
Table 4. 8. Affective responses designers evoke in servicescapes 137
Table 4. 9. Affective responses in fantasy servicescapes 139
Table 4. 10. Behavioural responses designers evoke in servicescapes 144
Table 4. 11. Behavioural responses designers evoke in fantasy servicescapes 146
Table 4. 12. Brand responses designers evoke in servicescapes 148

Table 5. 1. Ambient elements effective in telling the story 159
Table 5. 2. Interior design elements effective in telling the story 164
Table 5. 3. Exterior design elements effective in telling the story 167
Table 5. 4. Social elements effective in telling the story 169
Table 5. 5. High mimicry of the servicescape with related stories or movies 171
Table 5. 6. Moderate mimicry of the servicescape with related stories or movies 173
Table 5. 7. Incongruencies of the servicescape with related stories or movies 174
Table 5. 8. Consumers' experiences of narrative presence 176
Table 5. 9. Consumers' experiences of narrative presence classified by story mimicry 177
Table 5. 10. Consumers' experiences of narrative presence classified by age 178
Table 5. 11. Consumers' experiences of narrative presence classified by gender 179
Table 5. 12. Elements that helped consumers experience presence 181

Table 5. 13. Elements that could help consumers further experience presence 184
Table 5. 14. Consumers' affective responses in the fantasy servicescape 189
Table 5. 15. Consumers' affective responses classified by narrative presence..... 192
Table 5. 16. Consumers' intentions to spend time in the fantasy servicescape..... 193
Table 5. 17. Consumers' intentions to spend time classified by narrative presence..... 194
Table 5. 18. Consumers' intentions to spend money in the fantasy servicescape..... 196
Table 5. 19. Consumers' intentions to spend money classified by narrative presence..... 197
Table 5. 20. Consumers' intentions to return to the fantasy servicescape 198
Table 5. 21. Consumers' intentions to return classified by narrative presence..... 199
Table 5. 22. Consumers' intentions to return classified by story mimicry..... 200
Table 5. 23. Consumers' intentions to recommend the fantasy servicescape..... 201
Table 5. 24. Consumers' intentions to recommend classified by narrative presence..... 201
Table 5. 25. Consumers' behavioural responses in the fantasy servicescape 202
Table 5. 26. Consumers' behavioural responses classified by narrative presence..... 202
Table 5. 27. Consumers' brand responses in the fantasy servicescape 204
Table 5. 28. Consumers' brand experiences classified by narrative presence..... 206

Table 6. 1. Research questions with hypotheses and structural paths..... 229
Table 6. 2. Sampling profile of respondents..... 236
Table 6. 3. Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) criteria used in Study 3..... 240
Table 6. 4. Conceptual framework CFA final factor loadings and t-values..... 244
Table 6. 5. Conditions, mechanism, and remedies for Common Method Bias..... 248
Table 6. 6. Measures of Construct Reliability and Validity (from CFA)..... 252
Table 6. 7. Overall CFA Measurement Model Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) 253
Table 6. 8. Covaried items for Case 1 and Case 2 models..... 254
Table 6. 9. Overall final measurement model invariance examination of both cases 257
Table 6. 10. Global fit..... 261
Table 6. 11. Case 1 hypotheses testing (Proposed Structural Model) 261
Table 6. 12. Case 2 hypotheses testing (Proposed Structural Model) 262
Table 6. 13. Multi-group effects Global test 269

Table 6. 14. Multi-group effects Z-score values.....269
Table 6. 15. Multi-group effects standardised estimates.....270
Table 6. 16. Multiple Group differences at item level with Case 1 Model 274
Table 6. 17. Multiple Group differences at item level with Case 2 Model 275
Table 6. 18. Bootstrap estimates of the specific indirect effects in Case 1 276
Table 6. 19. Bootstrap estimates of the specific indirect effects in Case 2 277
Table 6. 20. Results for structural equation model with moderator effects for Case 1 282
Table 6. 21. Results for structural equation model with moderator effects for Case 2 283

Table 7. 1. Integration of Study 1, 2, and 3 findings 298

List of Figures

Figure 2. 1. Integration of literature areas 69

Figure 3. 1. Study 3 Case 1 (Snow White) 104

Figure 3. 2. Study 3 Case 2 (Evil Queen).....105

Figure 5. 1. The Green Dragon Inn – Fireplace.....161

Figure 5. 2. The Green Dragon Inn - Wooden materials.....162

Figure 5. 3. The Green Dragon Inn – An illustration of Bilbo Baggins on the wall.....162

Figure 5. 4. The Green Dragon Inn – Mugs.....163

Figure 5. 5. The Green Dragon Inn – Menu 163

Figure 5. 6. The Green Dragon Inn - Lake view 166

Figure 5. 7. The Green Dragon Inn - Thatched roof 167

Figure 5. 8. Consumers' age classification.....178

Figure 6. 1. Proposed conceptual framework.....215

Figure 6. 2. Proposed Structural Model.....260

Figure 6. 3. Proposed structural model - AMOS Output 260

Figure 6. 4. Proposed structural model with moderation effects.....281

Figure 6. 5. The moderation effect of Empathy on Behavioural Intentions – Case 1 282

Figure 6. 6. The moderation effect of Empathy on Behavioural Intentions - Case 2 284

Figure 6. 7. The moderation effect of Empathy on Brand Personality - Case 2 284

Chapter 1 Introduction

Experiencing "*A Whole New World*": The importance of telling fantasy stories through servicescape atmospherics

1.1 Research rationale

> Why spend $16m on a cellar door? One thousand people per day have visited the d'Arenberg Cube *[in McLaren Vale, South Australia]* since it was opened *[in 2017]*: that's why.
>
> - Osborn, 2018

Retailers spend millions of dollars each year to build and design the interior atmosphere of their stores (Baker, Levy, & Grewal, 1992; Roggeveen, Grewal, & Schweiger, 2020). For example, in 2017, AUD $16 million was invested for the building, internal fit out, equipment, and car park development of the d'Arenberg Cube, which is a cellar door, restaurant, museum, and function facility, all framed within the shape of a Rubik's Cube located in McLaren Vale, South Australia (Sigala & Rentschler, 2019; Osborn, 2018).

While the variety of managerial ideas and practices used to manipulate the atmospheric variables (environmental features of a space which stimulate one's senses and thus affect the total experience of being in a given place at a given time, Kotler, 1974) is becoming increasingly sophisticated (Sherry, 1998; Roggeveen et al., 2020), critically, consumers as end-users whom retailers design their stores to attract and sell products or services to, remain overlooked in retailer-designer discussions. Indeed, while design practices try to attract the consumers, it is rarely understood how creative ideas for certain types of design (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Mossberg & Eide, 2017) engage the consumers and enrich their in-store experiences (Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017). The significance of the atmospheric variables in creating engaging in-store experiences for consumers provides the impetus for this thesis.

1.1.1 Servicescape atmospherics

Since Pine and Gilmore (1999, 2013) introduced the concept of "experience economy", retailers have come to increasingly realise the importance of providing attractive, unique experiences to engage consumers (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Kozinets et al., 2002; Sands, Oppewal, & Beverland, 2009, 2015; Mossberg & Eide, 2017) and to differentiate their offer from competitors (Sands et al., 2009, 2015; Pina & Dias, 2021). In addition, over the time, consumption practices have evolved from fulfilling one's utilitarian needs towards an activity that embraces fun and playfulness (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Hollenbeck, Peters, & Zinkhan, 2008; Cova & Dalli, 2009). Consumers no longer visit the marketplace to merely buy products but to also engage in fantasies, feelings, and fun (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Le, Scott, & Lohmann, 2019; Pina & Dias, 2021). Relatedly, Mossberg (2008) contends that while marketers often focus on consumers' rationality and aim to provide favourable pricing, quality and other utilitarian benefits, the consumers might be instead captivated by experiences outside realms of their everyday lives or what researchers refer to as extraordinary experiences (e.g., Hansen & Mossberg, 2013; Husemann, Eckhardt, Grohs, & Saceanu, 2016) that take place in special worlds created by storytelling and embedding elements of fantasy in designing servicescapes (i.e., physical environments built for commercial exchanges, Bitner, 1992) (see also Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2019).

According to Cova and Dalli (2009, p.478) retailers need to consider three main aspects in creating an experience for consumers in their servicescapes. The first aspect involves design and staging, with attention paid to multi-sensorial stimulation (see Sherry, 1998; Ballantine, Jack, & Parsons, 2010; Ballantine, Parsons, & Comeskey, 2015; Roggeveen et al., 2020). Relatedly, Sherry (1998, p. 9) underscores:

> The importance of listening to the voice of the designer *[Nixon, 1992]* rivals that of hearing the voice of the consumer, once we accept that design is itself spectacle, in an era where more and more often stores are the brand and shoppers are flâneurs bent upon … acquisition of experience as much as *[acquisition of]* goods.

The design, and holistically, the servicescape atmospherics (Stimuli) have the ability to impact consumers' internal evaluations (Organism), including their affective responses, that, eventually, result in changes in behaviour (Response) (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Krishna, 2012; Vukadin, Lemoine, & Badot, 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020). Therefore, detailed attention is paid to the atmospherics when creating an extraordinary experience

(Sands et al., 2015; Wiedmann, Labenz, Haase, & Hennigs, 2018; De Keyser, Verleye, Lemon, Keiningham, & Klaus, 2020).

The servicescape design, divided into functional (e.g., layout) and aesthetic (e.g., décor) (Eroglu & Machleit, 2008), enables consumers to find the products easily in a store (utilitarian benefit) while they are entertained and enjoy the experience (hedonic benefit) (Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal, & Voss, 2002; Kaltcheva, & Weitz, 2006; Levy, Weitz, & Grewal, 2014; Garrido-Morgado, González-Benito, Martos-Partal, & Campo, 2020). While previous research on servicescape design focused on functional dimensions such as the layout (e.g., Vrechopoulos, O'Keefe, Doukidis, & Siomkos, 2004), to promote a more engaging experience of a brand's essence and to satisfy those consumers who seek entertainment beyond utilitarian values of shopping (Kozinets et al., 2002; Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006; Sands et al., 2015), more recent studies have highlighted the importance of aesthetics (Atwal & Williams, 2017; Alfakhri, Harness, Nicholson, & Harness, 2018) and themes (Borghini et al., 2009; Foster & McLelland, 2015; Lim & Kim, 2018; Song, Van Phan, & Kim, 2019; Tan & Huang, 2020), as hedonic attributes (Sands et al., 2015) of the servicescape.

Despite the contributions these studies make towards understanding the hedonic value of design in creating extraordinary experiences, an area that the marketing literature has left almost overlooked relates to the significance of telling stories to consumers through the physical and symbolic structures of design (Mossberg, 2008, Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2019; Jolliffe & Piboonrungroj, 2020). This thesis, as such, contributes to the environmental psychology, storytelling, narrative engagement, empathy, as well as the branding literatures by examining consumers' affective, behavioural and brand responses in servicescapes designed based on a fantasy story.

The importance of storytelling and in particular, the use of fantasy in consumer research is subsequently elaborated.

1.1.2 Storytelling servicescapes

> We have everything we need, so we're not buying commodities.
> We're buying relationships and stories and magic.
>
> - Seth Godin (2010)

In addition to the servicescape design, Cova and Dalli (2009) refer to storytelling as the second important aspect for retailers to consider when creating a memorable experience that can differentiate their offer and attract consumers (see also Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Campos, Mendes, Valle, & Scott, 2018; Jolliffe & Piboonrungroj, 2020). Author and business executive Seth Godin (2010, p. 171) asserts that "We have everything we need, so we're not buying commodities. … We're buying relationships and stories and magic." According to Godin (2010), storytelling has made its way into the marketing business. Therefore, to differentiate themselves, brands have to tell a tale to consumers to sell them what they offer because marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make but about the stories you tell (Godin, 2010).

Stories entertain the consumers by getting them engaged with the actions they describe (Slater & Rouner, 2002; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Bilandzic, Kinnebrock & Klingler, 2020). Mental imagination of and engagement with a story and its characters, in-turn, changes consumers' affective responses that eventually influence their behaviour (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004a; Green & Clark, 2013; Van Laer, De Ruyter, Visconti, & Wetzels, 2014, Dessart & Pitardi, 2019). Considering the power of stories in attracting, engaging, and affecting consumers' responses, servicescapes that tell stories are a competitive tool for retailers (Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Campos et al., 2018; Jolliffe & Piboonrungroj, 2020). Extant research on storytelling, however, have mostly focused on the influences of stories presented in the form of texts (Green & Brock, 2000; Appel & Richter, 2010; Banerjee & Greene, 2013; Walkington, Wigman, & Bowles, 2020) or different types of advertisements (Escalas, 2004a, 2004b; Dessart, 2018, Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Bennett, Diamond, Miller, & Williams, 2020; Campbell, Sands, & Ferraro, 2020) with limited research conducted on the influences of storytelling in servicescapes on consumers' responses (cf. Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017). Thus, to date, less is known about consumers' experiences in servicescapes designed based on a story (Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2019).

In addition, previous studies on the use of storytelling for servicescape design focus on real stories about the history of the company or the brand (e.g., Borghini et al., 2009) or cultural stories (e.g., Mossberg, 2008; Chan, Wan, & Tam, 2019; Sigala & Rentschler, 2019). Therefore, the lack of systematic empirical research about consumers' responses to fictional stories used to design servicescape atmospheres calls for further investigation (Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017).

To contribute to addressing the discussed gaps in the extant literature, the current thesis investigates the consumers' affective and behavioural responses and their perceptions of brand personality in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories.

The distinction between fictional and real stories and the significance of fantasy stories in consumer research is subsequently discussed.

1.1.3 Fantasy servicescapes

In consumer research, fantasy is defined as the creation of new worlds (Seregina, 2018). These special, new worlds refer to places of escape and a pleasurable diversion from the ordinary life (Seregina, 2018, 2019; Mossberg, 2019) often aided by consumption objects (Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011) and consumption environments (Kozinets et al., 2004; Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2019).

To respond to consumers' desire for extraordinary experiences, retailers create a theatre for consumers and the company's offerings (Firat & Dholakia, 1998, Sherry et al., 2001; Kozinets et al., 2002; Mossberg, 2008, Cova & Cova, 2012; Mossberg & Eide, 2017) and design the servicescape atmosphere to not only sell products and/or services to consumers but tell stories, entertain, and provide escapism by using fantasy elements in servicescapes (Kozinets et al., 2002; Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017).

As a genre, fantasy stories are those stories whose plots are purely imaginary and describe magical creatures such as fairies and dragons (Green, Garst, & Brock, 2004; Green, Garst, Brock, & Chung, 2006; Harmon & Holman 1990, 2003). Fantasy stories that are set in an alternative world (i.e., High-fantasy, Gamble & Yates, 2008; Stableford, 2009) purvey a sense of elsewhereness to their audience (Seregina, 2014, 2018) and thus, can be used in the marketing context to provide an escape from the ordinary life (Seregina, 2014, 2018).

While the importance of fantasy as playful and imaginative consumption is long noted by consumer researchers (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Belk & Costa, 1998; Kozinets, 2001; Kozinets et al., 2002; Martin, 2004; Mossberg, 2008; St. James, Handelman, & Taylor, 2011; Chronis, Arnould, & Hampton, 2013; Seregina, 2019), the significance of the concept in terms of how consumers respond to extraordinary servicescapes that are designed based on a fantasy story requires further investigation (Kozinets et al., 2002; Stevens & Maclaran, 2005; Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2008, 2019; Mossberg &

Eide, 2017; Seregina, 2014, 2018). This thesis focuses on high-fantasy stories as being set in an alternative, secondary world conveying a sense of elsewhereness to consumers.

The current thesis contributes to the literatures on environmental psychology, storytelling and fantasy, narrative engagement and empathy, and the branding literature by examining consumers' affective, behavioural and brand responses in servicescapes that are designed based on a fantasy story. In doing so, this thesis demonstrates the circumstances in which implementing a fantasy story for servicescape design will be worth the effort and provides advice to retailers on deciding between the use of famous or original fantasy stories for servicescape design. The findings of this thesis further help design experts identify the atmospherics that are effective in presenting a story to consumers and provide insight on the reasonable level to mimic a story in the servicescape.

Following design and storytelling, the third aspect that retailers are advised to consider when creating any experiences concerns consumers' participation (Cova & Dalli, 2009) or engagement (see Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Bilandzic et al., 2020) supported by the many kinds of facilitators the companies offer (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Seregina, 2019). Consumers' participation and, specifically, engagement with stories is elaborated in the following section.

1.1.4 Narrative engagement

As the third important aspect in creating an extraordinary experience in servicescapes (Cova & Dalli, 2009), consumers' participation in an activity varies between active and passive participation. In contrast to passive participation, active consumers engage with and play a crucial role in creating the experience (see Witell, Kristensson, Gustafsson, & Löfgren, 2011, Seregina, 2019; Ind, Coates, & Lerman, 2020).

As stories engage consumers (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Bilandzic et al., 2020), and thereby, influence their affective and behavioural responses (e.g., Van Laer et al., 2014; Lee & Jeong, 2017; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019), the process of receiving and responding to fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics requires active participation by the consumers (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Chronis, 2008; Mossberg, 2008, 2019; Van Laer, Feiereisen, & Visconti, 2019b). As Mossberg (2008) contends, when a servicescape is designed to tell a story, the consumers have "the opportunity to *"*act*"* and let go of the real world for a while" (p.202).

Regardless of whether the story plot is fictional or non-fictional, stories, as illustrated in this thesis, cause consumers to become detached from the real world and get transported to the world created by the story, as they mentally imagine the events (Van Laer et al., 2014; Lim & Childs, 2020) and empathise with the story characters (MacDorman, 2019; Walkington et al., 2020). This experience of letting go, or suspension of the real world, when lost in a given story, is conceptualised as Narrative Transportation (Green, 2005; Van Laer et al., 2014; Kim, Lloyd, & Cervellon, 2016; Seo, Li, Choi, & Yoon, 2018; Van Laer, Edson Escalas, Ludwig, & Van Den Hende, 2019a; Van Laer et al., 2019b). Transportation to a story, then, changes consumers' emotions, intentions, and behaviour (Escalas, 2004a; Dal Cin, Gibson, Zanna, Shumate, & Fong, 2007; Dunlop, Wakefield, & Kashima, 2010; Van Laer et al., 2014; Dessart, 2018; Dessart, & Pitardi, 2019).

While consumers' transportation to stories presented as texts (Banerjee & Greene, 2013; Walkington et al., 2020), movies (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Green & Clark, 2013) or advertisements (Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Bennett et al., 2020; Campbell et al., 2020) has been studied extensively in the marketing literature, research on how consumers engage with and respond to stories told through servicescape atmospherics is overlooked (Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2019). As servicescapes can tell stories (see Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Mansvelt, 2008; Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2008, Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2019) and stories have power to engage consumers (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Van Leeuwen, Van Den Putte, Renes, & Leeuwis, 2017; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019), it might be reasonable to expect that stories that are conveyed to us via a servicescape could also evoke our imagination, invite us to think of ourselves in the shoes of characters experiencing the story events and get lost in the presented story (Mossberg, 2008, 2019). To address Mossberg's (2019) call for research on consumers' experience of stories in servicescapes, this thesis examines whether consumers engage and get lost in stories told through servicescape atmospherics, and how this experience influences their subsequent responses.

Although the narrative transportation theory provides the foundation for understanding the prerequisites, the process, and insight on the outcomes of consumers' transportation into stories, the theory applies in conditions where consumers are exposed to a story with causality and chronology (Escalas, 2004a), elements that are not necessarily present in servicescape environments. The servicescapes design might represent a story in a non-linear order (Mossberg, 2008) which makes the experience of stories difficult to interpret

by narrative transportation. Therefore, a similar yet distinct construct has been used in this thesis to examine consumers' experiences of stories in servicescapes conceptualised as Narrative Engagement (see Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008, 2009; Bilandzic et al., 2020; Sukalla, Bilandzic, Bolls, & Busselle, 2015).

Narrative transportation and narrative engagement have similarities in their antecedents, process, and their consequences including affective responses, intentions, and behaviour (Bilandzic et al., 2020). However, while transportation measures ones' detachment from the real world through mental imagery of the story events and empathy with characters (Van Laer et al., 2014; Lim & Childs, 2020), narrative engagement has four dimensions, namely, narrative understanding, attentional focus, emotional engagement, and presence that can be measured together or independently in a study (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009) depending on the context to be investigated. Given that this thesis is the first to examine narrative engagement in the context of servicescape environments, all four dimensions of the construct are investigated in order to find which dimension is more appropriate in measuring consumers' experience of stories in servicescapes. Specifically, this thesis makes a significant contribution by validating a scale that helps future studies examine consumers' engagement with fantasy stories, as well as their affective, behavioural, and brand responses in fantasy designed servicescapes. The findings of this thesis, further, suggest a list of strategies through which design experts can increase the likelihood of consumers' engagement with stories in servicescapes.

While the servicescape design, storytelling, and consumer engagement, are all important in creating memorable in-store experiences, scholars' opinions differ about the aspects that should be highlighted, with extant studies having often focused on a single aspect at a time (Cova & Dalli, 2009). In this regard, some researchers manipulate one or more of the atmospheric stimuli (hereafter Aspect 1) and examine their individual or joint effects on certain consumer responses (Ballantine et al., 2010; Ballantine et al., 2015; Roggeveen et al., 2020). Other researchers focus on planning entertaining and/or educational events in servicescapes (hereafter Aspect 3) to engage the consumers (Sit, Merrilees, & Birch, 2003; Sands et al., 2009, 2015; Sands, Ferraro, Campbell, & Tsao, 2021) with limited studies conducted on the use of stories in marketing (hereafter Aspect 2) (Kozinets et al., 2002; Woodside, 2010; He, Zhu, Gouran, & Kolo, 2016; Gilliam, & Rockwell, 2018). Therefore, research on the simultaneous effect of these aspects on consumers' responses is warranted (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Carù & Cova, 2007; Mossberg & Eide, 2017).

This thesis contributes to environmental psychology, storytelling, narrative engagement, empathy, and branding literatures by examining consumers' engagement (Aspect 3) with fantasy stories (Aspect 2) told through the servicescape atmospherics (Aspect 1) and how engagement with fantasy stories influences consumers' affective, behavioural, and brand responses in servicescapes.

The effect of servicescape atmospherics and stories on consumers' emotions and behaviour was discussed in previous sections. As another variable that the servicescape atmospherics and stories can both influence, the following section highlights consumers' perceptions of servicescape brand personality.

1.1.5 Storytelling brands

In addition to changing consumers' emotions and behaviour, servicescape atmospherics play an important role in communicating the personality of the servicescape brand (i.e., the set of human characteristics associated with a brand, Aaker, 1997) (Mohtar, Taha, Ghazali, & Radzi, 2019; Möller & Herm, 2013; Magnini & Parker, 2009). Furthermore, besides the changes in consumers' emotions and behaviour, stories affect consumers' brand experiences, that consist of all the feelings and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli, including the brand's design, packing, and environment (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus, & Van Riel, 2013; Ryu, Lehto, Gordon, & Fu, 2019; Nikhashemi, Jebarajakirthy, & Nusair, 2019; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019). Stories can help the retailers to create experiences that are appealing to consumers' emotions and dreams (see Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboylu, 2005; Lundqvist et al., 2013). Therefore, more and more retailers are coming to recognise that branding is a magical affair in which fact and dream must merge. Thus, they blend fantasy with reality and incorporate stories in different facets of branding, including a store's design (see Kozinets et al., 2002, Mossberg & Eide, 2017). For example, Lundqvist et al. (2013) find that telling an authentic story about the history of a brand to consumers changes the personality of the brand from sincerity to excitement. Although the consumers did not see the servicescape in Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) study, the authors argue that the role of the servicescape atmosphere and the way in which it conveys the story are an important part of the full brand experience. This consideration thus warrants further studies. Moreover, extant studies on storytelling are limited to brands that are marketed with an authentic story about the brand's history (Lundqvist et al., 2013, Ryu et al., 2019) or cultural stories

(Mossberg, 2008). Thus, further research is required to examine consumers' responses to non-authentic (unrealistic) stories (Lundqvist et al., 2013). To contribute to addressing the limitations of extant studies, this thesis examines how fantasy stories told through the servicescape atmospherics affect the servicescape brand's personality.

Furthermore, studies on storytelling either take a consumer (e.g., Lundqvist et al., 2013) or retailer perspective (e.g., Mossberg, 2008) to understand the significance of stories in brand building. This thesis not only examines consumers' experiences, but the designers' opinions are also investigated towards incorporating fantasy stories in servicescapes and how such story-based atmospheres influence consumers' subsequent responses.

Having discussed the potential of the servicescape atmospherics and stories to influence consumers' affective, behavioural, and brand experiences, as a variable that can change consumers' responses to the same story, the effect of empathy with different characters of a story is elaborated in the following section.

1.1.6 Empathy with story characters

Research about consumers' experiences of stories have proven that differences in empathy towards story characters can influence consumers' responses to the same story (Slater & Rouner, 2002; Escalas & Stern, 2003; Dal Cin et al., 2007; Argo, Zhu, & Dahl, 2008; Mar, Oatley, & Peterson, 2009; Wallin, Koro-Ljungberg, & Eskola, 2019; Kandaurova & Lee, 2019; Pervan, Rayne, & Bove, 2020). Despite the significance of empathy with story characters on consumers' transportation to or engagement with a story, however, previous research on narrative engagement often focus on the use of positive characters with managers preferring their brands to appear in positive storylines (Knoll, Schramm, Schallhorn, & Wynistorf, 2015). By contrast, recent research on the use of dark stories in retailing find several advantages for brands that feature negatively-valenced imagery and dark characters over brands that use non-dark stories including captioning attention, improving consumers' brand experiences (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010; Campbell et al., 2020), and enjoyment of the experience (Dessart, 2018).

Regardless of the contributions these latter studies make towards understanding the use of negative stories and characters in marketing, further research is required to examine the effect of specific negative emotions that are evoked by dark characters, such as fear, on consumers' responses, such as their brand perceptions (Campbell et al., 2020).

Considering that fantasy is a genre of contrasts (Saricks, 2009) with the plot depicting positive versus negative characters, this thesis compares consumers' responses to fantasy designed servicescapes to understand whether those consumers who empathise with the positive (versus negative) story character experience more positive (versus negative) emotions, behaviour, and brand personality as a result of engagement in fantasy stories. In doing so, this thesis helps brand managers understand the significance of highlighting the type of story character in servicescapes that reinforces positive brand associations to the servicescape brand.

Despite the benefit of stories in engaging consumers (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008, 2009; Bilandzic et al., 2020) and the ability of fantasy in creating extraordinary servicescapes to escape (Seregina, 2014, 2019; O'Keefe, 2003), consumers' responses to servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories remains unclear (Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Seregina, 2019). A review of the literature revealed a number of gaps in extant research which motivated the formulation of several questions outlined below. To contribute to the servicescape environment, narrative engagement, brand management, and consumer behaviour literatures, this thesis is led by five aims that are addressed within three studies.

1.2 Research questions

Although consumers' engagement with and getting lost in narrative worlds presented in forms of text (Green & Brock, 2000, 2002; Banerjee & Greene, 2013; Walkington et al., 2020), movies (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Green & Clark, 2013), and advertisements (Escalas, 2004a; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Bennett et al., 2020; Campbell et al., 2020) is proven in the marketing literature by multiple scholars, limited research have examined consumers' engagement with fictional stories in physical environments and how storytelling through servicescape atmospherics impacts consumers' responses (Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2008, 2019). As such, the question rises whether exposure to fantasy stories presented through the servicescape atmospherics also results in narrative engagement. This leads to the first research question (hereafter RQ1):

RQ1: Do consumers experience narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes?

Servicescape atmospherics (Bitner, 1992; Vukadin et al., 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020) and stories (Escalas, 2004a; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019) can influence the

consumers' emotions. However, consumers' emotional responses in servicescapes that are designed based on a fantasy story requires further investigation (Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2008, 2019; Seregina, 2019). As such, as the second research question (hereafter RQ2) this thesis examines the affective responses that consumers experience in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories:

RQ2: What affective responses are experienced in fantasy servicescapes?

Different dimensions of a servicescape (Vukadin et al., 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020) and stories (Banerjee & Greene, 2013; Van Laer et al., 2014; Dessart, 2018) can influence the consumers' intentions and behaviour. Yet, the effect of fantasy servicescape atmospherics on consumers' intentions and behaviour calls for further investigation (Mossberg, 2019, Seregina, 2019). Thus, the third research question (hereafter RQ3) examines consumers' intentions and behaviour in fantasy designed servicescapes:

RQ3: What intentions and behaviours are experienced in fantasy servicescapes?

In addition to changing affective and behavioural responses, servicescape atmospherics (Mohtar et al., 2019; Möller & Herm, 2013) and stories (Lundqvist et al., 2013) impact brand personality. Yet, research on consumers' brand personality perceptions when they are exposed to fantasy stories in servicescapes is overlooked (Lundqvist et al., 2013). To fill this gap in the extant literature, the fourth research question (hereafter RQ4) examines how consumers perceive the personality of the brand of fantasy servicescapes:

RQ4: How do fantasy servicescapes influence perceptions of brand personality?

As fantasy stories depict positive and negative characters (Saricks, 2009) and given the fact that consumers' empathy with different characters can influence their responses to the same story (Argo et al., 2008; Wallin et al., 2019), the fifth and last research question (hereafter RQ5) examines how empathy with positive (versus negative) story characters impacts consumers' responses in fantasy designed servicescapes:

RQ5: How consumers' empathy with positive (versus negative) characters influences responses to fantasy servicescapes?

1.3 Research overview

This chapter outlined the importance of the five research questions this thesis examines, based on gaps in extant studies in the servicescape environment, narrative engagement, brand management, and consumer behaviour literatures. Given the context of this thesis, investigating consumers' extraordinary experiences of fantasy stories in servicescapes, the introduction chapter, and the proceeding chapters, are each titled with reference to a famous fantasy story that helps highlight the purpose of the chapter.

Starting with the Introduction chapter, as the overall purpose of this thesis is to examine consumers' extraordinary experiences of engagement with fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics, the chapter is titled, "Experiencing *"A Whole New World"*: The importance of telling fantasy stories through servicescape atmospherics". The title, *A Whole New World*, is borrowed from Disney's animated feature film, *Aladdin* (2019). Lyrically, *A Whole New World* describes Aladdin showing the confined princess a life of freedom while riding on a magic carpet. As fantasy stories help create new worlds for consumers in servicescapes (Seregina, 2018), the title helps describe the thesis purpose while also allowing to attract the readers' attention to the chapter and to the entire thesis (Lewison & Hartley, 2005; Hartley, 2007; Jacques & Sebire, 2010; Buter & Van Raan, 2011; Keating et al., 2019).

Following the Introduction chapter, Chapter 2 presents a critical review of the literatures on servicescape environment, narrative engagement, brand management, and consumer behaviour to identify the gaps in the literature which, in-turn, lead to the development of the research questions for the current thesis. Given the stream of information Chapter 2 discusses from different literatures, it is titled, ""*Inside Information"*: Implementation of fantasy stories in servicescapes". *Inside Information* is borrowed from the title of the twelfth chapter of Tolkien's (1937) fantasy novel, *The Hobbit*.

Chapter 3 outlines the design and methodology that underpin the investigation of the five research questions. The chapter starts with an overview of the research paradigm, outlining the research ontology and epistemology, and explains the mixed-methods data collection procedure, including the in-depth interviews in Studies 1 and 2 followed by an online survey in Study 3. Chapter 3 is titled, ""*Three is Company"*: A mixed-methods approach to examining consumers' experiences of fantasy stories in servicescapes", and the catchphrase, *Three is Company*, is borrowed from the third chapter of the first book

of Tolkien's (1954) fantasy novel, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring.* This chapter of the novel describes how the three story characters, Frodo, Samwise, and Pippin journey together through the Shire. Considering that the current thesis involves two qualitative and one quantitative studies, the title, *Three is Company*, helps describe the mixed-method approach of the thesis.

Following the methodology, Chapter 4 presents the findings and primary insights from the data gathered through ten in-depth interviews conducted in Study 1. To contribute to addressing the research questions, Study 1 investigates designers' opinions on the why, when, and how of implementing fantasy stories in servicescapes. Designers were asked about the types of experiences they create in a servicescape, the type of stories they use for servicescape design, and the reasons that might encourage or discourage them from implementing a story in servicescape design. Furthermore, Study 1 findings identify the circumstances in which designers consider using a story for designing the servicescape, the servicescape elements that are more effective in representing a story, and the extent to which mimicry of a story is recommended. The design experts also share about the affective, behavioural, and brand responses they aim to evoke in consumers by telling fantasy stories through the servicescape atmospherics. Given the purpose of Study 1 to explore designers' perspectives on designing fantasy servicescapes, Chapter 4 is titled, "*"Advice from a Caterpillar"*: Incorporation of fantasy stories in the servicescape from a designer's perspective". The catchphrase, *Advice from a Caterpillar,* is the title from the fifth chapter of Carroll's (1865) fantasy novel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* The caterpillar in Carroll's novel helps the main character, Alice, by providing advice to her towards achieving her goals, such as how to grow or shrink by eating a mushroom. Given the expertise of designers on different atmospherics, including but not limited to colour combinations, and the fact that the researcher in this thesis asked their advice for designing servicescapes based on fantasy stories, Carroll's caterpillar seemed to wisely represent designers' contribution to this thesis.

Following designer opinions, the research explores consumers' experiences of visiting a fantasy servicescape in Study 2 (Chapter 5). Specifically, Study 2 investigates whether consumers engage with fantasy stories told through the servicescape atmospherics, and to explore the outcomes of engagement with stories, in terms of consumers' emotions, behaviour, and brand experiences. In addition, considering designers' opinions regarding the level of story mimicry, the study examines how the level of perceived mimicry at the

servicescape influences consumers' engagement with the presented stories. Study 2 is titled "*"An Unexpected Journey":* Consumers' experiences of fantasy servicescapes" as the researcher explored consumers' experiences of a fantasy servicescape, in the case of Study 2, The Green Dragon Inn, in Matamata, New Zealand. *An Unexpected Journey* is the title of Jackson's (2012) high fantasy film, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, which was made at the same location that Study 2 collected data from. Consumers go to fantasy servicescapes, where unexpected things take place (Mossberg, 2008), in order to escape their ordinary lives (Seregina, 2014, 2019). This title, therefore, clearly signifies the purpose of Study 2, to examine consumers' experiences of fantasy servicescapes.

Having explored the designers' opinions and consumers' experiences in Studies 1 and 2, to validate and support the findings, a survey is conducted in the third study (Chapter 6) to examine consumers' experiences of narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes, and to understand how engagement with fantasy stories influences consumers' affective and behavioural responses. In addition, the study examines how narrative engagement affects brand personality. The study, further, examines how empathy with the positive (versus negative) character of a fantasy story affects consumers' responses. Given that Study 3 examines consumers' responses to a servicescape designed based on the story, *Snow White*, and compared two contrasting designs of the same restaurant highlighting the positive story character (Snow White) and the negative character (The Evil Queen), the study is titled, "The Fairest Servicescape of Them All: Consumers' experiences of servicescapes designed based on positive versus negative story characters". The title is adapted from the Evil Queen's mantra, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" in Brothers Grimm's (1812) fantasy novel, *Snow White*. The Evil Queen in the *Snow White* story asked this question of her magical mirror to show her who's the most beautiful lady in their land. As Study 3 examines consumers' experiences of two contradicting designs of a restaurant that highlight Snow White versus The Evil Queen, the title signifies how the consumers perceive the two designs, based on the characters.

After providing the findings of Study 3, the thesis comes to its conclusions in Chapter 7 by discussing how each of the three studies contributed in addressing the five questions of this thesis. Thereafter, the theoretical contributions and managerial implications of the thesis are discussed. The chapter follows by reviewing the research limitations and concludes by suggesting avenues for further research. The conclusion chapter is titled, "*"The Return Journey"*: The contributions, implications, and future research avenues for

consumers' experiences of fantasy servicescapes". *The Return Journey* is the title of the eighteenth and penultimate chapter of Tolkien's (1937) novel, *The Hobbit*. As the conclusion chapter presents the thesis contributions based on the three studies' findings and discusses the theoretical and managerial implications of this thesis, the catchphrase, *The Return Journey*, signifies what the researcher has to share with readers of this thesis about designers' and consumers' perceptions towards servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories.

With regard to the overall purpose of this thesis to examine consumers' experiences of fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics, as a monolith project, it is titled, "*"There and Back Again"*: An examination of consumers' experiences of fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics". *There and Back Again* is the title of the book written by the character, Bilbo Baggins, in *The Hobbit* (1937), in which, Bilbo recounts a journey which took him from his light-hearted, ordinary surroundings to an unexpected, more sinister territory. Given the similarities of this thesis to Bilbo's book in describing consumers' extraordinary experiences of servicescapes where the consumers are exposed to the events and characters of fantasy stories, this title seemed appropriate to describe the thesis purpose.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

"Inside Information": Implementation of fantasy stories in servicescapes

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the importance of this thesis was presented. The purpose of this chapter is to review and synthesise relevant literature in order to theoretically frame this thesis. Specifically, the extant research on environmental psychology, storytelling, fantasy, narrative transportation, empathy with story characters, narrative engagement, as well as brand personality will be described and discussed. Throughout this chapter, the discussion will critically review the extant literature, whereby underscoring the need for further research focusing on consumers' experiences of fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics.

This chapter begins with an overview of the literature on environmental psychology and defines the terminology related to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework that is used throughout this thesis as the foundation explaining the relationships between the stimuli in a servicescape and consumers' affective and behavioural responses. It then explores the literature on storytelling, followed by discussing the significance of using stories in designing servicescapes. Subsequently, in line with the purpose of this thesis, the literature on fantasy, as a story genre, is defined and the use of fantasy elements in servicescape design is reviewed. The literature review follows by exploring consumers' experience of narrative transportation and describing the antecedents and outcomes of transportation to stories. Thereafter, consumers' empathy with different story characters, as a factor influencing responses to a story is discussed. The chapter then follows by describing narrative engagement as the construct explaining the experience of stories told through servicescape atmospherics. Then, the literature on brand personality is reviewed. After presenting the gaps within the extant literature, the chapter concludes by posing the research questions.

2.2 Environmental psychology

Donovan and Rossiter (1982) present what is considered as a valuable theoretical model for studying the effect of servicescape atmospherics on consumers' internal evaluations, and behaviour (see also Baker, 1986; Baker, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1988; Bitner, 1992; Krishna, 2012; Vukadin et al., 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020). However, research on the dynamics of human-environment exchange originates from the works of environmental psychologists (e.g., Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Russell & Pratt, 1980).

By testing Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model in retail settings, Donovan and Rossiter (1982) suggest that environmental stimuli (S) affect consumers' internal evaluations (O) that, in-turn, elicit behavioural responses (R). The environmental psychology or Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model is one of the most prominent and robust models used by consumer researchers that provides the theoretical basis for understanding consumers' behaviour in servicescape environments (see also Bigne, Chatzipanagiotou, & Ruiz, 2020; Laato, Islam, Farooq, & Dhir, 2020; Chopdar & Balakrishnan, 2020).

The following subsections describe the terminology related to the SOR model used throughout this thesis as the foundation explaining the relationships between the stimuli in a servicescape, the affective evaluations evoked by stimuli, and consumers' responses that manifest as either approach or avoidance behaviours in the servicescape.

2.2.1 Stimuli: Servicescape atmospherics

Two intertwined streams of research in the marketing and retail literature, atmospherics and servicescapes, help understand the effect of environmental stimuli on consumers' subsequent responses (see Mari & Poggesi, 2013). The term atmospherics is credited to Kotler (1973–74, p.50) who defines it as "the effort to design buying environments to produce in the buyer specific emotional effects that enhance his purchase probability". The term, servicescape, attributed to Bitner (1992), is defined as physical environments built for commercial exchanges.

The servicescape atmosphere is a multidimensional construct that comprises ambient, design and social cues (i.e., stimuli) (see Baker, 1987; Bitner, 1992; Baker et al., 2002; Ezeh & Harris, 2007; Wang & Mattila, 2015; Roggeveen et al., 2020). Ambient factors refer to background characteristics of an environment that influence the consumers at a

subconscious level and can be visual (e.g., light), acoustic (e.g., music), olfactory (e.g., scent), haptic (e.g., temperature), texture (e.g., smooth, rough) or a combination thereof. Design factors, by contrast, exist at the forefront of consumers' awareness, such as colour, layout, décor, and architecture of a servicescape. In addition, social factors refer to the number and behaviour of the employees and other consumers in the servicescape that can affect consumers' emotions and behaviour (Bitner, 1992; Ezeh & Harris, 2007; Wang & Mattila, 2015; Demoulin & Willems, 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020).

In line with Donovan and Rossiter's (1982) conceptualisation of the SOR paradigm for the commercial environment, servicescape dimensions have the potential to influence consumers' responses, including their internal evaluations and behaviour (Bitner, 1992; Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994; Huddleston, Behe, Driesener, & Minahan, 2018; Lindberg, Salomonson, Sundström, & Wendin, 2018; Roggeveen et al., 2020).

Evidence for retailers' manipulations of environmental elements to change behaviour is abundant. For example, studies on restaurants have shown that music tempo can affect pace of shopping, length of staying, and the amount of money that consumers spend in a retail environment (Milliman, 1986). As another example, bright (versus dim) lighting encourages the consumers to examine and handle more products (Areni & Kim, 1994; Summers & Hebert, 2001).

Similarly, design elements are proven to influence consumers' evaluations of the objects (e.g., Baker et al., 1994) in the environment, and subsequently, their decision making. For example, consumers are willing to pay a higher price for products sold in an upscale store even before they know the actual price (Baker et al., 2002). This is partly because design cues such as colour and layout help consumers in forming cognitive evaluations such as value for quality and better service in the servicescape (Kumar & Kim, 2014). As such, retailers emphasise the appearance of their stores through a striking design, unique look, and feel (Floor, 2007; Wiedmann et al., 2018; De Keyser et al., 2020).

With regards to social cues, stores characterised by prestige-image, where salespeople wear professional attire and greet the consumers are perceived as offering higher quality (Baker et al., 1994). Thus, retailers such as Abercrombie & Fitch place a high importance on the attire and behaviour of staff (Halpern & Odell, 2010). Social cues in a servicescape "undeniably" influence consumers' cognitive evaluations (Kumar & Kim, 2014, p. 687). For example, a salesperson's sense of humour is proven to be effective at down-regulating

consumes' negative emotions (Samson & Gross, 2012), and to help consumers cope with dissatisfactory or unpleasant consumption experiences (McGraw, Warren, & Kan, 2015).

Most research on consumer-environment relations "view the commercial environment solely in discrete features" with a focus on antecedent-consequent relations between the stimuli and corresponding consumer responses (Eroglu & Machleit, 2008, p.826). Despite their advantages, however, such fragmented efforts isolate one or a few stimuli as the sole cause of outcomes that are far too complex to be explained by a single category of environmental determinants (Eroglu & Machleit, 2008). By contrast, few studies apply a holistic approach in examining the effect of atmospherics on consumers (see Werner & Altman, 2000; Babin, Chebat, & Michon, 2004; Harris & Ezeh, 2008; Healy, Beverland, Oppewal, & Sands, 2007; Ballantine et al., 2010; Teller & Dennis, 2012).

The holistic or transactional approach, that is considered as the main theoretical foundation of environmental psychology (see Stokols, 1987; Saegert & Winkel, 1990) evolved based on the idea that a given system cannot be explained by considering its component parts separately and that the focus should be on understanding one's whole transactions (experiences and actions) with an environment, the relationship between its aspects, and how they work in combination (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Werner & Altman, 2000; Eroglu & Machleit, 2008; Ballantine et al., 2010). Based on the holistic approach, phenomena must be studied as a gestalt system consisting of the physical environment, people (including both, staff and consumers), processes (psychological and social), and temporal qualities (Werner, Altman, Brown, & Ginat, 1993; Werner & Altman, 2000; Mari & Poggesi, 2013; Kumar, Purani, & Sahadev, 2017).

As discussed in Chapter 1, the current thesis investigates how fantasy stories that are incorporated into servicescape stimuli including (but not limited to) the music, light, and décor affect consumers. While atmospheric elements are all, more or less capable of representing a story, following Eroglu & Machleit (2008), stimuli are examined from a holistic approach in this thesis.

The following section explains organism; consumers' affective and cognitive states that can be influenced by the stimuli in a commercial environment.

2.2.2 Organism: Affective states

Organism (O) in the SOR model refers to consumers' internal processes which contain perceptual, physiological, thinking, and feeling activities that intervene between stimuli and consumers' behavioural responses (Bagozzi, 1986). Researchers identify two types of internal evaluations induced by the environment: cognitive and affective evaluations (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992). Cognitive evaluations relate to a physiological activity in which sensory stimulation cues are converted to meaningful information based on which we make conclusions about different aspects of a retailer's offer (e.g., price, quality, etc.) (Bettman, 1979; Baker et al., 2002). By contrast, affective evaluation is associated with our emotions and feelings toward the offer (e.g., Ward & Russell, 1981; Bagozzi, 1986) and are a judgment regarding whether the offer is pleasant, attractive, valuable, likable, or preferable (Russell & Snodgrass, 1987). As Mehrabian and Russell (1974) postulate, any environment is capable of evoking different emotions in consumers.

Congruent with the majority of research on servicescape atmospherics that examine only the affective component of internal evaluations (Yoo, Park, & MacInnis, 1998; Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006) and given the purpose of this thesis in examining consumers' emotions in fantasy servicescapes, the focus is on affective responses. In general, the number of studies that examine both affective and cognitive evaluations is limited in the literature (Bitner, 1992; Kumar & Kim, 2014).

In line with the SOR model, the majority of research in environmental psychology focus on the 3 dimensions of Mehrabian and Russell (1974) as expected affective reactions to environmental stimuli (Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2001). Known by the acronym PAD, these emotions are Pleasure – Displeasure, Arousal – Non-arousal and Dominance – Submissiveness. Pleasure – displeasure refers to the degree to which the consumers feel good, happy or satisfied in environments; arousal – non-arousal is the degree to which a person feels excited, stimulated or active; and dominance – submissiveness is the extent to which the consumer feels in control of, or free to act in an environment (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982).

In providing empirical support for their notion that the three emotional dimensions sufficiently account for the variety of consumers' emotional responses to stimuli, Mehrabian and Russell pointed to Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum's (1957) study stating that the three dimensions of evaluation, activity, and potency adequately account for

people's cognitive interpretations of various physical objects and social events (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). Subsequent research, however, found pleasantness and arousal as adequately representing one's affective responses to a wide range of environmental stimuli and therefore, only focus on the two (Russell, 1978; Russell & Pratt, 1980). In addition, while evidence for the suitability of pleasure and arousal appears convincing over a broad spectrum of situations, evidence for the dominance dimension is more tenuous. Dominance requires a cognitive interpretation by consumers which makes it not purely applicable in situations calling for affective responses (Russell & Pratt, 1980).

In conditions where the environment is neither pleasing nor displeasing, moderate arousal has been specified by Mehrabian & Russell (1974) as enhancing consumers' approach behaviours. By contrast, very low or very high levels of arousal lead to avoidance behaviours. Also, while higher levels of arousal result in higher approach behaviour when the environment is pleasant, in unpleasant environments, higher arousal will increase avoidance behaviours in consumers. As such, the consumers are expected to be spending more time and money in environments where they feel a) pleasure and b) a moderate to high level of arousal (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982).

While researchers interested in the effect of physical environments have found PAD typology as parsimonious and useful (Baker et al., 1992; Sherman, Mathur, & Smith, 1997), PAD's dimensions were later criticised for being too narrow in scope and not encompassing a comprehensive range of emotional responses (Richins, 1997; Machleit & Eroglu, 2000). More importantly, given that consumer experiences are situation-specific, emotion taxonomies from psychology are not devised to measure emotions in a consumption context and therefore, recent studies question the applicability, reliability, and validity of psychological scales in consumer research (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005; Schoefer & Diamantopoulos, 2008).

Accordingly, Eroglu et al. (2001) recommend more comprehensive emotion typologies that use *discrete* emotions such as Richins' (1997) Consumption Emotions Set (CES) and either cover the entire set of the emotions, or those hypothesised, to be relevant in a specific research context. Richins' (1997) emotions set with 16 descriptors covers most emotional reactions in consumption settings. The items achieve satisfactory reliability and can be used to test specific emotions hypothesised as antecedents, consequences, or moderator variables (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999).

Following Richin's (1997) emotion typology, the positive and negative emotions that consumers are likely to experience in fantasy servicescapes are explored (Studies 1 and 2) and measured (Study 3) in this thesis by considering them as being discrete.

The next section distinguishes between consumers' approach and avoidance behaviours as final responses to the commercial environment.

2.2.3 Response: Approach and avoidance behaviours

The responses in SOR paradigm represent consumers' final decisions in an environment that can be classified as either approach or avoidance behaviour (e.g., Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Sherman et al., 1997). All positive actions directed at a particular commercial setting, such as one's desire to stay in, explore, and spend more than planned for are referred to as approach behaviours. By contrast, avoidance behaviours reflect the opposite (Mehrabian & Russell 1974; Bitner, 1992). Based on the SOR model, behavioural decisions within and toward an environment are a result of the emotional states consumers experience in that environment. For example, consumers are likely to spend time and money in stores where they feel pleasant, whereas unpleasant environments are avoided (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982).

Further, behavioural research undertaken by social psychologists find a gap between one's intentions and behaviour with related theories, such as the theory of reasoned action (see Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985, 1991), proposing that a person's *intention* to perform a behaviour is the most immediate and important predictor of that behaviour (Sheeran, 2002). To clarify this gap in detail, the following discussion of the theory of planned behaviour considers consumers' intentions when deciding to act, particularly, in a servicescape.

2.2.3.1 Planned behaviour

According to the Theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, 2020), human behaviour is guided by three considerations. First are beliefs about the likely outcomes of a behaviour and evaluations of these outcomes (behavioural beliefs). Behavioural beliefs produce a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward a certain behaviour. The second relate to the beliefs about the normative expectations of others and a person's motivation to comply with these expectations (normative beliefs). Normative beliefs result in perceived social

pressure or subjective norm. As the theory highlights, what we believe other people think we should do (i.e., social norms) may be more crucial than our own individual preferences and thus the purchase decisions we make in public might be different from what we would have done in private. Known as control beliefs, the third type of considerations relate to one's beliefs about the presence of factors that facilitate or impede performing a behaviour (Ajzen, 2020). According to Ajzen (2020) control factors include "required skills and abilities; availability or lack of time, money, and other resources; cooperation by other people; and so forth (p. 315). Control beliefs give rise to perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 2020) that Solomon, Russell-Bennett, and Previte (2012) described as "the belief that you can actually control the situation and make changes" (p. 230).

The attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and the perception of behavioural control together form an intention. In general, the more favourable one's attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control, the intention to perform the behaviour will be stronger. Finally, given a sufficient degree of actual control over the behaviour, people are expected to carry out their intentions when the opportunity arises. An intention is thus assumed to be the immediate antecedent of a particular behaviour. However, as the theory highlights, even when consumers have sincere intentions, many factors might interfere with the performance of the actual behaviour (Ajzen, 2020).

The interventions that change a person's behaviour could be directed at one or more of its determinants: attitudes, subjective norms, or perceptions of behavioural control (Ajzen, 2020). For example, in the case of Study 2 (Chapter 5), a consumer might have a favourable attitude toward buying a second glass of ginger beer at The Green Dragon Inn at Hobbiton Movie Set. She/he might further realise that other visitors are also buying a second beer (favourable subjective norm). However, the consumer might not actually buy beer due to varied reasons such as time limit, restricted options to choose from, financial reasons, and any other factor that eventually hinder the person from performing their actual behaviour, despite having the intention to do so. Thus, intention finds expression in behaviour only if the behaviour is under volitional control that relates to whether a person can decide at will to perform or not to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, 2020).

In summary, the theory of planned behaviour assumes that while consumers' intentions are the most important predictors of behaviour, people may not always have sufficient control over performing a behaviour to actually enact their intentions, and as behaviours pose difficulties of execution that limit volitional control (Ajzen, 2020), it is therefore

useful to assess consumers' behavioural considerations to understand why they do or do not act upon a certain intention, as the second study of this thesis investigates.

Having discussed how the servicescape atmospherics influence the consumers' responses, the next section explains the significance of stories in marketing and how storytelling in servicescapes creates unique, extraordinary experiences for the consumers. In this regard, a definition of stories is provided (Section 2.3.) and the discussion follows by identifying the types of stories used in marketing with a focus on using story elements for designing the servicescapes. The distinction between themed and story-based servicescape designs is outlined and an explanation is provided on how servicescape atmospherics represent a non-linear story plot (Section 2.3.1.).

2.3 Storytelling

Van Laer et al (2014, p. 798) restrict story to mean "a storyteller's *[retailer's]* account of an event or a sequence of events leading to a transition from an initial state to a later state or outcome (see also Bennett & Royle, 2016). In line with this definition, stories imply essential elements that include the story 1) plot, 2) characters, 3) climax, and the 4) outcome. The story plot relates to the temporal sequence of the events (Van Laer et al., 2014; Liu, Shmilovici, & Last, 2020). In contrast to reality in which time has a continuous flow, time in stories figures as episodes (i.e., situations via scenes in acts in a drama) with each episode having a beginning, middle, and end (Bruner, 1990; Escalas, 1998; Liu et al., 2020). A scene is equivalent to a situation, and a situation represents the conjunction of a specific time, at a physical place, the atmospherics, props (objects) and people (see Bearden & Woodside, 1976). Interactions (e.g., talking) and actions and events (e.g., touching, eating) occur within scenes. The second element relates to the characters (including but not limited to people and animals) who have a role in the story plot. As the third element, story climax deals with modulation of the dramatic intensity along the plot; and finally, a story's outcome is derived from a character's resolution of a conflict or misfortunate event (Stern, 1994; Green & Brock, 2000; Phillips & Mc-Quarrie, 2010; Banerjee & Greene, 2012; Liu et al., 2020).

A story expresses how and why life changes, describing a situation or context in which life is relatively in balance, but then an event – that screenwriters refer to as the inciting incident (Woodside, 2010; Liu et al., 2020) - throws a character's life out of balance (e.g., an antagonist temporarily preventing the protagonist from achieving her/his main goal,

or a situation where the protagonist lacks the skill required to achieve their goal, McKee, 2003). A good storyteller then, describes how the protagonist works with scarce resources, makes difficult choices, and finally acts despite existing risks to achieve what they want. Thus, there is a fundamental conflict in stories between one's subjective expectations and the cruel, objective reality that the story characters need to deal with (McKee, 2003; Fog et al., 2005; Woodside, 2010; McRoberts, 2018; Liu et al., 2020).

To make sense of a specific story, a story receiver (the consumer) asks herself/himself who the principal protagonist is? What is keeping the protagonist from achieving her/his goal? Fear? Confusion? Personal conflicts with friends, family, lovers? Social, or physical conflicts? Not enough time to get things done? What does the protagonist want to restore balance in life? Finally, the story receiver asks what actions does the protagonist take to achieve her/his desire in the face of these antagonistic forces? (Woodside, 2010).

As discussed subsequently in detail, consumers' imagination of and engagement with the story and its characters in search of potential answers to the foresaid questions leads to activation of affective, cognitive, and belief changes that eventually affect intentions and behaviour (McKee, 2003; Woodside, 2010; Green & Clark, 2013; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019).

The why and how of incorporating story elements in servicescape design is explained in the following section.

2.3.1 Storytelling servicescapes

As an eternal, universal activity, it is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine a time in the history of human life without stories (Van Laer et al., 2014; Moore, 2012; Boyd, 2009). Throughout the years, an extensive range of branding and advertising companies, and consumer researchers have realised the value of stories in marketing, providing as much examples on how companies can differentiate their offer and benefit on a market level by telling stories to consumers (e.g., Mossberg, 2008; Lundqvist et al., 2013; Van Laer et al., 2014; Pera, 2017; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Campos et al., 2018; Mossberg, 2019; Jolliffe & Piboonrungroj, 2020).

Amongst the variety of stories used in a marketing context, one could refer to stories about companies and/or their products, such as branding stories (Lundqvist et al., 2013; Woodside, 2010; Wertime, 2002), advertising stories (Dessart, 2018; Escalas, 2004a),

consumer stories (Stern, 1995; Chang, 2009) and the development of a business concept around a certain story (Deighton, 1992; Mossberg & Johansen, 2006; Mossberg, 2008). As a global trend in the experience industry (Mossberg, 2008), the focus of this thesis is on the latter type of storytelling. Cafes and restaurants (e.g., The Green Dragon Inn at Matamata, New Zealand, and Story Book Dining at Artist Point with Snow White in Florida, United States), brand stores (e.g., American Girl, see Borghini et al., 2009) and hotels (e.g., The Shire of Montana in Montana, United States) are themed upon a story. Similarly, theme parks (e.g., Disneyland, Gottdiener, 1998) and touristic attractions are evolved based on the power of literature or films, and consumers' desire to remain in a fantasy world after having read/seen stories such as *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Hobbit* (Peaslee, 2011; Dybedal, 1998) that result in a huge interest to visit the locations where these books or films are set, or are themed upon (Mossberg, 2008).

Mossberg (2008) differentiates between themed servicescapes and those designed based on stories. In general, a theme is derived from a certain idea or a subject that permeates the atmospherics, and both types of servicescapes can be dramaturgical. However, while story elements "might be used but it is not necessary" (p. 199) in themed environments, a story-based servicescape is built by extracting fundamental dramaturgy elements that represent different characters, a conflict, and the actions made in different episodes of a story plot (Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Jolliffe & Piboonrungroj, 2020).

For example, a restaurant that is designed around a story has a script and the characters (e.g., the story hero), and typically there is a sequence in which the story is told. The personnel may have defined roles and play parts that are drawn up using the story that, in-turn, helps enhance the staging, and in facilitating consumers' engagement with the story. The personnel can also guide the consumers by providing story-related information, and thus keep the story parts together (Mossberg, 2008).

Although stories consist of a series of imagined scenes and episodes (Lewis, 1966), when designing servicescapes based on a specific story, not all episodes might be embedded in the design (Mossberg, 2008), especially due to limitations in space and the retailer's budget. As Mossberg (2008, p. 199) contends, "the sequence does not have to be linear", and the concept "can be built on non-linear dramaturgy" where a story is represented by a number of parallel, non-chronological events that lack the characters' actions from the start to the end. For example, we see characters illustrated on the walls of Alice's Fantasy Restaurant in Tokyo, Japan, and the layout (e.g., the Croquet Ground), furniture, and

mannequins simulating the story, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, but the atmospherics convey a selected number of episodes from the entire story plot.

As such, a business such as a restaurant can be built by incorporating cues from a fictitious or real story that differentiate the servicescape from its competitors (Mossberg, 2008). This thesis provides insight into themed servicescapes that are designed based on fantasy stories. The chapter distinguishes between fantasy and real stories in the following section (Section 2.4.). In the meantime, the significance of themed, story-based environments for consumers is explained.

The primary retail mission of themed servicescapes is to offer services and products in an entertaining context, which is important given the many alternatives that consumers have in the contemporary retail world, such as shopping online (Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2008). This explains why servicescapes conceptualised upon stories attract consumers (Mansvelt, 2008; Edwards, 2000; Gottdiener, 1998; Sherry, 1998). Stories engage and entertain consumers (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Hollenbeck et al., 2008), and thus help retailers create experiences that fascinate peoples' dreams and emotions (Fog et al, 2005). The power of attraction, as such, depends on the story which makes it difficult for competitors to copy (Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Campos et al., 2018; Jolliffe & Piboonrungroj, 2020).

Consumers visit themed servicescapes not only to make purchases but to also engage in fantasies, feelings, and fun (see Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Le et al., 2019; Pina & Dias, 2021). The important role of fantasy elements in designing servicescapes is also emphasised by Hollenbeck et al. (2008) and Kozinets et al. (2002). Malls are implicated in the production of magic and fantasy (Mansvelt, 2008), more and more becoming theatres in which consumers can create a world of their own (see also Badot & Filser, 2007). Their built environment purvey myths of elsewhereness (Hopkins, 1990). As such, retailers pay attention to aesthetics in planning the design of servicescapes, and to the process by which consumers create meaning out of their physical experiences of place, as stores can tell stories (Kozinets et al., 2002; Mossberg, 2008, Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2019), stimulate our imagination, involve us emotionally and entertain us (see Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Van Laer et al., 2014; Bilandzic et al., 2020).

According to Bitner (1992), the servicescape is rich in clues regarding what a retailer can offer and therefore, when a servicescape is intended to tell a story, retailers organise it based on a script (Mossberg, 2008) and by detailed attention to atmospherics (Caru & Cova, 2007), and providing the prerequisites that reflect the story, such as the staging, props, music, lighting, colours, and other related factors that encourage the consumer to become engaged, and further, to co-create (Mossberg, 2008, Pera, 2017).

A considerable number of studies examine the characteristics of themed servicescapes, and how extraordinary environments impact consumers' behaviour (Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2019; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Seregina, 2019). However, despite its importance as a competitive marketing tool, the link between storytelling and servicescapes remains overlooked (see Mossberg & Johansen, 2006; Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Seregina, 2019).

Consistent with a purpose of this thesis, Lundqvist et al. (2013) call for future research on the psychological mechanisms underlying the effects of storytelling, as well as whether a story influences consumers' emotional engagement. Moreover, Arnould (2007) suggests retailers understand "the operation of transportation" by consumers (p. 191). Another important issue this thesis examines stems from the lack of empirical research about consumers' responses to fictive (versus real) stories, with extant studies examining consumers' experiences of fictional stories in areas such as advertising (Gurzki, Schlatter, & Woisetschläger, 2019) and emotional melodramatic entertainment (Argo et al., 2008) but not in servicescape environments (see Mossberg & Eide, 2017). Therefore, research on consumers' responses to fictional stories in servicescapes remains overlooked.

The next section provides a definition of fantasy stories followed by a discussion on the use of fantasy in consumer research.

2.4 Fantasy

The concept of fantasy does not have a clear, standard definition. There are diverse viewpoints about it that at times, even contradict each other. Meanwhile, dictionaries present fantasy as being closely connected to one's imaginations, and strongly opposing facts, reality, and truth (Seregina, 2014). For example, the *Oxford dictionary of English* (2010) defines fantasy as the "activity of imagining impossible or improbable things" (p.632). Fantasy is referred to as the liberation of the mind, providing freedom (Small,

2008) and enabling the mind to construct anything an individual wants (Rubin & Howe, 1986). According to Knudsen, Rickly, and Vidon (2016) fantasy is "a domain of pleasure and as such it functions to avoid an encounter with the real" (p. 43).

2.4.1 Genre

In general, fictional stories, as the name signifies, are stories whose plots are purely imaginary or do not claim to literally represent real-world events (see Green et al., 2004; Green et al., 2006). By contrast, non-fictional stories are developed upon real characters and events (Van Laer et al., 2014).

Harmon and Holman (1990, 2003) classified fictional stories that describe imaginary, magical, and supernatural elements and creatures, such as dragons and fairies, under the genre of fantasy. Accordingly, Carroll's (1865) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* story, Tolkien's (1954-1955) *The Lord of the Rings* and Rowlling's (1997-2007) *Harry Potter* are considered as prominent examples of the fantasy genre (Harmon & Holman, 2003). As highlighted by Saricks (2009), "Fantasy must be the most ubiquitous of the genres, as there are fantasy elements in most fiction, almost regardless of how realistic the story is. It is also an ancient form, the genre of myth and legend, … the fairy tales, and stories of our childhood. The world of faerie … magic, sorcery, and enchantment all live on in fantasy" (p. 36). Today, fantasy is considered as an enormously popular category, not a neglected step-genre shivering in shadows (O'Keefe, 2003).

Fantasy frequently overlaps with Science Fiction. Yet, several subtle, critical differences exist. While science fiction emphasises ideas, fantasy delves more into relationships and therefore, fantasy stories appeal more to one's emotions than to the intellect. Science fiction and fantasy both deal with otherness of time or place; the settings may be contemporary or historical but there is something out of harmony. However, while science fiction worlds could be accepted as possible - even if improbable - fantasy exists in a world most people believe never could be. The success of each fantasy story is dependent upon creating a magical world populated by characters to whom we relate. The key to fantasy is thus presence of magic or enchantment that most clearly distinguishes it from other genres. Magic may manifest itself in the existence of a magical sword or personal magical powers; there may be creatures that can only exist in a magical world; or there may be a feeling of otherness, and a sense of enchantment that grows throughout

the story. The goal of fantasy stories is to create worlds and set audience in them (Saricks, 2009).

Fantasy, in and of itself, encompasses several sub-genres characterised by specific settings or by overlaps with other literary genres or with forms of speculative fiction (Dozois, 2014). The next section specifies the sub-genre, storyline, and characterisation of the fantasy stories that this thesis investigates.

2.4.2 Subgenre

As a subgenre of fantasy, High Fantasy stories are defined as being set in a purely imaginary, alternative or secondary world when compared to Low Fantasy stories that are characterised as being set in the real, primary world, or a more rational, familiar, albeit fictional world with inclusion of magical elements (Buss & Karnowski, 2000; Perry, 2003; Gamble & Yates, 2008; Stableford, 2009). Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, as well as Brothers Grimm's Snow White, for example, are regarded as archetypal works of high fantasy (Hunt & Lenz, 2005; Dozois, 2014; Sergeant, 2019). As fantasy and magical elements can be used in the marketing context to purvey myths of elsewhereness (Seregina, 2014, 2018), this thesis focuses on high-fantasy stories as being set in an alternative world, conveying a sense of elsewhereness to consumers.

2.4.3 Storyline

The storyline in fantasy features Good versus Evil forces, as protagonists who are often the Heroes in the story battle and ultimately, conquer malevolent forces: the antagonists or the Anti-Heroes (see Saricks, 2009; Timmerman, 1983). Unlike Horror that creates a nightmare situation in which the characters strive to survive and temporarily defeat the evil forces, fantasy is more affirming, giving protagonists the chance to win the battle against the dark, and to permanently defeat the evil. Thus, fantasy is an optimistic genre where good forces conquer the evil (Saricks, 2009). In Tolkien's (1954) *The Lord of the Rings,* for example, we see the good characters come into their own powers and join the battle to save the world.

2.4.4 Characterisation

Just as the storylines focus on the battle between good and evil, so are the story characters usually recognisable as being one or the other. Clearly defined stereotypical characters

are an appeal in many genres and fantasy is no exception (Saricks, 2009). As characters of fantasy stories are stereotyped as positive or negative, any mention of good or negative character throughout this thesis refers to the character's personality and not the events happening in the related story plot.

Characters play a crucial role in fantasy (Saricks, 2009). The characters are on physical, or less tangible, mental journeys of discovery. They may have unique gifts and powers, or intelligence, magical in their deepest nature that they discover in themselves and seek to master (Timmerman, 1983). Therefore, fantasy stories have strong appeal as coming-of-age stories (Saricks, 2009).

Characters may include mythical creatures such as wizards, dragons, unicorns, and elves, or more familiar ones. In many high fantasy stories, there is a knowledgeable, mystical mentor, often a formidable wizard or warrior who provides the main character with advice and help (e.g., Gandalf the Grey in *The Lord of the Rings*). In some high fantasy stories, there is also a mysterious Dark Lord, often obsessed with taking over the whole world and killing the hero (e.g., Sauron in *The Lord of the Rings*). The latter is an evil wizard or a sorcerer who commands a huge army and highly feared servants (Clute & Grant, 1999).

In addition to being considered as a literary genre, elements of fantasy are used in constructing contemporary commercial environments (Kozinets et al., 2002), and the importance of fantasy as part of playful and imaginative consumption has been long noted by consumer researchers (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The following section explains the significance of fantasy specifically in servicescape design.

2.4.5 Fantasy servicescapes

Fantasy is seen within consumer research as the creation of worlds that are free from the limitations of what is normally known and believed (Sherry et al., 2001; Martin, 2004; Kozinets et al., 2004; Seregina, 2014, 2018). It is a place of escape (Kozinets, 2001; Martin, 2004; Mossberg, 2019), where consumers are entertained through a pleasurable diversion from their lives (Seregina, 2014, 2018), aided by consumption environments and objects (Sherry et al., 2001; Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011; Kozinets et al., 2004; Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2019).

Fantasy environments have been strongly connected to the idea of Utopia that brings a sense of being detached from real life; enabling relaxation, renewal, and acceptance for consumers (Belk & Costa, 1998; Hirschman, 1988; Kozinets, 2001; Maclaran & Brown, 2005). Relatedly, Warren (1999, p. 114) advocates that "Disney's colonisation of space outside Paris was designed to encourage visitors to shed associations with the real world when they enter" the park (see Mansvelt, 2008). Badot and Filser (2007) differentiate between themed and ordinary worlds, claiming malls and touristic attractions as turning into ''utopian islands" providing consumers with safe, autonomous, aesthetic substitutes for everyday lives (p.177).

As such, using fantasy elements is important in constructing commercial environments (Kozinets et al., 2002; Martin, 2004; Chinomona & Sandada, 2013, Mossberg, 2019). Relatedly, in his paper, *Magic of the mall,* Goss (1993, p.19) contends that as an attempt to "assuage collective guilt over conspicuous consumption … fantasy, and magic are promoted in the shopping centre landscape through *[the]* architecture, interior design and theming which draws on other times and places." Kozinets et al. (2002) argue that consumers draw products and brands into their fantasies through staged experiences in servicescapes.

While the importance of fantasy as playful and imaginative consumption is long noted in extant consumer research (Martin, 2004; llouz, 2009; St. James et al., 2011; Chronis et al., 2013; Seregina, 2014, 2018; Fakfare, Lee, & Ryu, 2020), yet the significance of the concept in servicescape environment research, in terms of how consumers respond to fantasy servicescapes, remains overlooked (Martin, 2004; Stevens & Maclaran, 2005; Seregina, 2014, 2018; Fakfare et al., 2020).

The next section provides explanation on the phenomenon responsible for how a story, regardless of its genre, influences consumers' responses, including their emotions and behaviour. In doing so, the chapter provides conceptual clarification of the terminology used in the field of narrative transportation.

2.5 Narrative transportation

While the concepts of story and narrative were often used within the former literature as interchangeable (e.g., Chase, 1995; Grayson, 1997; Shankar, Elliott, & Goulding, 2001; Appel & Maleckar, 2012), Thompson (1997) distinguished between the two, contending

that narrative is derived from the process by which consumers attribute meaning to, and interpret a story. Thompson's definition of narrative is thus consistent with that of Weick's (1995) who earlier argued that a consumer, as the receiver of a story, does not merely read (or watch) but also actively interprets the story. In line with Weick (1995) and Thompson's (1997) discussions and given the fact that a story always includes at least a storyteller (retailer) and a story receiver (consumer), recent research consider story and narrative as distinctive concepts "that articulate the separation between the storyteller and story receiver and thus between the production and consumption of stories" (Van Laer et al., 2014, p.798). Whereas a story represents a series of events that (often) happen in chronological order, a narrative is the story the consumer interprets based on her/his knowledge, attention, demographics, and significant others (Fishbein & Yzer, 2003).

In general, stories have the ability to evoke transportation (Gerrig, 1993; Green, 2005; Banerjee & Greene, 2013; Green & Clark, 2013; Van Laer et al., 2014; Dessart, 2018; Dessart, & Pitardi, 2019; Van Laer et al., 2019b; Walkington et al., 2020). Deighton, Romer and McQueen (1989) anticipated the concept of narrative transportation, arguing that a story invites the story receivers (i.e., in a marketing context, the consumers) into the action it portrays and thereby, makes them lose themselves in the story (Nell, 1988). This experience of detachment from the real world while engrossed in a story (Gerrig, 1993) - a condition that Green and Brock (2000) and Green (2005, p.53) describe as "transportation into a narrative world" - is key mechanism underlying narrative impact (Gerrig, 1993). When transported, travellers into the story react to events described by words on a page, or by images on a screen while their thinking is focused on the story (Van Laer et al., 2014). For example, narrative transportation theory proposes that when consumers lose themselves in a given story, their attitudes and intentions might change to reflect that story (Green, 2008; Lee & Jeong, 2017; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019).

As such, regardless of whether a story plot is fictional or non-fictional, when exposed to a story, consumers become detached from the reality and get transported to the world created by the story, and this experience then influences their subsequent responses (Green & Brock, 2000; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Mossberg & Eide, 2017).

To understand how narrative transportation affects consumers, Van Laer (2011) defines the concept according to three key features. First, transportation requires that consumers process the story, which involves the acts of receiving, and interpreting. Stories are conveyed to consumers through various media, including texts (Green & Brock, 2000;

Appel & Richter, 2010; Banerjee & Greene, 2013; Bilandzic et al., 2020; Walkington et al., 2020), advertisements (Escalas, 2004a, 2004b; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010; Dessart, 2018, Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Bennett et al., 2020; Campbell et al., 2020), or as in this thesis, commercial environments (Mossberg, 2008, 2019; Mossberg & Eide, 2017).

Second, consumers are transported through two critical components: empathy with the story characters (Dal Cin et al., 2007; Argo et al., 2008; Mar et al., 2009; Van Laer, 2011; Van Laer et al., 2014; Wallin et al., 2019) and mental imagery of events (Green, 2008; Van Laer et al., 2014; Lim & Childs, 2020). Exposure to a story activates a person's empathic feelings and vivid images that affect her/his propensity toward transportation (Green & Brock, 2002; Green, 2008; Van Laer et al., 2014).

Empathy refers to the attempt in putting oneself in shoes of the story characters, to understand the character's experiences, and to feel the world in the same way (Van Laer et al., 2014). Empathy occurs when the consumer shares an emotion with a character (see Feagin, 1997; Slater & Rouner, 2002; Argo et al., 2008; Mar et al., 2009; Ok, 2018; Wallin et al., 2019). Through empathy, the consumers develop positive and/or negative feelings towards the characters involved in a story and as such, vicariously experience a connection with the characters' values and outcomes. Empathy thus explains the state of detachment from the world of origin that is conceptualised as narrative transportation (Van Laer et al., 2014).

By contrast, in mental imagery, consumers create vivid images of story episodes and feel as if they experience the events themselves. As such, while empathy implies a focus on the story characters, mental imagery suggests that imagination of story events is central (Van Laer et al., 2014). Imagery is critical for the transportation's effect as evoked story events in mentally imagined situations resemble real life experiences (Gerrig, 1993; Green, 2006). Previous studies have found that consumers who do not mentally imagine a story are less likely to become transported (Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004; Green et al., 2008).

The third feature of narrative transportation refers to the fact that when consumers are transported to a story, they "lose track of reality in a physiological sense" (Van Laer et al., 2014, p.799). This feature relates narrative transportation to similar phenomena such as absorption (Tellegen & Atkinson, 1974), immersion (Wang & Calder, 2006), flow

(Csikszentmihalyi, 2013) and presence (Biocca, 2002; Lee, 2004). Despite the similarities between these constructs, several subtle, critical differences exist.

For example, absorption relates to a personality trait or general tendency to be immersed in life experiences whereas transportation refers to an engrossing temporary experience of a person's exposure to a story (Sestir & Green, 2010). Phillips and McQuarrie (2010) demonstrated that immersion is an individual's experiential response to aesthetic and visual elements of images, whereas transportation necessarily relies on a story with a plot and characters, features that are not present in immersion. While flow is a general construct experienced in different activities, transportation specifically requires empathy and mental imagery, which do not occur in flow (Bracken, 2006). Also, whereas people crave transportation experiences to be entertained and have fun, optimal flow experiences relate to the desire to be challenged (Van Laer, 2011) with attention focused on an activity to the extend one loses track of time, conscious awareness of the self and surroundings (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Green, 2004).

Based on what was discussed above, transportation occurs when a consumer mentally experiences entering a world evoked by a story because of empathy for the characters as well as imagination of the plot. Thus, for transportation to occur, in addition to imagery, the consumers must empathise with the characters. Otherwise, images of elsewhereness, whereby, people imagine themselves in a special world is not enough to be transported, though such images could cause immersion. In line with these features, Van Laer et al. (2014) define narrative transportation as:

> The extent to which a consumer empathises with story characters, and the story plot activates his or her imagination, which leads him or her to experience suspended reality during story reception (pp. 799-800).

As such, although transportation more or less resembles other discussed phenomena, given its routes in empathy and imagery of story events, the concept is particularly useful for predicting the influence of story consumption (i.e., narratives) on consumers (Green & Brock, 2002). Specifically, the theory proposes that narratives can transport the consumers' psychological states from the real world to non-real, imaginary worlds (Green & Brock, 2000; Green et al., 2008; Mazzocco, Green, Sasota, & Jones, 2010; Green & Clark, 2013). Consumers first lose distinction between fictional, story worlds and the real world. Second, transported individuals may have feelings and connections with narrative worlds, even though they know that the characters and plot are not real. Finally,

consumers return to the real world, with changes in their cognitive and affective states, and their behaviour (Green & Brock, 2000). This understanding of transportation is based on Gerrig's (1993) description, asserting:

> Someone is transported, by some means of transportation, as a result of performing certain actions. The traveller goes some distance from his or her world of origin, which makes some aspects of the world of origin inaccessible. The traveller *[then]* returns to the world of origin, somewhat changed by the journey (pp. 10-11).

As such, consumers are transported into stories when specific contextual and personal preconditions are met and get influenced by this experience (Green & Brock, 2000). Antecedents of transportation classified into two categories relating to the storyteller (retailer) and story receiver (consumer), as well as the outcomes of transportation are discussed in detail subsequently in this chapter.

Considering that elements from a story can be incorporated into atmospherics of a servicescape, it might be reasonable to expect that the stories conveyed to us via a servicescape could also evoke our imagination, invite us to think of ourselves in the shoes of the characters experiencing the story episodes and thus become lost in the story.

From the time Green and Brock (2000) first researched transportation quantitatively, many studies have investigated how stories transport and affect consumers (Van Laer, 2011) and the significance of the transportation effect is proven in multiple areas such as advertising (Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Campbell et al., 2020). Despite notable strides, however, Van Laer et al. (2014) call for conceptual and empirical research on the topic asserting that transportation constitutes key issues that demand theoretical and applied research attention (see also Green et al., 2004).

Despite the importance of storytelling in servicescape design (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Mansvelt, 2008; Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017), no studies to date seem to have investigated whether the effect of stories on consumers in servicescape environments is a result of consumers' engagement with and transportation to the stories. As such, RQ1 investigates whether consumers' exposure to fantasy stories in servicescape atmospheres evokes their imagination and gets them engage with and lost in the stories. The thesis also examines the antecedents and consequences of consumers' experiences of stories. The construct that can examine consumers' experiences of stories

in servicescape atmospheres where stories are normally presented in a non-linear order, however, needs to be further clarified.

Although the narrative transportation theory provides the foundation for understanding the antecedents, process, and outcomes of transportation into stories, as later discussed, the theory applies in conditions where consumers read or watch a story with chronology and causality (Sections 2.5.1.1.2 and 2.5.1.1.3), elements that are not necessarily present in servicescape environments. As earlier mentioned, the design of a servicescape might represent a story in a non-linear order (Mossberg, 2008) which makes the experience of stories difficult to interpret by narrative transportation. Accordingly, a similar construct is used in the current thesis to explain consumers' experiences of stories in servicescapes, Narrative Engagement.

However, before explaining narrative engagement, considering the relatively extensive literature for narrative transportation and that the two constructs overlap in terms of their antecedents and outcomes (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009), this chapter first describes these antecedents and outcomes in Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 and outlines narrative engagement as the construct responsible for the effects of storytelling in servicescapes in Section 2.7.

The next section highlights the antecedents of narrative transportation; qualities that make it easier for consumers to become engaged with and transported to a story.

2.5.1 Narrative transportation: Antecedents

Van Laer et al.'s (2014) definition of story and narrative that distinguishes between the two by considering a story as storyteller's production and narrative as story receiver's consumption of the story helps classify the antecedents of transportation as two categories that relate to retailers as storytellers, and to consumers as receivers of the story. The first category covers factors that are under the retailer's control including genre, chronology and causality of the plot, identifiable characters, and verisimilitude. The second category relates to consumers' characteristics in terms of age, gender, transportability, attention, education, and familiarity with the genre or story. The storyteller antecedents are outlined in detail the following subsections.

2.5.1.1 Storyteller antecedents

A review of the literature on narrative transportation reveals five factors that a storyteller has control over when transferring a story to audience (Van Laer, 2011, Van Laer et al.,

2014; Byrne, 2016). In line with the purpose of the current thesis, this chapter highlights the story genre and explains chronology and causality as factors affecting transportation. The discussion follows by explaining how identifiable characters of fictional stories can affect transportation. The last storyteller antecedent of narrative transportation relates to verisimilitude of the story. Previous research provide evidence supporting the fact that in the context of fantasy, it is irrelevant whether a story is real or false and that consumers are less concerned about the origins of such stories as long as they feel safe and controlled in a servicescape (Caru & Cova, 2007). As the effect of verisimilitude on transportation is beyond the scope of this thesis, less emphasis is put on defining this concept.

The storyteller antecedents and their effect on transportation are separately discussed in the following subsections.

2.5.1.1.1 Genre

Extant research on the significance of genre and its possible influence on transportation appear to be controversial. Whereas researchers such as Bilandzic and Busselle (2008) contend that genre by itself does not have a remarkable effect on transportation but that one's familiarity with a certain genre does, the ability of fiction (versus nonfiction) stories to evoke empathy and transport the consumers is proven by other researchers (Mar, Oatley, Hirsh, Dela Paz, & Peterson, 2006; Mar & Oatley, 2008; Mar et al., 2009; Johnson, 2012).

As a variable, genre has been argued to be of a non-dichotomous nominal measurement level precluding higher operations that imply order and thus inclusion of genre as an antecedent of narrative transportation is considered by some researchers (e.g., Van Laer et al., 2014) as being methodologically problematic. In contrast, however, other scholars have reasonably measured the impact of genre (e.g., Comedy movies, Garza, 2003; Fearful versus Romantic television programs, Griskevicius et al., 2009) on other consumers' responses. Nevertheless, Van Laer et al. (2014) suggest future studies to consider investigating the effect of genre on transportation.

Given the significance of fantasy in designing servicescapes (Kozinet, 2001; Mansvelt, 2008), and in line with Van Laer et al.'s (2014) suggestion to study effects of genre on transportation, this thesis examines non-commercial, fantasy stories that are not manipulated to convey any persuading marketing messages to consumers.

The distinction between commercial and non-commercial stories in marketing lies in the fact that in contrast to commercial stories that are told with the purpose to persuade the consumers, non-commercial stories are intended for pure entertainment (Van Laer et al., 2014). Relatedly, Holt (2002) asserts that when consumers suspect that there is a profit motive behind a story, as its "sponsored persuasion" (p.85), narrative transportation, and its subsequent effects on consumers may be inhibited. Similarly, Van Laer et al. (2014) contend that the more stories are non-commercial, the more transportation increases.

The following two antecedents relate to the structure of the story plot that involves two important factors: chronology and causality (Escalas, 1998). As discussed earlier in the Literature chapter, the plot is an essential element of a story (Escalas, 1998). The plot can evoke mental imagery and therefore, it affects transportation (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004a).

2.5.1.1.2 Chronology

Research on narrative transportation pay attention to the articulation of the story plot; the temporal sequence of events that happen to characters, or chronology. Chronology refers to whether a story has a temporal dimension with a beginning, middle, and end (Escalas, 2004b). Previous studies find that chronology is important for transportation, such that a linear chronological progression in the story plot is said to result in higher transportation. By contrast, a lack of chronological order results in lower transportation (e.g., Wang & Calder, 2006).

While good chronology increases the transportation effect (Van Laer, 2011), stories presented in servicescapes might not necessarily have a linear chronological order and thus in support to what was earlier argued, investigating consumers' story experiences in servicescape atmospheres with narrative transportation could be challenging.

2.5.1.1.3 Causality

All stories consist of a causal sequence of rising and falling events (Gergen & Gergen, 1988). Previous studies demonstrate that narrative thought structures a story into an "organised framework that establishes relationships between story's elements and allows for causal inferencing … events are organised according to the causal and intentional relations among them" (Escalas, 1998, p. 268; see also Bruner, 1990).

Causality of events in the story plot influence consumers' beliefs and intentions. For example, In Adaval and Wyer Jr.'s (1998) study, causally connected travel stories lead to higher belief and intention ratings by consumers, compared to randomly connected information. Similarly, Van Laer (2011) found that the more a story has a causally connected chain of events, there is higher probability that consumers get transported to that story, and subsequently, the effect of transportation on its outcomes will be higher.

With regard to the definition of causality, although the atmospherics of a servicescape together represent a specific story, considering that the story plot might not necessarily be presented in linear order and lack chronology, consumers might also find it difficult to connect episodes of the story that are, for example, illustrated on walls or music that is played from various scenes. The lack of causality thus, in-turn, questions whether the narrative transportation construct can investigate consumers' experiences of stories in the physical environment.

2.5.1.1.4 Identifiable characters

For consumers to be transported, they need be able to clearly distinguish between characters in a story and thus the retailer is required to clearly convey which character is being described or pointed to, throughout the episodes (see Van Laer et al., 2014). Identifiable characters in story help consumers to understand the experiences of a character by knowing and feeling the world in the same way, to vicariously experience a character's beliefs and emotions, empathise with the character, and get transported to the story (Escalas & Stern, 2003; Slater & Rouner, 2002).

As discussed in Section 2.4.4., fantasy features clearly defined stereotypical characters that are recognisable as being either good or evil (Saricks, 2009). As such, consumers can identify the characters when they see illustrations of them, or staff dressed in character-based costumes in the servicescape. Accordingly, it would make sense to expect consumers empathise with, and get lost in stories in servicescapes.

2.5.1.1.5 Verisimilitude

Verisimilitude is defined by (Bruner, 1986, p. 11) as "lifelikeness" and it refers to the likelihood that events described in a story may actually happen (see Van Laer et al., 2014). A stream of research has been developed around verisimilitude with researchers having contradicting opinions on its importance for transportation. In this regard, some scholars

argue that a story does not need to be true to transport the consumers and what matters, instead, is whether the story is believable. These studies contend that the higher the level of verisimilitude in a story is, the more the consumers will experience suspended reality (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008) and become transported to the story (Green, 2004).

In the fantasy context, however, given that the story plot describes events and characters in a purely imaginary world (Green et al., 2004; Green, 2004), consumers are not likely to consider the story events as possible to happen and thus story verisimilitude does not seem applicable as an antecedent of transportation to fantasy stories. Wang (1999) argues that in the Disney context, it is irrelevant whether the story elements are true or false as no originals can be used as reference. Consumers are less concerned about the origins of stories as long as they feel safe and controlled in the environment (Caru & Cova, 2007). For consumers to be lost in a fantasy story, they must leave the limitations of the ordinary and accordingly, the servicescapes must be designed as special worlds that consumers would perceive as exciting, safe, and controlled so that they can observe, participate, and play roles outside the norms of everyday life (Mossberg, 2008).

Verisimilitude of a fantasy story therefore does not inhibit consumers' transportation to that story. The consumers can be as much transported to fictional stories as to those that are purely factual and fictional stories can affect consumers as much as any factual story (see Green & Brock, 2000; Prentice, Gerrig, & Bailis, 1997; Strange & Leung, 1999; Wheeler, Green, & Brock, 1999). Similarly, Green and Donahue (2011) demonstrated that fiction versus nonfiction manipulations do not affect transportation. We relate to and identify with characters in literature and films whom we know are not real but still they can affect us (Mossberg, 2008). As verisimilitude of a fantasy story does not influence transportation to the story, the researcher does not examine this antecedent in this thesis.

The following section is about those characteristics of consumers that can impact their experience of transportation to stories.

2.5.1.2 Story receiver antecedents

Consumers play a major role in interpreting the stories they are exposed to. Previous research on narrative transportation have indicated the significance of six characteristics including age, gender, transportability, attention, education, and consumers' familiarity with a genre or story that influence the extent to which the consumers are transported (see Van Laer et al., 2014; Van Laer, 2011; Green, 2008; Green & Brock, 2002).

While each of the characteristics is discussed and their relationships with transportation is elaborated, their significance on transportation is beyond the scope of this thesis.

2.5.1.2.1 Age

> You're dead if you aim only for kids.
> Adults are only kids grown up, anyway.
> - Walt Disney.

The quote by Walt Disney highlights the importance of storytelling to adult consumers as much as to children, as a means of having a successful business. Lewis (1966, p.26) asserts that "the whole association of fairy tale and fantasy with childhood is local and accidental". In his essay on *Fairy Tales,* Tolkien (1974) demonstrates that fairy tales have not been especially made for, nor exclusively enjoyed by children. Indeed, as Timmerman (1983, p.41) contends, fantasy stories are apparently aimed for "the childlike", and not merely for the children. With subtitles such as *A Story for Children,* Lewis (1966) reminds us that we are human, and the stages of being children, then adults, then middle-aged, and then elderly, only form that composite whole of our human nature. We do not graduate at a certain age from childlikeness. Instead, childlikeness remains as a part of our human nature. Lewis (1966, p.15) comments on his essay, *On Stories,* that:

> It is usual to speak in a playfully apologetic tone about one's adult enjoyment of what are called, "children's books". I think the convention *[is]* a silly one. No book is really worth reading at the age of ten, which is not equally *[and often far more]* worth reading at the age of fifty, except *[for]* books of information.

Research on the effect of age on narrative transportation can be classified in two groups: Some scholars assert that younger people are more likely to be transported and relate it to their less knowledge of real world limitations, that younger people are less able to evaluate information critically, and assess verisimilitude less (e.g., Diekman & Murnen, 2004). By contrast, later studies (Mar et al., 2006; Van Laer et al., 2014) find that age does not have a significant effect on narrative transportation. While younger story receivers are transported more, due to greater influenceability, older people could experience greater transportation due to extended life experiences and knowledge (Van Laer et al., 2014). Mar et al. (2006) suggest that familiarity, story-relevant knowledge as well as experience with stories are greater in older than in younger consumers. Thus, in contrast to the assumption that children like marvellous stories because they are too

ignorant to know those stories are impossible, children do not always like them, nor those who like them are always children; and to enjoy reading about fairies, giants or dragons, it is not necessary to believe in them (Lewis, 1966).

Given the fact that fantasy stories are not only aimed for children (Lewis, 1966) and older consumers can be as much transported into stories as younger consumers and given the methodological and ethical issues associated with conducting research involving children (see Parker, 1984; Punch, 2002; Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin, & Robinson, 2010), following most researchers (Holloway & Valentine, 2000), the current thesis examines consumers aged above 16 years old.

2.5.1.2.2 Gender

In terms of how gender influences story interpretation, or what Stern (1993, p. 559) qualifies as "gendered reading," the extant literature show contrasting results. Some studies feature either female (Greenwood, 2007) or male (Denham, 2004) consumers. Amongst those who examine mixed gender, in Green and Brock's (2000) study, women report significantly greater narrative transportation than men. Women further, differ in their empathy for story characters (Ang & Couling, 1985), women are more likely to empathise than men (Argo et al., 2008; Davis, 1983), and also feel more emotions in response to stories than men (Stern, 1992, 1993). In these studies, men are found to be distant (Yannopoulou & Elliott, 2008) and distrustful of the storytellers in comparison to women who are more inclined to the storytellers' dominance (Stern, 1992).

By contrast, other researchers argue that men experience greater levels of transportation compared to women and relate the reason to men's need for idealising story characters that in turn, increases transportation (see Denham, 2004).

Based on other studies, however, there does not appear to be a consistent gender difference in transportation propensity (Brusse, Fransen, & Smit, 2017). In this regard, Green (2005, p.56) contends:

> Men and women can become equally immersed in stories, although certain types of stories may appeal more to one gender than another. For example, the audience for romance novels tends to be largely female; the reverse may be true for westerns.

Following Green (2005), this research assumed that consumers from all genders could become equally transported into stories.

2.5.1.2.3 Transportability

Transportability is a personality trait that relates to one's chronic propensity to be transported, and it functions independently of any specific genre or story (Dal Cin, Zanna, & Fong, 2004; Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008; Mazzocco et al., 2010; Van Laer et al., 2014).

Previous research on transportation have found that consumers' propensity for transportation, and as a result, the effect of transportation on its outcomes is higher for consumers who have high degrees of transportability (e.g., Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008; Van Laer et al., 2014).

2.5.1.2.4 Attention

Consumers' attention refers to their degree of focused concentration on a given story, and it is considered as a personal attribute that can influence the experience of narrative transportation (Gerrig, 1993; Van Laer et al., 2014). The more consumers pay attention to a given story, the higher they become transported (Polichak & Gerrig, 2002; Petrican, Moscovitch, & Schimmack, 2008).

By contrast, when the consumers become distracted for any reason, their experiences of narrative transportation (Van Laer, De Ruyter, & Cox, 2013; Zwarun & Hall, 2012) and the outcome of transportation is faded (Vaughn, Hesse, Petkova, & Trudeau, 2009).

2.5.1.2.5 Education

In terms of how education affects transportation, a general assumption is that highly educated consumers read more and are as such, likely to be better at inference making (Mar et al., 2006). As such, it is expected that consumers with higher education levels experience a higher level of transportation (Van Laer et al., 2014).

2.5.1.2.6 Familiarity

Consumers who have previous knowledge about or personal experiences with a story or genre find it easier to imagine the story events and as a result, they are more likely to get transported into that story (Slater, Rouner, & Long, 2006; Green, 2004). For example, Green's (2004) study found that consumers' closeness to someone who is gay and their knowledge of Greek life in U.S. colleges resulted in greater transportation when they were presented a story of a gay man visiting a college fraternity. Familiarity with a story topic thus facilitates narrative transportation by making story processing easier, and the more

the consumers know about a topic, the greater they experience transportation in that topic (Slater et al., 2006).

In a similar vein, consumers entering a servicescape designed around a story better have knowledge about the story context for an extraordinary experience (Caru & Cova, 2007). Consumers who visit a story based restaurant, hotel, or touristic location for the first time and are not familiar with the story context might find it difficult to engage with the story. In such cases, the servicescape personnel can facilitate consumers' immersion by sharing information about the story or role plays (Mossberg, 2008; Caru & Cova, 2007).

While familiarity can intensify one's transportation to a story, unfamiliar consumers are also found to be transported to stories and therefore, it is argued that familiarity is not an absolute prerequisite for transportation (e.g., Green, 2004). Therefore, this thesis does not focus on familiarity as a factor affecting transportation to stories.

Based on what is discussed, the extant literature suggests that the effect of transportation varies depending on consumers' personal attributes such that the more the consumers are transportable, pay attention, are educated, and familiar with a story topic, their propensity for transportation increases thus increasing the influence of transportation on its outcomes (Van Laer et al., 2014). Extant findings regarding age and gender are not consistent and thus make it difficult to conclude on a certain age group or gender that are more prone to be transported.

Given the purpose of this thesis, the following chapters do not examine the effect of the story receiver antecedents on consumers' experiences of fantasy stories. However, as age and gender are asked during the interviews (Study 2) and the survey (Study 3), in cases where they seem to have a significant effect, the researcher briefly shares about them besides other relevant findings.

Now that the antecedents of narrative transportation are discussed, the following section elaborates on consumers' affective and cognitive responses, belief and attitude changes, intentions, and behaviour as the potential consequences of transportation into stories.

2.5.2 Narrative Transportation: Outcomes

Previous research identify affective, cognitive, belief and attitude changes, as well as change in consumers' intentions and behaviour as consequences of transportation into stories (Gerrig, 1993; Green & Brock, 2000; Van Laer, 2011; Van Laer et al., 2014;

Dessart, 2018; Dessart, & Pitardi, 2019). The outcomes of transportation are discussed in following sections. However, although all of the outcomes are explained, given the purpose of this thesis to investigate consumers' affective responses, intentions, and behaviour in response to fantasy stories they experience in servicescapes, the focus is on the latter three outcomes of transportation, with less emphasis on other outcomes.

2.5.2.1 Affective responses

Stories evoke feelings in consumers (Escalas, Moore, & Britton, 2004) which are also known as affective responses (Schwarz, 1990). Gerrig (1993) asserts that when consumers are lost in a story, they not only lose access to real world facts, but also experience emotions (and motivations) consistent with that story, even if the story events are not real. For example, in their essay on how people connect to fictional stories, Oatley and Gholamain (1997) assert that "Genre fiction is put together using techniques that allow the reader … to disappear into the story, to experience the emotions that are intended by the writer" (pp.179-191).

Transportation to a story, as such, causes the consumers to express affective responses consistent with that story (see Gerrig, 1993; Stern, 1994; Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004a; LaMarre & Landreville, 2009; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019), and the more a story transports the consumers, the stronger will be the emotions consumers feel in reaction to that story (Van Laer et al., 2014; Vaughn, 2010; Chang, 2009). However, further research is required to understand how different stories evoke different emotions in consumers (Chen, 2015). Therefore, RQ2 examines the affective responses consumers experience in servicescapes that are designed based on fantasy stories.

2.5.2.2 Cognitive responses

Besides evoking emotions, transportation also involves consumers' cognitive processes that are qualitatively different (Edell & Burke, 1987; Van Laer et al., 2014) such that, for example, when a consumer reads or watches a story about a child being kidnapped, she/he might need to understand the motivation behind kidnapping the child besides the emotions experienced by parents over their missing child (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). Therefore, in contrast to the affective responses that are emotional in nature and express feelings, cognitive responses are critical in nature and reflect expressions of thoughts (Batra & Ray, 1986; Escalas, 2004b).

Research on transportation have classified the cognitive responses a story can evoke into two different categories: as either critical, or narrative thoughts. When consumers confront a claim in a story which they find different to their beliefs, they are likely to generate critical thoughts (Moyer-Guse & Nabi, 2010). By contrast, narrative thoughts represent the structure of a story (Escalas, 2004b) and contain narrative cues that relate to characters or objects. Consumers generate narrative thoughts to construct a narrative from a story (Van Laer et al., 2014).

Transportation to stories can reduce one's critical thoughts (Green & Brock, 2000), even when consumers find the story as being inconsistent with their prior beliefs (Slater & Rouner, 2002). Higher degrees of transportation affect consumers' cognition such that they counterargue less about the story (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004a; Dunlop et al., 2010; Banerjee & Greene, 2012). While counterarguments have a negative effect on beliefs, attitudes, and intentions in response to stories (Moyer-Gusé, 2008), by contrast, transportation increases narrative thoughts (Chang, 2009).

2.5.2.3 Beliefs

When transported, consumers perceive story events as being truthful (Green & Brock, 2002), even if a story is fictional (Konijn, Van der Molen, & Van Nes, 2009; Marsh & Fazio, 2006). This is because the more transported one becomes into a story, the more they disconnect from their current knowledge and beliefs (Green, 2004; Green & Brock, 2000). The perception of story realism prompts consumers to engage in story-consistent thinking that in-turn, affects their beliefs (Green & Brock, 2000, 2002; Escalas, 2004a, 2007; Mazzocco, Green, & Brock, 2007; Appel & Richter, 2010; Green & Clark, 2013; Isberner et al., 2019).

Although transportation can influence one's beliefs (Braverman, 2008; Green & Brock, 2000), change in belief depends upon consumers' imagination of alternative outcomes to their current behaviour (Tal-Or, Boninger, Poran, & Gleicher, 2004). Without this effort, the beliefs that are raised as a result of transportation into a story might disappear soon after the story ends (Van Laer, 2011).

2.5.2.4 Attitudes

Attitudes refer to consumers' evaluations of a story plot about how positive or negative they perceive it to be (Van Laer et al., 2014). Attitudes are determined by two factors that

relate to how desirable or undesirable the consumers find the story plot (affective and cognitive responses) and how truthful they perceive it to be (beliefs). Transported consumers are more likely to perceive a story plot as being desirable and truthful that, in-turn, positively affects their attitudes (Escalas 2004a, 2007; Wang & Calder, 2006; Green & Donahue, 2011). During the transportation process, more affective responses and less critical thoughts are experienced that, in-turn, result in more positive attitudes (Escalas, 2004a; Ahn, 2015).

2.5.2.5 Intentions

Fishbein and Yzer (2003) define intention as one's willingness to perform a certain behaviour. According to the principle of "Ideomotor action" (James, 1890), imagining about a behaviour (e.g., buying a glass of beer) increases a person's tendency to actually engage in the behaviour (see Gregory, Cialdini, & Carpenter, 1982; Anderson, 1983; Schlosser, 2003; Dal Cin et al., 2007; Small, 2008). This is because imagery can evoke affective responses that, in-turn, enhance consumers' product evaluations and increase their intention to purchase the product (Oliver, Robertson, & Mitchell, 1993; Bolls, 2002; Petrova & Cialdini, 2008).

When the consumer engages in imagining real products, the empirical senses of how it would feel, smell, taste, look, and sound like are engaged, motivating the individual to try and make the image real (Babin & Burns, 1998). In this way, imagination can seem so real that the consumer might feel as though she/he has already experienced owning that product. Therefore, the act of imagining ownership could motivate consumers to purchase the product (Small, 2008). Previous research suggest that when consumers imagine their experience with a given product, they are less likely to evaluate the product attributes or counterargue the product related message, therefore, reducing consideration of the negative aspects of the (narrative/advertisement) message (Green & Brock, 2000).

Previous research reveal the process taking place while consumers imagine performing a particular behaviour, conceptualising it as narrative transportation (Petrova & Cialdini, 2008). Imagery is a focal component of narrative transportation (Green & Brock, 2000). Specifically, according to the transportation theory, when consumers become transported into a given story, their intentions (Green, 2008) and subsequent behaviour (Petrova & Cialdini, 2008) change to reflect that story. Therefore, transported story receivers tend to be more willing to perform an imagined action (see Dal Cin et al., 2007; Schlosser, 2003).

For example, consumers exposed to *The Lord of the Rings* story might have a greater intention of buying a pint glass of beer once they are transported into the story, imagining the story characters having beer at the Green Dragon Inn as described in the related movie. On the downside, Dal Cin et al. (2007) reveal that viewers transported by a movie in which the character smokes are more willing to smoke after they experience a high level of transportation.

The potential influence of transportation on consumers' intentions has been the focus of many studies and continues to gain importance (Green & Brock, 2002; Escalas, 2004a, 2007; Slater & Rouner, 2002; Vaughn, 2010). Following the stream of existing research, RQ3 investigates how consumers' engagement with fantasy stories presented through the servicescape atmospherics affects their intentions.

2.5.2.6 Behaviour

Transported consumers are reported as tending to act on behavioural templates that storybooks and movies provide. Head, Schau, and Thompson (2011), for example, find that *Twilight* fans are likely to adapt their costumes and produce thematic consumer goods based on the stories. The more transportation increases so does story-consistent behaviour (Van Laer et al., 2014). Nevertheless, empirical work on the behavioural effects of narrative transportation is limited (Van Laer et al., 2014; Green, 2004). Williams, Green, Kohler, Allison, & Houston (2011) are amongst one of the few researchers who investigate consumers' actual (smoking) behaviour instead of affective or cognitive responses, beliefs or attitudes and intention changes.

Examining the potential effects of transportation on consumers' actual behaviour has, further, raised moral questions that make the investigation challenging. For example, when consumers are transported to a story with a plot that constitutes a danger to the consumer or that threatens the safety of others, such as drug usage and self-destructive actions, they are likely to develop story-consistent intentions that may negatively affect their personal health or safety (Van Laer et al., 2014).

In addition, in line with what was earlier discussed, transported consumers can act upon their story-consistent intentions when certain preconditions are met: the consumer has sufficient ability to perform the behaviour, and there are no environmental constraints that inhibit performance of that behaviour (Van Laer et al., 2014; Fishbein & Yzer, 2003). As research on the behavioural impacts of transportation is warranted (Green, 2004; Van

Laer et al., 2014), in addition to consumers' intentions, RQ3 also investigates consumers' behavioural responses to fantasy stories experienced in servicescapes.

Based on what was discussed, consumers' transportation to story influences affective and cognitive responses to that story, as well as changes in one's beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviour. Also, the more transportation increases, so do story-consistent responses. With regard to the purpose of this thesis, the focus is on the affective responses (RQ2) and intentions and behaviours (RQ3) the consumers experience in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories.

2.6 Empathy with story characters

Over the time, a stream of research in social psychology and consumer behaviour have shown that the self is a malleable construct (Markus & Kunda, 1986), and that people act differently in different situations, are influenced by social roles and cues, and have a need for self-presentation (Aaker, 1999). Cova and Dalli (2009) assert that consumers come to the marketplace to be immersed in a thematised environment that would help them experience other possible selves*:* The personas a consumer might wish, or instead, fear becoming in the real world (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Given that transportation recruits imagery systems (Van Laer et al., 2014), consumers' experiences of getting lost in stories can help in literally visualising alternative selves or contexts. Green (2005, p.58) contends:

> Narrative worlds have the unique benefit of providing simulations of alternative personalities, realities, and actions without any real cost … A reader *[i.e., a consumer]* doesn't have to take the risk of changing jobs or … moving to a different city to experience another kind of life … While immersed in a narrative, readers take the role of characters and see through a new set of eyes.

Comprehension of a story requires that a consumer locates her/himself in the mental model of that story (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). Based on the Deictic Shift Theory, consumers exposed to a certain story switch to the time and location of that story, and to the subjective world of the story characters (Segal, 1995a, 1995b). For transportation to happen, this switch is necessary as some information make sense only from the deictic centre of the story (Galbraith, 1995; Zubin & Hewitt, 1995). For example, depending on the narrator, time and location in a story, deictic words such as "I" and "here" refer to different things (Segal, 1995a; 1995b) and therefore, deictic shift is a cognitive process

necessary for understanding the story, and for emotional perspective taking processes such as identification (Cohen, 2001, Tal-Or & Cohen, 2010), or as in the current thesis, empathy with characters (Zillmann, 1994; Escalas & Stern, 2003; Wallin et al., 2019).

When consumers see a story's events and characters from a point of view within the story and adapt a character's perspective, they become aware of her/his interpretations of events, and of the character's motives regarding what she/he does, or in relation to others in that story. As such, consumers' locating of themselves in stories constitutes cognitive perspective taking: an understanding of events and situations from within that specific story, not as an objective observer (Cohen, 2001; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009).

In addition, by adopting a story character's perspective, consumers relive the character's emotions, an experience conceptualised as empathy (see Escalas & Stern, 2003; Argo et al., 2008; Mar et al., 2009; Wallin et al., 2019; Kandaurova & Lee, 2019). In contrast to sympathy that refers to consumers' understanding of characters' emotions even if they do not share those emotions, when emphasising with a character, consumers feel the same emotions the character experiences. In other words, sympathy is feeling emotions for the story characters, but not sharing the same emotions (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Oatley, 1999).

Stories can evoke empathy with the characters such that the consumers try to understand the experiences of characters, and to feel the world in the same way (Escalas & Stern, 2003; Van Laer et al., 2014; Wallin et al., 2019). Empathy with characters then, results in narrative transportation, as consumers "vicariously experience characters' beliefs and emotions, empathise with them, and become engrossed in the story" (Van Laer et al., 2014, p.802; see also Konijn et al., 2009). This situation prompts consumers to perceive story events from the characters' point of view (Hoffner, Levine, & Toohey, 2008).

As empathy requires consumers to adopt characters' perspectives, it has been identified as a factor that could moderate the influence of narrative transportation on its outcomes (Van Laer, 2011; Argo et al., 2008, Escalas et al., 2004). For example, Argo et al. (2008) found that differences in empathy influence consumers' affective responses to the same story. Moreover, in Escalas et al.'s (2004) research, heightened levels of empathy evoked more positive cognitive evaluations. Empathy is thus proven as increasing the likelihood that consumers accept the underlying message of a story and act accordingly (Mar et al., 2009; Deighton et al., 1989).

Despite the ability of empathy to moderate the effect of transportation on its outcomes, previous research often focus on how empathy leads to transportation and transportation then, mediates the effect of empathy on consumers' responses (Argo et al., 2008). Thus, more research is required to understand how differences in the level of empathy is likely to moderate the effect of transportation on consumers' responses (see Van Laer, 2011). RQ5 examines how empathy with positive (versus negative) story characters influences the effects of transportation to stories (in the context of this thesis, narrative engagement) on consumers' subsequent affective, behavioural, and brand responses in servicescapes.

"Character is the driving force in fiction" (Surmelian, 1969, p. 139; Radway, 1997). When consumers encounter stories, they imagine the characters (Van Laer et al., 2014) and experience archetypal myths (Holt, 2003; Jung, 1959). Myths are simple stories of heroes or supernatural beings that help the consumers make sense of the world through explaining aspects of human behaviour and providing ideals to live by, with compelling story characters and resonant plots (see Woodside, Sood, & Miller, 2008; Holt, 2003). Archetypes are defined by Jung (1959, p.101) as "forms or images of a collective nature which occur practically all over the earth as constituents of myth". Archetypes are universally familiar sets of traits of a certain character, such as the character's fears, motives, and personality characteristics (see Rowe, Ha, & Lester, 2008). For example, the Hero is associated with a courageous archetype; a character who exhibits goodness and battles the evil whereas the Anti-Hero is associated with the power of destruction and being evil (see Wertime, 2002 and Mark & Pearson, 2001 for archetypes applicable to marketing and consumer psychology).

Considering that fantasy is a genre of contrasts (Saricks, 2009) with the plot depicting a kind of battle between a good versus an evil character, and with regard to the fact that people identify with story characters and empathise with them as they put themselves in the shoes of the characters (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991), this research aims to understand how consumers' empathy with the positive (versus a negative) characters of a fantasy story can affect their responses. In fiction, there is the wish to be elsewhere, and the story is designed to gratify this wish by allowing the audience to become a character in the story (Oatley & Gholamain, 1997). Depending on the character type one empathises with, however, responses to the same story could differ (Argo et al., 2008; Mar et al., 2009; Slater & Rouner, 2002; Escalas & Stern, 2003; Dal Cin et al., 2007; Wallin et al., 2019; Kandaurova & Lee, 2019; Pervan et al., 2020).

Slater, Buller, Waters, Archibeque, and LeBlanc (2003) find that characters promoting a healthful lifestyle convince nutritious eating habits among story receivers. By contrast, Dal Cin et al. (2007) reveal the dark side of empathy with story characters such that characters who smoke increase story receivers' intentions to smoke, as well. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that empathy with positive (versus negative) characters of fantasy stories represented in a servicescape atmosphere might also lead to different responses. For example, do the consumers experience more positive emotions when they empathise with a positive character as compared to the negative character of the story?

In this regard, previous research tend to focus on the use of positively-valenced imagery with managers preferring brands to appear in positive storylines with positive characters associated to them (Knoll et al., 2015). For example, Knoll et al., (2015) find that positive characters elicit more favourable brand attitudes when compared to negative characters. By contrast, more recent research on the use of dark stories in retailing find a number of advantages for brands that feature dark characters over brands that use non-dark stories, including attracting consumers' attention and higher brand recall (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010; Campbell et al., 2020) and enjoyment (Dessart, 2018). Accordingly, RQ5 examines how consumers' responses to servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories is affected as a result of empathy with positive (versus negative) story characters.

Having discussed the experience of becoming lost in stories and consumers' empathy with characters as a factor that moderates the impact of transportation on its outcomes, as stories presented through the atmospherics do not always constitute chronology and causality, a similar, yet distinct construct that could help examine the experience of stories in servicescapes is elaborated in the following section.

2.7 Narrative engagement

Scholars investigating the influence of stories on consumers often focus on one or the other of similar constructs: transportation (Green & Brock, 2000; Van Laer et al., 2014; Dessart, 2018; Dessart, & Pitardi, 2019), immersion (Wang & Calder, 2006), absorption (Tellegen & Atkinson, 1974), flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013) presence (Biocca, 2002; Lee, 2004), and engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008, 2009; Bilandzic et al., 2020). Despite their similarities, however, there are subtle differences amongst these constructs that make them more or less applicable in different contexts. Given the purpose of the current thesis, although the phrase, *transport,* is used at times to refer to the experience

of being lost in stories, considering that retailers focus more on design aspects and less on providing information to support the temporal dimension, and causality of events in a story plot, the stories presented through servicescape atmospherics lack the required chronology and causality (Escalas, 2004a) for transportation to occur. Therefore, due to this lack of narrative structure thought, the narrative transportation construct does not seem applicable for investigating consumers' experience with, and responses to stories in servicescapes (Escalas, 2004a). This assumption is supported by studies in consumer research literature that focus on engagement (and not narrative transportation) in stories in retail environments (e.g., Borghini et al., 2009; Diamond et al. 2009; Penaloza 1998; Sherry et al., 2001; Joy & Sherry, 2003). In line with Busselle and Bilandzic's (2009) conceptualisation of engagement with narratives, the sense of detachment from reality while lost in a world created by stories in a retail environment is referred to and examined by the construct Narrative Engagement in the current thesis. Accordingly, RQ1 examines whether consumers experience narrative engagement in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories.

The following subsections distinguish among the dimensions of engagement with stories referred to as: narrative understanding, attentional focus, emotional engagement, and narrative presence (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). These dimensions present unique but interrelated processes involved in narrative engagement.

2.7.1 Narrative understanding

The first dimension of engagement with narratives, labelled as narrative understanding, describes how easily the consumers make sense of and understand a story (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Sukalla et al., 2015; Bilandzic et al., 2020) by consistently constructing mental models of meaning that represent the characters and situations and are created by combining information provided by the story with what the consumer already knows about life, in general, and about that specific story topic or genre (Graesser, Olde, & Klettke, 2002; Roskos-Ewoldsen, Davies, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2004).

This aspect of narrative engagement corresponds to Van Laer's (2011) first prerequisite when explaining transportation: the process of interpreting a given story. The constructs of narrative engagement and narrative transportation thus both require the consumer to make sense of the story.

2.7.2 Attentional focus

The second dimension, attentional focus, describes consumers' focus on, or distraction from the story (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Sukalla et al., 2015; Bilandzic et al., 2020). When engaged in a story, attention shifts away from one's physical environment such that the person is not aware of her/his surroundings. If consumers' attention is distracted for any reason, such as noise, the person would find it difficult to make sense of a story and as such, not able to get engaged. The situation is similar in the experience of flow, telepresence, and transportation, as they all require that the person focus on the activity in hand or on the presented story (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009).

2.7.3 Emotional engagement

As the third dimension, emotional engagement refers to emotions consumers experience due to having feelings for (sympathy) the characters or feeling the characters' emotions (empathy) (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Sukalla et al., 2015; Van Leeuwen et al., 2017). Alike transportation thus narrative engagement requires that consumers understand and feel the characters' emotions.

It is important to note that consumers' feelings for and with the characters, or emotional engagement is specific to the emotional arousal component of narrative engagement and not necessarily to any specific emotions (see Ravaja, Saari, Kallinen, & Laarni, 2006). This is useful as stories can evoke a full range of emotions, but to predict what emotions are evoked by a story only by measuring emotional engagement is difficult (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). To understand how engagement with stories evokes specific emotions in consumers, two independent constructs for positive and negative affective responses are included in the framework in Chapter 6 and measured by Richins' (1997) scale.

2.7.4 Narrative presence

The last dimension of engagement, narrative presence, relates to consumers' sense of transitioning from the real world to that of a story, as a result of mentally constructing an alternative world (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Sukalla et al., 2015). Story receivers perceive the alternate world of stories as more immediate than the real world; an aspect of narrative engagement that corresponds to Gerrig's (1993) description of *being there*, to telepresence (Biocca, 2002), and to transportation (Green & Brock, 2002). However, whereas telepresence concerns one's experiences of computer stimulated environments

(Bracken, 2005; Lee, 2004), transportation to story worlds evolved from the literature on narrative experiences (Gerrig, 1993; Green & Brock, 2002).

This distinction is relevant; consumers might feel present in an alternative world as a result of sensory simulation. But sensory simulation is not enough, by itself, to explain feeling present in a story. Narrative presence is consumers' experience of being present in a story world as a result of perspective taking and comprehension processes, through which a consumer empathises with the story characters and makes sense of the story (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Sukalla et al., 2015; Van Leeuwen et al., 2017).

In this thesis, the servicescape atmospherics (the stimuli involving the senses) represent a fantasy story, and therefore it is anticipated that consumers visiting such servicescapes feel present in the world created by the story. This experience of entering and returning from a story world is central to narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009).

Narrative engagement and narrative transportation both require that the consumers focus on a story (i.e., attentional focus) and understand the story (i.e., narrative understanding), to feel the characters' emotions (i.e., emotional engagement) and to experience being in the world of the story (i.e., narrative presence) (Burroughs, Shrum, & Rindfleish, 2002; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Quintero Johnson & Sangalang, 2017). Green and Brock (2000) conceptualise transportation as "an integrative melding of attention, imagery, and feelings" (p.701). Similarly, Rodgers and Thorson (2012) define transportation as the "degree to which a reader *[consumer]* becomes immersed or absorbed in stories and undergoes a mental process that entails imagery, affect, and attentional focus" (p.250). The difference between these two constructs which makes narrative engagement more suitable for servicescape environments is the lack of chronology and causality of stories presented through the atmospherics, elements that are crucial for narrative transportation to occur (Escalas, 2004a; Van Laer, 2011).

In addition, measuring consumers' experiences of stories through narrative engagement has several advantages: first, the four dimensions of the construct can be combined into a monolith measure of overall engagement, or each be used independently to distinguish and measure the different aspects of engagement. Second, and relatedly, the ability to distinguish among dimensions of narrative engagement help researchers understand the mechanisms responsible for different outcomes. Busselle & Bilandzic's (2009) research for example, found a higher level of correlation between the emotional engagement and

attitudinal effects than other subscales. This feature in-turn leads to the third advantage of narrative engagement. Considering correlations between the subscales and outcomes of narrative engagement, scholars can use the scale to investigate whether the different subscales relate more or less closely to outcomes of narrative engagement. For example, emotional engagement may relate closely to one's fear of crime whereas enjoyment of mystery genres may be more explainable by narrative understanding. Conceptualisation of narrative engagement as a multidimensional construct, as such, allows researchers to explore the degree to which the unique, but interrelated dimensions of the construct predict consumers' responses to stories (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Quintero Johnson, & Sangalang, 2017).

In addition, the four subscales make it easier to interpret which dimensions are mostly affected by different stimuli. For example, certain manipulation of stimuli may increase attentional focus but decrease emotional engagement and thus result in no total effect. This is while, the two might actually be competing effects to be analysed independently (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009).

While all items devised for the narrative engagement construct can be adapted for using in context as diverse as short stories, novels and films, the narrative engagement scale remains to be tested with fantastic content to understand how consumers experience such type of stories (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009).

In addition to similarities in the antecedents and processes of narrative engagement and narrative transportation, as discussed below, the two constructs have similar outcomes.

2.7.5 Narrative engagement: Outcomes

Research on consumers' experiences of stories find that the extent to which consumers become engaged with a story affects their subsequent responses to that story, including consumers' emotions (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Sukalla et al., 2015; Bilandzic et al., 2020), and intentions (Lee & Jeong, 2017) that this chapter elaborates in line with the purpose of this thesis. Similar to the issue with transportation, there is a lack of research on the behavioural outcomes of narrative engagement that this thesis examines as part of its purpose.

2.7.5.1 Affective responses

In their study on the emotional effects of narrative engagement, Bilandzic et al. (2020) develop a typology of emotions likely to arise from one's processing of narrative events and story characters and engagement with science stories, as well as the mechanisms by which the emotions lead to subsequent responses to stories. The authors suggests there are two types of emotions that stories elicit in consumers. The first type of emotions are discrete narrative emotions that require a basic understanding of a story and are grouped in positive, negative, and mixed valences. By contrast, complex emotions are perceived only when a person experiences a sufficient level of narrative engagement. For example, empathy with characters is considered as a complex emotional reaction to stories as it requires a high level of narrative processing. Thus, the process by which these emotions are evoked is more complex. A consumer must get involved in a story and to understand the events from the characters' perspectives. The requirements for experiencing discrete narrative emotions are lower in comparison, as consumers simply make sense of a story to perceive these emotions. However, according to Bilandzic et al., (2020), this is not to conclude that intense levels of engagement are incompatible with the discrete emotions. In fact, consumers can also experience these emotions when they are highly engaged in a given story (Bilandzic et al., 2020).

For the purpose of this thesis, RQ2 investigates the discrete emotions that consumers are likely to experience as a result of engagement with fantasy stories in servicescapes.

2.7.5.2 Intentions and behaviour

While previous studies also find that narrative engagement is positively associated with consumers' intentions (e.g., intention to quit smoking, Kim, Bigman, Leader, Lerman, & Cappella, 2012; intention to visit a hotel, Lee & Jeong, 2017) that predict consumers' behaviour (Ajzen, 2020), the focus of extant studies has been on consumers' intentions (Kim et al., 2012; Van Leeuwen et al., 2017) and therefore, research on the behavioural effects of narrative engagement is warranted. Accordingly, to contribute in filling this gap in extant literature, this thesis examines how consumers' intentions and actual behaviour is influenced as a result of engagement with fantasy stories in servicescapes (RQ3).

In addition to affecting consumers' emotions, intentions, and behaviour, atmospherics of the servicescape and stories have the power to affect consumers' brand experiences (Ryu et al., 2019; Nikhashemi et al., 2019), as explained in the following section.

2.8 Storytelling brands

Stories can affect the consumers' brand experiences, including brand associations and their willingness to pay for the brand (Lundqvist et al., 2013; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Ryu et al., 2019; Nikhashemi et al., 2019). Consumers' brand experiences consists of all the "sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packing, … and environment" (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 52; see also Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019). Stories can add favourable and unique associations to a brand and increase consumers' brand equity (Keller, 1993; Wood, 2000; Leone et al., 2006).

For any retailer, successful brand building could be achieved in the form of experiences that "entice, entrance, and enrapture" (Kozinets et al., 2002, p. 20) consumers who seek experiences appealing to their dreams and emotions, and stories help retailers to create such experiences (Fog et al., 2005). More and more retailers are coming to recognise that branding is a magical affair in which facts and dreams must merge. Thus, they are interested in blending fantasy into reality, and incorporating stories in different aspects of branding, including the brand's store design (Kozinets et al., 2002; Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017).

Regardless of being real or fictional, stories provide meaning to brands (Halliday, 1998; Simmons, 2006; Woodside, 2010; Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013; Carnevale, Yucel-Aybat, & Kachersky, 2018; Hudak, 2019), and devise frameworks in which brands could be embedded (see Kozinets, Valck De, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). Wertime (2002) provides story gist (i.e., the main idea) for twelve archetypes with brands that explicitly or implicitly inform consumers that experiencing the brand can demonstrate fulfilling one or more of the archetypes, some of which are shown in Table 2.1. Through adding favourable, unique associations to a brand, stories increase brand equity (Lundqvist et al., 2013; Leone et al., 2006; Keller, 1993).

Further, stories are less critically analysed and cause less negative thoughts (Green & Brock 2000; Escalas, 2004a; Van Laer et al. 2014). Storytelling is perceived as being more convincing than facts, therefore, increasing brand trust, raising brand awareness, and making brands unique (Kaufman, 2003; Kelley & Littman, 2006; Braverman, 2008; Mossberg & Johansen, 2006; Woodside, 2010; Mazzocco et al., 2010; Mills & Robson, 2020). For example, Mossberg and Johansen (2006) explain how marketers use real or

invented stories to create an atmosphere and enhance the uniqueness of service brands. In another study by Brakus et al., (2009), Brand Disney was found to be unique with the researchers classifying it as an experiential brand that stimulates the consumers' senses, encourages them to use their imagination, and makes consumers feel part of the magic that the brand offers.

Table 2. 1. Archetypes, story gist and brand examples

Archetypes	Story Gist	Brand Examples
The Hero	Fortitude, courage, and victory A journey and transformation	Michael Jordan & Nike Shoes Mr. Coffee
The Anti-Hero	Universal message of destruction Attraction of evil The bad dude	Heavy Metal icons Harley
The Wise Old Man	Experience, advise and heritage Staying the test of time	Levi's
The Mother of Goodness	Purity and nourishment Motherly warmth	Just Juice
Source: Developed in part from several chapters in Wertime (2002).		

The affective responses consumers experience when transported to a story can, further, affect their brand evaluations (Escalas, 2004a). Relating a story to a brand, for example, results in changing a brand's personality, that according to Aaker (1997, p. 347) is the "set of human personality characteristics associated with a brand". In Lundqvist et al.'s (2013) study, the story changed the personality of a brand from sincerity to excitement. In their study, however, the consumers were asked to read a story about a company and were not shown the servicescape. The role of the servicescape, and the way in which it conveys a story are, however, an important part of the full brand experience (Lundqvist et al., 2013). As stories have power to change a brand's personality, in order to contribute in addressing the limitations of extant literature, RQ4 examines how fantasy stories told through the servicescape atmospherics affect brand personality.

In addition to stories, different dimensions of a servicescape, by essence, are indicated as communicating the personality of the servicescape brand (Magnini, & Parker, 2009; Möller & Herm, 2013; Mohtar et al., 2019). In this regard, the vision, sound, smell, and

touch senses are manipulated to change the consumers' perceptions of a certain brand. For example, music genre and tempo (fast or slow) are identified as major determinants of brand personality (Neumann & Strack, 2000; Magnini & Parker, 2009). Relatedly, Magnini and Thelen (2008) find that the presence of classical (vesus no music) triggers consumers to rate a restaurant as "intelligent". The presence of in-store music makes a store feel "sophisticated" and "inspirational" (North, Hargreaves, & Mckendrick, 2000). The use of music thus signals a brand's personality (Magnini & Parker, 2009).

Nevertheless, existing studies are limited to brands that are marketed with an authentic story about the history of a certain brand (e.g., Lundqvist et al., 2013; Ryu et al., 2019) or cultural stories (Mossberg, 2008). Thus, the lack of systematic empirical research on consumers' reactions to un-authentic stories suggests the need for further investigation (cf. Argo et al, 2008). This leads to question whether different stories associate different personalities to brands. As such, this thesis examines how fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics affect the servicescape brand's personality (RQ4). This thesis also examines how empathy with positive (versus negative) characters impact consumers' perceptions of brand personality (RQ5).

Furthermore, studies on storytelling either take a consumer (e.g., Lundqvist et al., 2013) or retailer perspective (e.g., Mossberg, 2008) to understand the significance of stories in brand building. This thesis not only investigates consumers' experiences, but designers' opinions are also investigated towards incorporating fantasy stories in servicescapes, and how such story-based atmospheres affect consumers' brand perceptions.

In investigating consumers' experience of stories in servicescapes, this thesis considers that there are stories that come from brands the consumers encounter in a servicescape and stories that come from various service providers including, for example, the authors or movie producers and that these stories, together, shape consumers' brand experiences in servicescapes.

A brand's personality also has the ability to affect consumers' attitudes and behaviour (Freling & Forbes, 2005; Dodoo, 2018) such as word-of-mouth and willingness to pay (Bairrada, Coelho, & Lizanets, 2019). Therefore, when studying consumers' behaviour in fantasy servicescapes (RQ3), this thesis also considers that brand personality, in-turn, influences consumers' intentions and behavioural responses.

2.9 Research questions

Despite the benefit of stories in engaging consumers (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008, 2009; Bilandzic et al., 2020) and the ability of fantasy in creating extraordinary servicescapes to escape (Seregina, 2019), consumers' experiences of servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories requires further understanding (Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Seregina, 2019). A review of the literature revealed a number of gaps in extant research which motivated the formulation of several research questions outlined below. To contribute to the servicescape environment, narrative engagement, brand management, and consumer behaviour literatures, this thesis is led by five aims that are addressed within three studies.

Although consumers' engagement with stories in forms of texts (Green & Brock, 2002; Walkington et al., 2020), movies (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Green & Clark, 2013), and advertisements (Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Campbell et al., 2020) has been proven in the marketing literature by multiple scholars, limited studies have examined consumers' engagement with fictional stories in physical environments and how stories told through the servicescape atmospherics impact consumers' responses (Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2008, 2019). As such, the question rises whether exposure to fantasy stories presented through the servicescape atmospherics results in narrative engagement.

RQ1: Do consumers experience narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes?

Servicescape atmospherics (Vukadin et al., 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020) and stories (Escalas, 2004a; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019) impact consumers' emotions. However, consumers' emotional responses in servicescapes that are designed based on a fantasy story yet needs further investigation (Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2008, 2019; Seregina, 2019). RQ2 examines the positive and negative affective responses that consumers experience in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories:

RQ2: What affective responses are experienced in fantasy servicescapes?

Different dimensions of a servicescape (Vukadin et al., 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020) and stories (Van Laer et al., 2014; Lee & Jeong, 2017; Dessart, 2018) further, influence consumers' intentions and actual behaviour. Yet, the effect of fantasy servicescapes on consumers' behaviour calls for further investigation (Mossberg, 2019, Seregina, 2019). As such, RQ3 examines consumers' intentions and behaviour in fantasy servicescapes:

RQ3: What intentions and behaviours are experienced in fantasy servicescapes?

In addition to changing affective and behavioural responses, servicescape atmospherics (Mohtar et al., 2019; Möller & Herm, 2013) and stories (Lundqvist et al., 2013) impact brand personality. Yet, research on consumers' brand personality perceptions when they are exposed to fictional stories is overlooked (Lundqvist et al., 2013). To fill this gap in the extant literature, RQ4 examines how consumers perceive the personality of the brand of fantasy servicescapes:

RQ4: How do fantasy servicescapes influence perceptions of brand personality?

As fantasy stories depict positive and negative characters (Saricks, 2009) and given the fact that consumers' responses to a story differs (Argo et al., 2008; Wallin et al., 2019) depending on the character they empathise with, this thesis also examines how empathy with positive (versus negative) characters impacts consumers' subsequent responses in fantasy servicescapes. The fifth and last question of this thesis thus examines:

RQ5: How consumers' empathy with positive (versus negative) characters influences responses to fantasy servicescapes?

To address these questions, the thesis starts (Chapter 4) by investigating the opinions of design experts on the why, and how of implementing stories for servicescape design. In doing so, the designers were first asked about the types of experiences they create for consumers in servicescapes, the type of stories they implement in servicescape design, the reasons that encourage or discourage implementing a story in servicescape design, the circumstances in which designers consider using a story for the servicescape design, the servicescape elements that are effective in implementing a story, the extent to which the designers recommend mimicry of the story in the servicescape design, as well as the affective and behavioural responses stories evoke in servicescapes. The designers also shared the personalities they aim to relate to servicescape brands by incorporating stories in design.

Following the designers' opinions, the research continues by investigating consumers' experiences of visiting a fantasy designed servicescape in the second study (Chapter 5) to understand their perceptions of the servicescape atmospherics that reminded them of the story, and the level to which the atmospherics mimic the story. The consumers then shared their experiences of engagement with the story. Consumers further shared about the

emotions, intentions, and behaviour they had at the servicescape as well as how they perceived the servicescape brand.

After exploring designers' opinions and consumers' experiences in Study 1 and Study 2, to validate and support the findings, a survey is conducted in Study 3 (Chapter 6) to test whether consumers experience narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes, and how engagement with the story influences their affective and behavioural responses, and the brand personality. Study 3 also investigates how empathy with positive (versus negative) story characters influences consumers' subsequent responses to the servicescape.

2.10 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed several academic literature domains relevant to the current thesis including the environmental psychology, storytelling, fantasy, narrative transportation, empathy with characters, narrative engagement, and the literature on brand personality.

The chapter started by reviewing the effect of the servicescape on consumers' emotions and behaviour. With regard to its conceptual comprehensiveness and perceptual process measurement, the environmental psychology literature is the most significant literature for studying holistic perceptions of retail environments. Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) Stimulus-Organism-Response framework which Donovan and Rossiter (1982) adapted to study consumer-environment relations enables comprehensive examinations of one's responses to servicescapes.

The discussion followed by encapsulating the importance of storytelling and the benefit of using stories for designing servicescapes. Stores, restaurants, and hotels designed based on either real or fantasy stories have the potential to attract (Mansvelt, 2008) and engage (Diamond et al., 2009) the consumers. Regardless of the importance of fantasy as playful and imaginative consumption (Seregina, 2014; Fakfare et al., 2020), however, the significance of the concept in servicescape research, in terms of how the consumers respond to fantastic servicescapes, remains overlooked (Kozinets, 2001; Martin, 2004; Stevens & Maclaran, 2005; Seregina, 2014; Fakfare et al., 2020).

Whether real or fictional, stories invite consumers into the action they portray and make them lose themselves in the story (Green & Brock, 2000, 2002; Van Laer et al., 2014; Van Laer et al., 2019b; Walkington et al., 2020). This experience of detachment from the real world while being lost in a story is conceptualised as narrative transportation (Green,

2005; Van Laer et al., 2014; Van Laer et al., 2019b; Walkington et al., 2020). The chapter, further, reviewed the literature on narrative transportation. The stories a retailer tells, and consumers' characteristics include the two substantial antecedents of narrative transportation (Van Laer et al., 2014).

The storyteller antecedents cover factors that are under the retailer's control and include genre, chronology and causality, identifiable characters, and verisimilitude. Given the importance of fantasy in designing servicescapes (Mansvelt, 2008, Seregina, 2018), and to address the call for research on the effects of diverse story genres on transportation (Van Laer et al., 2014), this thesis examines non-commercial, fantasy stories. As for the chronology and causality, although these features can increase the transportation effect (Van Laer, 2011), stories presented in servicescapes might not necessarily have a linear chronological order and neither could consumers always connect episodes of the story that are illustrated on walls and supported by other atmospherics such as music played from various scenes of a certain story. The lack of chronology and causality of stories presented in servicescapes thus question the applicability of the narrative transportation construct for investigating consumers' story experiences in servicescapes. In terms of character identifiability, fantasy stories feature stereotypical characters who are either good or evil (Saricks, 2009) and empathy with the characters gets consumers transported (Escalas & Stern, 2003). As the last storyteller antecedent, verisimilitude does not inhibit transportation in a fantasy story and consumers are less concerned about the story origins as long as they feel safe (Wang, 1999).

The second category of transportation antecedents relates to consumers' characteristics of age, gender, transportability, attention, education, and familiarity. As fantasy stories are not only aimed for children (Lewis, 1966) and older consumers can be transported to stories as much as younger consumers, and given the difficulties of conducting research involving children, this thesis examines consumers aged above 16 years old. Despite the contradictive opinions on the effect of gender on transportation, following Green (2005), the current thesis assumes that all gender groups can be equally transported into stories. While research on transportation find that consumers' transportability, their attention to a story and education level positively affect this experience, the latter characteristics are beyond the scope of this thesis. Similarly, while familiarly intensifies transportation to a given story, unfamiliar consumers are also transported (Green, 2004) and thus this thesis does not examine this characteristic.

The four dimensions of narrative engagement as the construct this thesis uses to examine consumers' experiences of fantasy stories in servicescapes were distinguished as follows: Narrative understanding describes how easily the consumers understand a presented story (Van Laer, 2011). Attentional focus relates to the consumers' focus on the story, as also required for transportation. Alike transportation, narrative engagement also requires that consumers feel the characters' emotions. Nevertheless, emotional engagement is specific to the emotional arousal component of narrative engagement and not to specific emotions (Ravaja et al., 2006). To understand how narrative engagement evokes specific emotions in consumers, two constructs measuring the positive and negative affective responses are included in the conceptual framework (Study 3) and measured by Richins' (1997) scale. The last dimension of narrative engagement, narrative presence, involves one's sense of transitioning from the real world to the story world as a result of mentally constructing an alternative world (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Bilandzic et al., 2020).

While consumers' engagement with and getting lost in stories presented in forms of texts (Banerjee & Greene, 2013; Walkington et al., 2020), movies (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Green & Clark, 2013) and advertisements (Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Campbell et al., 2020) is proven in the marketing literature, limited studies have examined consumers' responses to fantasy stories in servicescape atmospheres (Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Mossberg, 2019). Accordingly, this thesis examines whether consumers experience narrative engagement in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories (RQ1).

In addition to similarities in the antecedents and processes of narrative engagement and transportation, the constructs have similar consequences including affective responses, intentions, and behaviour (Bilandzic et al., 2020). Similar to transportation, however, research on the outcomes of narrative engagement is limited and therefore, this thesis examines the effect of narrative engagement on consumers' affective responses (RQ2), intentions and behavioural responses (RQ3).

Stories (Lundqvist et al., 2013) and the servicescape atmospherics (Möller & Herm, 2013; Magnini, & Parker, 2009) also have power to change brand personality. To contribute to addressing the limitations of the extant literature, this thesis examines how fantasy stories told through the servicescape atmospherics affect brand personality (RQ4).

Given that fantasy is a genre of contrasts (Saricks, 2009) depicting the battle between a good versus an evil character and consumers empathise with them (Escalas & Stern, 2003;

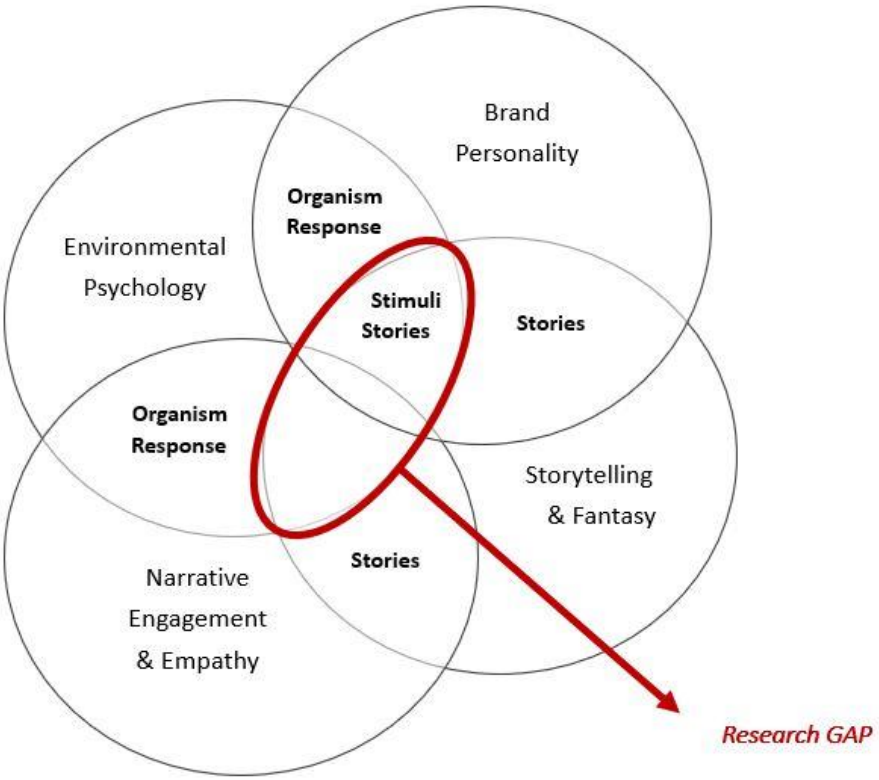
Van Laer et al., 2014; Ok, 2018; Wallin et al., 2019), this thesis examines how empathy with positive (versus negative) story characters impacts consumers' subsequent responses in fantasy designed servicescapes (RQ5).

Figure 2.1. illustrates how the discussed literature areas relate to each other and the gap in the literature that translates into the five research questions of this thesis. Based on the above discussions, the figure presents that stimuli in a servicescape can tell fantasy stories that links the literature of environmental phycology to that of storytelling and fantasy. Stories engage the consumers as they imagine the events and empathise with characters thus linking the literature of storytelling to that of narrative engagement and empathy with the characters. Engagement with a story and its characters leads to changes in consumers' affective and behavioural responses (i.e., organism and response) that link the literature on narrative engagement and empathy to environmental psychology. In addition, stories can change consumers' brand personality perceptions. This explains how the literature of storytelling and fantasy links to the literature of brand personality. Not only stories but the stimuli, organism and response can also result in changes in brand personality which in-turn, explain how the literature of environmental psychology relates to the literature of brand personality.

Although stimuli of a servicescape can tell stories and stories can engage the consumers, question remains whether consumers experience narrative engagement in servicescapes that are designed based on stories. Moreover, as consumers visit the marketplace not just to buy products/services but to engage in fantasies as a means of escaping their real lives, the use of fantasy stories in servicescape design could provide this escape to consumers. Consumers' responses to fantasy designed servicescapes, however, remains overlooked within the extant literature.

This thesis contributes to environmental psychology, storytelling, narrative engagement, empathy, and branding literatures by examining consumers' narrative engagement with fantasy stories that are told through the servicescape atmospherics and how engagement with fantasy stories influences consumers' affective, behavioural, and brand responses in the servicescape.

Figure 2. 1. Integration of literature areas



Chapter 3 outlines the strategy, design and methodology employed in this thesis to answer the proposed research questions.

Chapter 3 Methodology

"*Three is Company*": A mixed-methods approach to examining consumers' experiences of fantasy stories in servicescapes

3.1 Introduction

Having reviewed the importance (Chapter 1) and the theoretical foundations (Chapter 2) relevant to this thesis, this chapter outlines the design and methodology that underpins the investigation of the five research questions. The chapter starts with an overview of the research paradigm, outlining the research ontology and epistemology, and thereafter, explains the mixed-methods data collection procedure, including the in-depth interviews in Studies 1 and 2 followed by an online survey in Study 3. Ethics approval numbers of the three studies are provided, and a summary of the chapter is presented at the end.

As earlier discussed in Chapter 2, this thesis examined how retailers affect consumers' emotions and behaviour and brand personality by embedding the plot and characters of a fantasy story in servicescape atmospherics. As there is limited research on consumers' responses to fantasy themed servicescapes (Kozinets et al., 2002; 2004; Seregina, 2014), this research begins with an exploratory qualitative enquiry in Study 1, conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with design experts to understand how servicescape atmospherics are manipulated to present a story, and how such experiences influence consumers' responses.

Having understood the why, how, and when of designing retail environments based on fantasy stories from design experts' perspectives, the research conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with consumers visiting a fantasy designed servicescape in Study 2 for understanding consumers' point of view on the issue in question. The study explored servicescape atmospherics that consumers perceive as more effective in reminding them of the related story, their engagement with the story, and responses to the servicescape.

Based on the findings from the two first qualitative studies, the extracted propositions, together with other existing scales and constructs in the literature, were replicated as part

of the survey design in Study 3. The study surveyed consumers to examine relationships between servicescape atmosphere, consumers' experience of narrative engagement, and their affective, behavioural, and brand responses. The study also examined the effect of empathy with positive (versus negative) characters as the moderator in the framework. The method of data collection of each study is further explicated in sections 3.4. to 3.6.

The following section describes the research paradigm, and an outline and justification of the research strategy, design and methodology is provided.

3.2 Research paradigm

A philosophical paradigm, which relates to a researcher's worldview, guides the way in which she or he conceives the research objectives and approaches the research process, contributing to the outcomes and, to some degree, determining the nature of the results. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), a philosophical paradigm is a combination of a) the researcher's ontological perspective (i.e., what is the nature of reality?), b) their epistemological view (i.e., the relationship between the inquirer and knowledge?), and c) their methodological premises (how does one gain knowledge of the world?) which address whether the researcher focuses on analysing individuals' subjective experience and interpretation of the world, and/or identifying and verifying the relationships and regularities between diverse elements (e.g., Burrell & Morgan, 2017; Su, 2018).

The ontological perspective and the epistemology employed in this thesis are explained in the following section.

3.2.1 Research ontology: Realist

Crotty (1988, p.10) defines ontology as "the study of being" or the study of reality and the view that a researcher has toward understanding "what is". Ontology relates to whether the reality represents an objective existence external to and independent from individual cognition, or a product of individuals' subjective consciousness (Su, 2018).

The realist ontology that underpins the current thesis advocates the view that reality exists outside the mind (Crotty, 1988), independent of our perceptions of it (Khanna, 2019), and that the world is objective and thus can be observed and measured (Lee & Lings, 2008).

3.2.2 Research epistemology: Positivist

A researcher's ontological view, in-turn, leads to understanding what it means to know via the epistemology she/he undertakes. Epistemology, or the study of knowledge (Crotty, 1988), offers the philosophical grounding one needs to decide "what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure they are both adequate and legitimate" (Maynard, 1994, p.10).

Following the realist ontology, while this thesis uses a mixed-method approach starting with two qualitative enquiries (in Studies 1 and 2) followed by a final, quantitative study (in Study 3), it is underpinned by a positivist epistemology that provides "assurance of unambiguous and accurate knowledge of the world" (Crotty, 1988, p.18).

Van Asselt and Rotmans (2002, p.77) define positivism as "the paradigm that defines science as the search for and prediction of empirical regularities to make universal, true statements." Positivists use empirical methodologies adopted from the natural sciences to study phenomena (Berg, 2001). Thus, "positive science proceeds by a study of the given" rather than an abstract reasoning process, and the basis of this positive science is direct experience, not speculation (Crotty, 1988, p.20). The word positivist often emphasises an objectivist epistemology that aims to explain and predict what happens in the social world by searching for causal relationships between elements. The objectivist epistemology assumes that the phenomenon under investigation and the investigator have an independent relationship where knowledge accumulates as new verified hypotheses are added to knowledge and falsified hypotheses are eliminated (Burrell & Morgan, 2017).

The objectivist epistemology usually lies on the foundation of an ontology that assumes existence of the physical and social world to be an external reality that can be apprehended through the construction of a set of time and context free generalisations capturing the essence of reality. In line with the foresaid ontological and epistemological assumptions, positivist research emphasise the identification and empirical testing of hypotheses with quantitative approaches such as surveys (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). While positivism was traditionally considered to be associated with quantitative methods, more recent research has proven that the positivist paradigm and qualitative methods can coexist in harmony (Su, 2018) thus justifying the qualitative nature of Studies 1 and 2 in this thesis.

3.2.2.1 Positivism and qualitative research

The term qualitative research has been used by different scholars in different, and at times, contradictory ways (Su, 2018). Van Maanen (1979) argues that as a label, "qualitative methods" has no precise meaning in any of the social sciences and that it is, at best, "an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (p.520). Similarly, Strauss and Corbin (1998) refer to qualitative research as "any type of research that produces findings *[that are]* not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (p.10). Overall, common to many definitions of qualitative research is a focus on phenomena in relatively natural settings and nonmathematical data analysis processes (Su, 2018). As such, the positivist paradigm and qualitative research methods may seem to contradict each other, because positivism was traditionally considered to be associated with quantitative methods and qualitative research associated with subjectivist positions of researchers. Nevertheless, the positivist paradigm and qualitative methods can coexist in harmony. The positivist qualitative research, in fact, represent a uniquely useful and extensively adopted genre of academic inquiry (Su, 2018).

From an ontological perspective, positivist qualitative research assumes existence of an objective, external reality that could be apprehended and summarised, although not so easily quantified. From an epistemological perspective, positivist qualitative research focuses on searching for, through non-statistical means, regularities, and causal relationships between different elements of the reality and summarising identified patterns into generalised findings. Methodologically, positivist qualitative research emphasise a nomothetic rather than idiographic approach which utilises systematic research protocols and techniques to develop and test theoretical models or propositions in accordance with the canons of scientific rigor (Burrell & Morgan, 2017).

Positivist qualitative studies have been adopted by disciplines as diverse as psychology, law, and business, to mention a few. Positivist qualitative research are applied in many fields, including, but not limited to marketing (Berkovich, 2018; Sobh & Perry, 2006; Boddy, 2005a; 2005b). Despite marketing studies have long adopted qualitative methods (Belk, 2007; Calder, 1977), these studies are often associated with interpretivist approach (Su, 2018). In practice, however, the positivist approach to qualitative research has

established its position as a key genre of publication and research using positivist qualitative methods regularly appear in journals such as European journal of marketing (Sobh & Perry, 2006). Further, as positivist qualitative studies and quantitative studies share the same philosophical stances, journals having a quantitative focus also feature positivist qualitative studies that complement quantitative research (Su, 2018).

When carefully combined, the positivism and qualitative research can form a synergistic relationship. The complementarity between the positivist stance and qualitative methods manifests itself in multiple ways. Qualitative research is suitable for exploring emerging phenomena and identifying new theory development opportunities. Qualitative methods expand the scope of positivist research. Further, in cases where the researcher seeks an in-depth view of the underlying patterns or processes responsible for the phenomena, qualitative methods extend the depth of positivist research (Su, 2018). Boddy (2016) argues that when a researcher aims to develop a quantitative measurement instrument, such as a questionnaire, the preliminary required qualitative research can be undertaken under a positivist approach.

3.2.2.2 Positivist qualitative research process

The input of positivist qualitative research consists of a variety of especially unstructured data including interviews, observations, videos, and documents (Patton, 2001) that are extensively used in different fields of business and management (e.g., Kane, Johnson, & Majchrzak, 2014; Orlikowski, 2002; Gersick, 1989). An interview consists of semi-structured and/or open-ended questions about participants' experience, perceptions, and knowledge. The data obtained from interviews are usually incorporated in the final research report in the form of direct quotations (Su, 2018). The key benefit of using interviews is the creation of a thick description capturing both detailed content and rich context of phenomena (Geertz, 1973).

The output of positivist qualitative research in business emphasise novel, relevant, testable, and empirically valid theories (Eisenhardt, 1989b). The most common forms of these outputs include new themes, patterns, concepts, insights, and propositions (Patton, 2001). To convert diverse forms of qualitative data into high quality findings, several research methodologies are developed and adopted, and grounded theory is considered as one prominent methodology related to positivist qualitative research (Su, 2018).

3.2.2.3 Positivism qualitative research and grounded theory

Pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory presents a widely used methodology applicable to diverse paradigms (Walsh, Holton, Bailyn, Fernandez, Levina, & Glaser, 2015). The principles of grounded theory are well aligned with positivism (Bryant, 2002) but further, contribute to legitimisation and systemisation of qualitative research methods thus providing a valuable toolkit for qualitative researchers (Holton & Walsh, 2016; Su, 2018).

Formerly, qualitative research methods focused on an explicit coding procedure for converting qualitative data to a quantifiable form that could help further testing of provisional hypotheses, or focused on generating theoretical ideas including new concepts, properties, and hypotheses, without going through a systematic coding process. Glaser (1965) combined prior approaches to create the constant comparative method which achieves the twin goals of generating theory more systematically, through explicit coding and supporting provisional testing of hypotheses. Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain "the basic, defining rule for the constant comparative method" as, "while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category" (p.106).

Specifically, Glaser and Strauss's (1967) data coding process can be described in four stages. The first stage involves comparing incidents applicable to each category emerging from data. Through constant comparison, each of the category's dimensions, conditions, consequences, and their relation to other categories are identified. The second stage deals with integrating the categories and properties. As the researcher continues making sense of the data, the diverse categories start to relate to one another and become a more unified whole. The third stage focuses on delimiting the theory. As the emergent theory solidifies and the list of categories become theoretically saturated, the researcher starts discovering the underlying uniformity in the categories and properties. This results in the formulation of the theory with a smaller set of higher-level concepts. Finally, the fourth stage presents the coded data, memos, and the theory in writing. This process of coding and theory formulation is known as the Glaserian approach of grounded theory with constant comparison at the core of the approach (Su, 2018).

A different approach to grounded theory methodology which has been extensively adopted by qualitative studies in business and management was prescribed by Strauss and

Corbin (1990), providing a set of systematic techniques for developing theory from qualitative data (see also Corbin & Strauss, 1990) that centre on three basic types of open, axial, and selective coding. Open coding involves an interpretive process by which the data are broken down analytically and given conceptual labels. In open coding, events, actions, and interactions are compared for conceptual similarities and grouped together as in categories and subcategories. Axial coding relates categories to their subcategories through the "coding paradigm" of conditions, context, action or interaction strategies, and the consequences. The hypothetical relationships proposed deductively are verified repeatedly against incoming data, while the development of categories continues as the data accumulate. Selective coding takes place in the later phases of the study. and the process unifies all categories around a core category that might either emerge from the identified categories or instead, take the form of an abstract term. The core category emerging from selective coding represents the central phenomenon of the study. This approach is known as the Straussian approach to grounded theory (Kelle, 2010; Su, 2018).

The Glaserian and Straussian approaches to grounded theory have laid the foundation of qualitative research, and extant studies have drawn on elements from both. The two approaches differ in a number of ways that guide researchers to decide between utilising one or the other. First, whereas the Glaserian approach requires the researcher to rely on theoretical sensitivity and investigate the field without bringing precise research questions or preconceived theories, the Straussian approach allows the guidance of predefined research questions and pre-existing theoretical frameworks. Second, the Glaserian approach emphasises an *inductive* analytic process where theories strictly emerge from data. The Straussian approach combines elements of both inductive and deductive methods and centres on *abductive* reasoning which involves continual validation (Su, 2018). Abductive reasoning begins by examining data and after scrutiny of the data, the process considers all possible explanations for the observed data and thereafter, forms a hypothesis to confirm or disconfirm to the point the researcher arrives at the most plausible interpretation of the data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Third, in contrast to the Glasserian approach to grounded theory that is based on substantive and theoretical coding to form theoretical models, the Straussian approach has specified a coding paradigm that has the potential risk of forcing categories on data (Glaser, 1992), but helps generate findings in a structured manner (Kelle, 2010; Su, 2018).

Dunne (2011) contends that the main difference between the Classical (i.e., Glaserian) and Straussian approach is applying the existing literature review in the practical research process. Glaser opposes utilising literature review in the concern that extant literature may contaminate the processes of data collection, analysis and theory development and thus mislead the researchers to carry out frameworks, hypotheses, and other theoretical ideas based on the data, which, in turn, undermine the validity of grounded theory research. Although the Glaserian approach discourages grounded theorists from engaging with existing literature, other studies have found that the use of literature helps (especially for novice) researchers to have an idea of whether the proposed study is performed earlier as reference in refining their research questions (Caelli, Ray & Mill, 2003; Dunne, 2011).

In simple words, the Straussian approach to grounded theory refers to literature to understand the research subject. Reviewing the literature helps researchers to improve research questions. In addition, the Straussian approach has specific procedures that guide researchers to organise and analyse data, starting from preparations before the interviews, up until developing the new hypothesis or theory. Therefore, the Straussian approach is more structured, leading to a solid coding technique for data analysis that emphasise the reliability and validity of data, that can be shown in its three types of open, axial, and selective coding techniques (Dunne, 2011).

Despite of their differences, both the Glaserian and Straussian approaches of grounded theory have a significant level of consistency with the positivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Charmaz, 2000; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). For example, the Glaserian approach is known to follow "assumptions of an objective, external reality, a neutral observer who discovers data, reductionist inquiry of manageable research problems, and objectivist rendering of data" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.510). The Straussian approach is built upon similar assumptions with further emphasis on the positivism-inclined process of provisional verification of the findings (Su, 2018).

As a methodology increasingly adapted by scholars in different ways, Charmaz (2006, 2008) suggests that grounded theory can be broadly categorised into two forms of constructivist and objectivist grounded theory, with the former being aligned with the interpretive tradition and the latter with positivist qualitative research. Constructivist grounded theory views data and theoretical analysis as being closely intertwined and co-created through the interactions and interpretations of the researcher and research

participants. The emerging theory is, therefore, an interpretation that is based on, and specific to, the researcher's view.

By contrast, objectivist grounded theory views data as representing external, knowable reality and theoretical analysis as a process of careful discovery by unbiased scholars and therefore, the theory emphasises a stricter adherence to prescribed research procedures (Charmaz, 2006).

Given the positivist epistemology of this thesis in conducting the first two qualitative studies that are qualitative, the guidelines of the Straussian approach to grounded theory is followed. As discussed above, the Straussian approach has assumptions of an objective reality and thus aligns well with the positivist paradigm.

While a key merit of positivist qualitative research is the celebration of novelty and creativity (Bansal & Corley, 2011), nevertheless, positivist qualitative research also has its challenges. Due to its oftentimes field-based nature and highly methodical research process, it can require significant time and commitment, as well as access to research sites for in-depth investigation (Su, 2018).

The next section provides a description of key stages of the research process and a summary of data collection and analysis methods.

3.3 Research method: Mixed-methods

Considering the benefits of conducting positivist qualitative research for exploring phenomena and achieving an in-depth view of underlying patterns or processes responsible of phenomena (Su, 2018), and given the advantages of quantitative research in generalising the findings to a larger group of consumers (Gupta, 2013), a sequential mixed-methods design has been employed in this thesis to address the research questions. Mixed-methods research is proven to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this research topic, rather than relying on either of the qualitative or quantitative methods alone (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Chisnall (1973) reminds researchers that it is “not so much a question of which method is best, as which set of methods is likely to result in an objective research programme” (p. 162). Huberman and Miles (2002) assert that “quantitative and qualitative inquiry can support and inform each other” (p. 396).

Practically, qualitative data help understand those ideas and viewpoints of consumers that are not directly obtainable in quantitative research (Gupta, 2013). The aim of qualitative

research is to build a rich, holistic picture, and a deep understanding of phenomena in a specific context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research is a "situated" activity that places a researcher "in the world" and it typically involves collection and analysis of a range of empirical materials including interviews, case studies and texts that help make sense of phenomena being studied in terms of meanings that people in the relevant natural settings bring to them (p. 3). Quantitative research, on the other hand, helps avoid any personal bias that may exist during collection or interpreting responses, and is further useful in generalising the findings (Gupta, 2013). Consequently, this research combines qualitative and quantitative methods that could help "offset the weaknesses of either approach used by itself" (Gupta, 2013, p.43). According to Creswell and Clark (2017), the mixed-methods approach is particularly effective where an initial qualitative research helps to further explore propositions and scales for subsequent quantitative inquiries, as was the case in this thesis.

The next section describes the method and sample of Study1 of this thesis that explored designers' perceptions of story-based servicescapes and how such environments impact consumers' affective, behavioural and brand responses.

3.4 Chapter 4, Study 1: Qualitative

The first qualitative study of this thesis involves 10 in-depth interviews with interior designers to identify a) types of experiences they create for consumers in servicescapes, followed by the b) types of stories that are implemented in servicescape design, c) reasons that encourage or discourage designers from implementing stories in servicescape design, and d) circumstances in which designers would consider using a story for design, e) the servicescape elements that better represent a certain story and f) the extent to which mimicking a story is recommended. The findings also provide insights into g) affective, h) behavioural, and i) brand experiences the designers evoke in story-based servicescapes. When asking for the reasons that encourage the designers for implementing stories, special attention is given for understanding if stories can engage consumers, resulting in narrative engagement. Also, in exploring the atmospherics that better represent a story, the designers are asked for their opinions regarding how a plot and characters of stories, in general, and specifically fantasy stories could be embedded in the servicescape design. The designers also address the extent to which they control the elements consumers might experience in the servicescape (e.g., how certain utensils fit in the story) and eventually,

share their opinions on how story-based design practices influence consumers' responses. The designers refer to the importance of both positive and negative story characters in designing servicescapes.

The next section provides a discussion of the exploratory nature of the first and second studies of this thesis.

3.4.1 Exploratory research

The nature of the objectives Study 1 (and Study 2) aim to address is exploratory. Exploratory research aims to determine how people get along in the setting under investigation, the meaning they give to their actions and the concerns they have (Chambliss & Schutt, 2006). The purpose of this form of research is to understand "what is going on here?" and investigate a phenomenon without previously formulating any explicit expectations (ibid).

Exploratory research provides significant insights into a given situation and is conducted in an attempt to clarify ambiguous situations or discover ideas that have not been identified earlier (Zikmund & Babin, 2010). Exploratory research exists when research is being conducted in a relatively unknown area where only a small amount of relevant information exists.

As the literature review illustrated, extant academic literature on the impact of fantasy stories on consumers' responses is minimal. No studies to date have investigated the why and how of implementing fantasy stories in design (Study 1) and the consequences of such experiences in terms of consumers' engagement with stories, and their subsequent responses (Studies 1 & 2) and therefore, theories surrounding this topic do not exist yet. Consequently, it is not possible in this research to presuppose any hypotheses. As exploratory research is most appropriate and required when the purpose of the research is to gain new insights into relatively unknown area, the nature of the first and second studies in this research is exploratory.

3.4.2 Qualitative research strategy

In line with the exploratory nature of this study, and to collect the data needed to examine the research questions, a qualitative research strategy was implemented.

As discussed above, qualitative research allows the researcher to provide elaborate interpretations of phenomena under investigation without reliance on numerical data (Zikmund & Babin, 2010). Instead of being characterised by numbers, the nature of the data generated by this technique are textual, visual, or oral and focus on meaningful characterisations and interpretations (ibid). Qualitative methods allow intensive measurement of new or developing concepts and are great for studying unknown settings (Chambliss & Schutt, 2006) such as consumers' experiences of fantasy designed servicescapes. In addition, qualitative techniques provide the benefit of being able to identify the diversity of events or factors that lead to a certain outcome (ibid), which was the very essence of this study. Qualitative methods allow researchers to gain enhanced understanding of social processes as well as motivations that drive certain human behaviours (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003).

Essentially, qualitative research involves the examination, analysis as well as interpretation of observations to identify the underlying meanings and relationships (Boundless, n.d.). As such, qualitative techniques help researchers to discover the true inner meanings behind phenomena as well as revealing new insights (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) by obtaining an in-depth, rich, and descriptive understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour (Boundless, n.d.). In the first study, qualitative research helps the researcher to understand the reasons behind why, or why not, designers implement a story in servicescape design, and how such experiences may influence consumers' behaviour. Given that the literature review revealed that the impact of fantasy servicescapes from the practitioners (Study 1) and consumers' (Study 2) points of view is an undeveloped domain, the use of qualitative methods was further justified in the first (as well as the second) study of this thesis.

To conclude, considering the need to obtain in-depth, descriptive, and meaningful data on the topic under investigation, and the lack of existing relevant theories that could help understand the reasons for designing fantasy servicescapes (Study 1) and consumers' experiences of the story-based environments (Study 2), qualitative techniques seemed most appropriate. Further, when research questions proposed in a study are exploratory in nature, qualitative techniques are most appropriate for obtaining the desired conclusions (Chambliss & Schutt, 2006).

As a form of qualitative enquiry, justification for using semi-structured in-depth interviews as the primary method of data collection in Study 1 and Study 2 is provided in the section below.

3.4.3 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

The main method used to collect data in Study 1 and 2 was semi-structured in-depth interviews. The key motivation to conducting depth interviews is the rich and meaningful data the method tends to elect (Gillham, 2000). Depth interviews permit a researcher to fully explore all factors that underpin participants' answers to identify her/his true opinions, feelings, experiences, and the motivations behind their ideas (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). Depth interviews can help in discovering the subjective meanings and interpretations that participants give to their ideas and experiences. Given that the first study aimed to understand the underlying reasons that encourage designers to implement stories in servicescape atmospherics, as an example of what the study examined, in-depth interviews seemed appropriate for this study.

Depth interviews provide the advantage of generating much deeper information and insights from participants compared to alternative data collection methods (Zikmund & Babin, 2010). Using depth interviews allows the researcher to ask a large variety of questions and follow-ups with probes for additional elaboration (ibid). Such techniques allow a researcher to go beyond the surface level responses the participants initially offer and help gain a deeper understanding of the meanings and reasons behind ideas, in terms of penetration, exploration and explanation (Legard et al., 2003). Depth interviews offer the researcher the opportunity to establish rapport with the participants which further encourage participants to share their ideas and experiences (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

A semi-structured in-depth interview, unlike the structured interview, relies on general topics to be covered as opposed to a list of formal questions (Fontana & Frey, 2008). The goal of a semi-structured interview is to explore the topic openly and allow the interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words (Esterberg, 2002). This enables the generation of depth information about people's experiences and their meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

The ten participants in Study 1 were requested to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. The interviews were semi-structured as an interview guideline was prepared and followed (Appendix A). This was to ensure that the conversations were

flexible in terms of being able to diverge to explore the responses in detail, but still based around addressing the research questions to establish a degree of objectivity by suggesting the direction of the discussion. Loaded or leading questions were avoided to reduce potential bias. The questions were all structured in an open-ended format in order to stimulate free thought from participants and to give them opportunity to explain and qualify the answers and express their feelings using their own words. A funnelling technique (Renton, 2020) was implemented in the interview guideline where a general, broad question was initially asked before participants were asked to discuss more specifically or explain about relevant factors to the main question. This provided the advantage of cueing participants' ideas on designing servicescapes based on stories in general, and the discussion was, thereafter, followed by more specified questions on fantasy stories, as well as the underlying reasons related to each main question.

The questions were designed to yield information concerning the objective of these interviews which is to identify the types of experiences created for consumers, the type of stories adapted for servicescape design, reasons that designers implement stories in design, the circumstances they consider relating a story to design, servicescape elements that can better represent a story, the extent to which the stories are mimicked, as well as insights into affective, behavioural and brand experiences designers aim to evoke in consumers in story-based servicescapes.

3.4.4 Participant selection criteria

The participants for the in-depth interviews were deliberately selected through a mixture of judgement (or purposive), convenience, and snowballing criterion sampling methods (Babin & Zikmund, 2015; Sarstedt, Bengart, Shaltoni, & Lehmann, 2018). Accordingly, a list of 178 interior designers, spatial designers, and architects with experience in retail, as well as design and architecture academics from across 75 companies and universities were contacted by email. The recruiting process started by contacting those design experts whom the researcher had mutual contacts with and were judged as being appropriate for the purpose of the study and thereafter, each participant was asked if they could refer the researcher to their colleagues who would be willing to participate. Further, the researcher searched for and contacted other experts whose experiences seemed relevant to this thesis. Selecting participants with expertise in diverse areas of retail interior, architecture, and

with academic proficiency ensured the collection of broad, rich knowledge on the topic under investigation.

In terms of the appropriate sample size, qualitative methodologists are unlikely to agree on exact sample sizes needed for qualitative studies. Nevertheless, consensus exists that a number of factors can influence the number of interviews needed to achieve saturation (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013) including the quality of interview data, the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the qualitative method, and study design (Morse, 2000; Marshall et al., 2013). Researchers argue that the "how many" question is wrong to ask (Charmaz, 2000), and that the sample size "depends upon developing the range of relevant conceptual categories, saturating (i.e., filling, supporting, and providing repeated evidence for) those categories, and explaining the data" (Charmaz, 1990, p.1163; see also Charmaz, 2000; Dworkin, 2012).

Starks and Brown Trinidad (2007) argue that grounded theory, as the methodology used in this thesis, relies on theoretical sampling, which involves recruiting participants with different experiences of the phenomenon to explore multiple dimensions of the topic under study. The researcher continues adding individuals to the sample until she reaches theoretical saturation; when the complete range of constructs that make up the theory is fully represented by the data. Although it is impossible to predict what sample size will saturate a given theory, typical grounded theory studies report sample sizes ranging from 10 to 60 participants (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007).

For the purpose of Study 1, the researcher interviewed 10 participants, 6 of whom had expertise in retail interior design, 2 architects, 1 professor of experience design, as well as 1 retailer. Thus, in line with Starks and Brown Trinidad (2007), the participants have diverse yet relevant experiences on the topic. Considering richness of the interview data (Morse, 2000; Marshall et al., 2013) such that theoretical saturation was achieved upon the tenth interview (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007), and the mixed-methods approach of this thesis that conducted two qualitative studies and a survey, data collection was not continued after the tenth interview.

In terms of gender, 2 of the participants were women and 8 were men. Also, except one of the interior designers whose language was Persian and thus the interview guideline was translated for, the other participants resided in New Zealand and spoke English.

3.4.5 Data collection procedures

When conducting the in-depth interviews, each participant was first presented with the participant information sheet which explains information such as who the researcher is, the topic, what is involved as a participant, what happens to the collected information, confidentiality, and the importance of participants' contribution. Providing information sheets helps building participants' trust and enhances the likelihood of them responding with honesty (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008).

In terms of the location of interviews, participants were given the ability to select a location of their preference. Six interviews were conducted at participants' work offices, one done at a quiet café, one through Skype, and two others through email with further follow-up questions.

The interview locations were free from distraction and quiet throughout the process. Regardless of whether an interview was conducted physically, through skype, or email, the researcher followed-up with probes in cases where complementary information was needed until the point of theoretical saturation. The interviews lasted between about half an hour to an hour and half.

The data was recorded using the "Voice Memos" application on the researcher's iPhone and the entire conversation between the researcher and the participants was recorded. Following the interviews, the recordings produced from each interview were transcribed via *Rev.com* transcription service and analysed using the NVivo® 12 Plus QSR software. The NVivo qualitative analytical software has been used in similar studies to transcribe, manage, organise, analyse, categorise, and code data (Zamawe, 2015).

3.4.6 Data analysis: Content analysis

Following the formation of the interview transcripts, data analysis was performed in order to transform the raw data to a form of explanation, understanding, and interpretation of the topic and subsequently, enumerate how often particular propositions appear in the interview scripts. For this purpose, quantitative content analysis was used in Studies 1 and 2.

Content analysis is a method of analysing written, verbal, and visual communication messages (Cole, 1988). The method has shown steady growth in business studies in the last few decades (Neundorf, 2002). Content analysis is defined by Elo and Kyngäs (2008)

as “a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena. … Through content analysis, it is possible to distil (many) words into fewer content related categories” (p.108). The key feature of content analysis is that many words of a text (i.e., interview transcripts) are classified into smaller content categories (Burnard, 1996). When classified into the same categories, words, phrases, and the like, share the same meaning (Cavanagh, 1997).

As a method for making replicable, valid inferences from the gathered data to their context, content analysis provides knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts, and a practical guide for action (Krippendorff, 2018) that helps attain a condensed description of phenomena. The emphasis on data reminds the researcher that quantitative content analysis is reductionist, with measurement procedures that reduce communications to manageable data (e.g., numbers) from which inferences may be drawn about phenomena (Riffe, Lacy, Fico, & Watson, 2019). The outcome of content analysis is concepts or categories that describe the phenomena being investigated (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Content analysis was chosen for this study (and the following study) as it is proven as being the best method to provide “a scientific, quantitative, and generalisable description of communications content” (Kassarjian, 1977, p.10), therefore, advancing the research stream by documenting the frequency and form of certain propositions that the participants provide in terms of data (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997).

Following the positivist epistemology of this research, this thesis adapts quantitative methods of content analysis in analysing the interview scripts in studies 1 and 2.

3.4.6.1 Quantitative content analysis

The epistemological assumptions in quantitative content analysis are that some *truth* in a text can be revealed with as little interpretation as possible, for example by measuring, weighing, and counting the frequencies and proportions of similar statements (see Krippendorff, 2018). In contrast, the epistemological basis of the qualitative method of content analysis is that data and interpretation are co-creations of the “interviewer” and the participants, and interpretation during the analysis phase is a co-creation of the researchers and the text (Mishler, 1986). Thus, a text is assumed to imply more than one single meaning (Sandelowski, 2011). This is while researchers who adopt the quantitative method of content analysis tend to encourage greater explicitness and transparency than those adopting the qualitative method (Krippendorff, 2019).

As for the quantitative measures in content analysis, it is assumed that *frequency* indicates the importance of the subject matter (Guthrie, Petty, Yongvanich, & Ricceri, 2004). As a method, quantitative content analysis has been defined as "the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication … and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, to describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context" (Riffe et al., 2019, p.25).

Quantitative content analysis is most efficient when explicit hypotheses or research questions are posed (Riffe et al., 2019), this, in-turn, further justifies use of quantitative content analysis in this thesis. Describing the value of such explicitness, McCombs (1972) argued that (having) a hypothesis (or, similarly, a research question) "gives guidance to the observer trying to understand the complexities of reality. Those who start out to look at everything in general and nothing in particular seldom find anything at all" (p. 5). According to Riffe et al. (2019), hypotheses or research questions allow a researcher to focus on collecting only relevant data, therefore, sparing unnecessary effort that yield unreliable or invalid results. They also provide guidance on how to recognise and categorise that data and what level of measurement to use. For example, if a hypothesis specifies a particular relationship or effect, then the data should be collected in a way that gives that effect a chance to emerge.

3.4.6.2 Abductive inferences

There are two general approaches in research that result in the acquisition of knowledge, referred to as the inductive and deductive research approaches (see Krippendorff, 2018; Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). The inductive approach is a theory development process that starts with observations of specific instances and seeks to establish generalisations about the phenomena. By contrast, the deductive research approach is a theory testing process that commences with an established theory or generalisation to see if the theory applies to specific instances (see Krippendorff, 2018, Hyde, 2000). In practice, however, a combination of inductive and deductive coding is the most commonly used approach or what is referred to as abduction, that stems from the insight that most great advances in science have neither followed the pattern of pure deduction nor of pure induction (Taylor, Fisher, & Dufresne, 2002; Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019).

As earlier discussed, the Straussian approach to grounded theory, that was applied in this thesis, combines elements of the inductive and deductive methods and centres on the abductive reasoning (see Su, 2018). Krippendorff (2019) asserts that deductive and inductive inferences are not central to content analysis. In his view, content analysis is fundamentally abductive, and must not be confused with experiments that attempt to generalise responses to stimuli, including to texts, from a sample to a population of individual interpreters. According to Krippendorff (2019), the aim of content analysis is to make abductive inferences from texts to phenomena outside those texts.

Abduction is distinguished from induction (moving from particulars to generalisations) and deduction (moving from generalisations to particulars) as a form of reasoning that moves from particular texts, through context-sensitive explanations of texts, to particular answers to research questions (i.e., from particulars to particulars). Krippendorff (2019) identified the inferential step from text to the answer to a research question as abductive because the two domains of texts (alongside their descriptions or transcriptions), and what the text implies are logically independent and bridging the logical gap needs justification. Such inferences thus must in-turn be backed (p.178) by knowledge of the context of the text to assure the researcher of valid conclusions. As such, content analysts are in a position of having to draw inferences about phenomena that are not directly observable, and they are often equally resourceful in using a mixture of statistical knowledge, theory, experience, and intuition aimed at answering the research questions from available texts. Such answers solve a problem in the widest possible sense and range from solving an important mystery to informing a decision (Krippendorff, 2019).

3.5 Chapter 5, Study 2: Qualitative

Following the exploration of the affective, behavioural, and brand responses the designers aim to evoke in consumers in fantasy servicescapes in Study 1, 48 in-depth interviews were conducted with consumers in Study 2 in order to examine the real-world experiences of visiting The Green Dragon Inn at Matamata, New Zealand that is designed based on *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* fantasy stories.

The purpose of Study 2 was to understand whether consumers engage with stories that are presented to them through the servicescape design, and to explore the potential causes and effects of the experience of engagement. Considering designers' recommendations on keeping mimicry at a moderate level, which is discussed in detail in Study 1, the study

further examined the level of perceived mimicry at the Inn, and how it affects consumers' engagement with the presented stories.

In order to investigate the foresaid elements, the second study first started by asking visitors of the Inn about a) servicescape elements that reminded them most about the stories or movies, and b) the level of story mimicry at the Inn. The interviews followed by asking a number of questions to help the researcher to understand c) whether the consumers engaged with narratives and the story characters that they imagined of while they were at the Inn. Thereafter, the effect of story mimicry on consumers' experiences of narrative engagement was estimated. The study, moreover, examined the consumers' d) affective responses, e) intentions and behaviour, as well as f) brand experiences in the fantasy servicescape. Following this, the ratio of visitors who were engaged with the presented story and experienced the explored affective, behavioural and brand responses were compared to those who did not engage with the story, to understand the outcomes of narrative engagement.

3.5.1 Exploratory research

As discussed earlier in the Literature chapter (Chapter 2), extant literature on the effect of fantasy stories on consumers' responses is limited, and as the purpose of Study 2 was to gain insights into a relatively unknown area, similar to Study 1, the nature of Study 2 was also exploratory.

3.5.2 Qualitative research strategy

Similar to Study 1, in line with the exploratory nature of the study, a qualitative research strategy was implemented in Study 2 to collect the required data for examining the research questions.

As earlier mentioned, qualitative techniques help identify the diversity of events or factors that lead to certain outcomes (Chambliss & Schutt, 2006) and thus in the case of the second study, the technique allows the researcher in exploring, for example, those servicescape atmospherics that reminded consumers most about the story and subsequently, resulted in their engagement with the story. Qualitative methods further, allow the researchers to gain enhanced understanding the processes or motivations that drive consumers' behaviours (Camic et al., 2003). In this regard, Study 2 investigated

consumers' engagement with stories, and how this experience influences subsequent affective, intentions, behaviour as well as brand responses to the servicescape.

3.5.3 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

The main method of data collection within Study 2 was also semi-structured in-depth interviews. Given that the second study attempts to explore the servicescape elements that better remind consumers of the story, in-depth interviews seemed appropriate. Also, considering the benefits of depth interviews in identifying participants' feelings and experiences (Legard et al., 2003) and the purpose of the second study to understand consumers' engagement with the story, as well as their affective, behavioural, and brand experiences in such servicescape, in-depth interviews seem appropriate.

Each of the 48 participants selected in Study 2 were requested to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. The interviews were semi-structured in nature and the interview guide was informed by the literature and Study 1 findings (see Appendix B). This was to ensure that the conversations were flexible in terms of being able to diverge to explore the responses in detail, but still based around addressing the research questions to establish a degree of objectivity by suggesting the direction of the discussion. Loaded or leading questions were avoided to reduce potential bias. The questions were all structured in an open-ended format in order to stimulate free thought from participants and to give them opportunity to explain and qualify the answers and express their feelings using their own words. Once again, a funnelling technique (Renton, 2020) was implemented in the interview guideline where a general, broad question was initially asked before participants were asked to discuss more specifically or explain about relevant factors to the main question. This provided the advantage of cueing participants' ideas on, for example, servicescape design on a general level where participants are asked to describe the atmosphere of the servicescape and the discussion was, thereafter, followed by specified questions about certain atmospherics that the participant did not initially mention about.

The questions were designed to yield information about the objective of the interviews which was to identify the servicescape elements that better remind the consumers about the stories, the level of story mimicry at the Inn, whether the consumers experienced narrative engagement, and the story characters they imagined of at the Inn. The study also

examined consumers' affective, behavioural and brand experiences in the servicescape. The reason for choosing The Green Dragon Inn is discussed subsequently.

3.5.4 The Green Dragon Inn

Study 2 applied judgmental or purposive sampling (Babin & Zikmund, 2015; Sarstedt et al., 2018) to investigate consumers' experiences of visiting The Green Dragon Inn, that is designed based on *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* fantasy stories (Hunter, 2007; Harmon & Holman, 1990, 2003) at Hobbiton Movie Set in Matamata, New Zealand.

Kozinets et al. (2002) assert that theming has wide appeal in conditions where consumers are looking to linger, seek community, play, and learn, and it is thus ideal for many categories as diverse as tourists, stranded travellers, students, families with children, the elderly, as well as single individuals. As a themed tourist destination, the researcher found it appropriate to visit The Green Dragon Inn at Hobbiton Movie Set, which is the significant location Peter Jackson used to record *The Hobbit* as well as *The Lord of the Rings* fantasy film trilogies. Guided tours of Hobbiton Movie Set started in 2002 (Hobbiton Movie Set, n.d.). But the Green Dragon Inn (a replication of the Green Dragon that featured in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*) opened later in 2012. The tours have generally received good reviews (Trip Advisor, n.d.).

There is also a gift store (The Shire Store) selling souvenirs adjacent to Shire's Rest area, however, given the incongruency of the gift store's atmosphere design with the stories and that the store was not included in the story, the researcher did not find it appropriate for the purpose of the study and therefore, only focused on The Green Dragon Inn.

As this thesis also examined how empathy with positive (versus negative) characters affect consumers' experiences, The Green Dragon Inn was selected because in addition to being classified as fantasy (Harmon & Holman, 2003), the story relates to characters such as Frodo, as the main protagonist or Hero, and Sauron, as the main antagonist or Anti-Hero of the story, besides other characters.

The Hobbit and *The Lord of the Rings* stories are known to a wide range of consumers, considering the number of consumer ratings for the original and retellings of the storybook on Amazon, as well as the Box Office revenue for the movies. For example, the latest movie related to the story *The Lord of the Rings,* titled *The Return of the King,*

directed by Peter Jackson in 2003 grossed a Box Office of $752 million USD (Krämer, 2011) indicating the tremendous number of people who are familiar with the storyline.

The Chief Operating Officer of Hobbiton Movie Set approved the request to interview visitors of Hobbiton Movie Set (Appendix C), thus further advancing its appropriateness for the purpose of this study.

3.5.5 Participant selection criteria

The participants for the in-depth interviews were selected through a mix of judgemental, random, convenience, and snowballing criterion sampling methods. First, the participants had to all have visited the servicescape, and that their visit had taken place in the last 12 months from the time of interview. This ensured that participants are more likely to remember about their experience at the servicescape.

In addition, data was collected in three phases in an eight month period and various methods of data collection were employed. The first phase of data collection included 18 participants and the interviews were conducted at the location itself, where visitors were randomly selected by approaching them at the Shire's rest area upon their return from the tour to the Movie Set, while awaiting friends or family members to join them or after they had finished their shopping at the Shire's Store. Data collection continued for 3 days until the point of theoretical saturation. To avoid response bias, the researcher had clothing clearly identifiable with the brand of Massey University and clarified at the beginning of the interviews that the data is collected for the purpose of her doctoral thesis. Phase 1 interviews lasted between 7 and 17 minutes.

Upon analysing the data gathered during the first phase, the researcher faced several points mentioned by the participants that seemed important to be further investigated. To explore these points in detail, the researcher first interviewed a number of people who visited The Green Dragon Inn in the last 12 months from the time of the interview. This commenced with 8 more participants who were recruited starting with friends who had visited the servicescape and continued by interviewing friends of friends who were introduced as having visited the servicescape recently. However, the researcher did not reach the point of saturation with questions that were included in the second version of the interview guideline. Although responses were similar to the interviews conducted at the servicescape location, due to the time gap between their visits and the interviews, the latter participants found it difficult to describe, for example, the servicescape elements

that reminded them about the stories or the emotions they experienced in the servicescape. In cases where the participants struggled to answer a question, the researcher skipped to the next question and left the question unanswered. By doing so, the time gap between participants' visit of the servicescape and the interview did not have a negative impact on the quality of the obtained data, as these participants only answered those questions that they had certain answers for.

Moreover, unlike those participants interviewed at Hobbiton Movie Set, the participants interviewed in Auckland were not in a rush and had more time to share their experiences with the researcher. As a result, the 8 interviews conducted at Auckland (i.e., phase 2) took some time between 24 minutes up to an hour.

As phase 2 participants could not answer all questions, the researcher found it reasonable to conduct more interviews at the location upon receiving approval from the movie set (Appendix C). The third phase of data collection included 22 more participants who were randomly selected in a 4 day period at the movie set. The latter interviews lasted between 5 and 17 minutes.

Altogether, 48 participants were interviewed throughout the 3 phases of data collection. Table 3.1. illustrates the 48 participants' demographics.

Table 3. 1. Study 2 participant demographics

Participant demographics		**Number**	**Percentage**
Gender	**Male**	24	50%
	Female	24	50%
Age	**16-19**	3	6.25%
	20-29	22	45.83%
	30-39	13	27.08%
	40-49	4	8.33%
	50-59	3	6.25%
	60-69	3	6.25%
Fans	**Yes**	24	50%
	No	24	50%
Country of residence	**New Zealand**	10	21.60%
	Australia	6	12.5%

	United Kingdom	3	6.25%
	France	2	4.16%
	Other Europe	12	25%
	United States	7	14.58%
	Argentina	1	2.08%
	Puerto Rico	1	2.08%
	Canada	1	2.08%
	China	1	2.08%
	Singapore	1	2.08%
	India	1	2.08%
	Israel	1	2.08%
	Africa	1	2.08%

3.5.5.1 Pretesting

Pretesting of the interview guideline was completed prior to actual research sessions to detect any potential issues, remove bias, and ultimately improve the data collection method. The key motivation for implementing such trial sessions was to iron out any fundamental problems in the instructions, wordings, and design of the interview. Pretesting helps researchers to improve the data collection method by minimising response errors, such as participants misinterpreting the questions, through identifying ambiguous questions and making the necessary alterations (Bolton, 1991). As Taylor and Bogdan (1984) suggest, pretesting is essential to ascertain if the data collection methods elect data that will actually address the research questions.

Following the pre-test, modifications to the questions were made as an attempt to improve the validity by ensuring that the questions capture the underlying concepts being measured. Also, such a procedure allowed the researcher to ensure that the questions are easily understandable from the participants' perspective thus reducing potential bias.

In addition, the pre-tests allowed the researcher to practice and refine her interviewing skills such as accurately recording the data and the development of probing techniques. The crucial importance of probes is well established in literature as a tool which allows the researcher to yield increased depth and meaningfulness in participants' responses and thus enhance quality of the data collected (Gillham, 2000). Furthermore, as Gill et al.

(2008) suggest, it was vital to possess skills such as open and neutral body language, nodding, smiling, appearing interested, strategic use of silence, encouraging clarification, and avoiding of leading or loaded questions. Such skills improve data quality by making the participants feel comfortable and encourages them to contemplate their responses, to speak up, elaborate and clarify particular issues (see Gill et al., 2008). In summary, pretesting allowed the researcher to practice and polish these particular skills and therefore, it was vital in terms of minimising bias and improving the quality of the data.

The practice interviews were completed with willing friends who had previously visited the servicescape under investigation sometime within the last 12 months from the time this study was conducted. The practice interviews were not included in the sample size.

3.5.6 Data collection procedures

As mentioned above, the researcher asked permission from the management of the Movie Set in order to be present at the location for interviewing visitors for phases 1 and 3. Agreement was made between the management team and the researcher that the interviews be conducted after visitors return from the tour to the rest area and not while they are inside The Green Dragon Inn to avoid any interruption.

When conducting the depth interviews, each participant was first presented with a participant information sheet which comprehensively explains elements of this study such as who the researcher is, the topic, what is involved as a participant, what happens to the information that is collected, confidentiality, and importance of participants' contribution. Also, in cases when a participant asked for oral explanation of the research information instead of reading about it, the researcher briefly explained what was required to build trust with the participant.

In terms of the location of interviews, as mentioned earlier, 40 interviews were conducted at the rest area of the Movie Set after visitors returned from the tour to the servicescape, and 8 more interviews were done in Auckland. The interview locations were all free from distraction throughout the interview process. Regardless of whether an interview was conducted at the Movie Set or Auckland, the researcher followed-up with further probes through e-mail in cases where complementary information was needed until the point of theoretical saturation.

With respect to the time limitation of visitors who were interviewed at the Movie Set, and that visitors hardly allocated the time to participate, the number of questions that were asked from the participants varied depending on the participants' availability. For example, when a visitor was waiting for a family member to finish their purchase from the Shire's Store, they allocated more time to share their experience as compared to another participant who had just finished the tour and was in rush to get to the bus back home. In the latter situation, the researcher only asked a few numbers of determinant questions from participants that required further exploration.

The interviews were intended to be like a conversation subtly directed by the researcher (Esterberg, 2002), besides the use of probes to help clarify and extend the participants' responses and prompts to encourage the participants to say what they think and help steer them in the right direction (Gillham, 2000).

The interviews of the three phases, overall, lasted between about 5 minutes to an hour. The data was recorded using the "Voice Memos" application on the researcher's iPhone and the entire conversation between the researcher and the participants was recorded. Following the interviews, the recordings produced from each interview were transcribed via *Rev.com* transcription service and analysed using the NVivo® 12 Plus QSR software, with some comparisons and calculations done using Microsoft Excel.

3.5.7 Data analysis: Content analysis

Similar to Study 1, quantitative content analysis was used to transform the raw data to a form of explanation and understanding of the topic and subsequently, to enumerate how often particular propositions appear in the scripts. Through quantifying the qualitative data obtained from content analysis, this study maximises the validity of the constructs and the hypotheses that are investigated in Study 3.

3.5.8 Reporting Study 1 and Study 2 findings

When reporting Study 1 and Study 2 findings, the researcher refers to the design experts (Study 1) and consumers (Study 2) as research "participants". Accordingly, when a quote is cited from a certain participant, the study refers to the participant as "P" followed by a number allocated to the participant. Although designers and consumers are both labelled and referred to as participants in Study 1 and Study 2, any reference to the participants and Ps in Study 1 only relate to the design experts, and any reference to the participants

and Ps in Study 2 only relate to the consumers. For example, P5 in Study 1 is the designer number 5 whereas P5 in Study 2 refers to consumer number 5.

The qualitative data in Studies 1 and 2 are coded for both their existence and frequency such that the researcher has reported a concept if it appeared at least once in the data and no matter how many times the concept appeared (coding for the existence of the concept) and the number of participants who referred to the concept are also counted and reported (coding for the frequency of the concept). According to Krippendorff (2018), the presence of a concept indicated the participants' awareness or knowledge of that concept whereas the frequency with which an idea or concept occurs in a stream of messages indicates the level of importance of that concept in the messages.

The researcher discusses the findings in the text and tables by reference to the categories as well as the related subcategories. For example, in Study 2, when reporting the findings about consumers' intentions to spend money in the fantasy servicescape, if 14 out of the 48 consumers share about their intentions to spend money on eating, the researcher refers to these consumers with (14/48) in the text and in the related table as the main category. Subsequently, if the latter 14 consumers share reasons for why they did not spend money on eating, the researcher discusses the reasons by reference to the 14 consumers and not all 48 consumers. For example, if 7 out of the latter 14 consumers share that they did not spend money on eating because there were not many food options, the researcher refers to this group of consumers with (7/14) in the text and the related table as the subcategory.

3.6 Chapter 6, Study 3: Quantitative

Consistent with the mixed-methods approach of this thesis, the third study involves surveying consumers to test hypotheses that are developed based upon the extant literature, as well as the findings of the first two qualitative studies.

The two former exploratory studies provided an understanding of consumers' experiences in fantasy designed servicescapes. Findings from the interviews with practitioners (Study 1) and consumers (Study 2) represented the a) affective responses, b) intentions and behaviours, and c) brand personalities designers evoke, and consumers experience in servicescapes designed based on a fantasy story. Further, d) servicescape elements that best represent a certain story were identified, and e) evidence was found for consumers' engagement with fantasy stories in the servicescape. In terms of how character archetypes

can influence consumers' experiences, designers in study 1 highlighted the importance of using both, positive and negative characters in designing servicescapes for consumers' enjoyment of their experience. Regardless of the significance of implementing both character types in design, consumers in Study 2 did not imagine and empathise with the bad characters of the story, relating the reason to the design and positive atmosphere of the Inn. In fact, to avoid prompting the participants to imagine about certain characters, the researcher did not name the characters during the interviews. As such, the effect of using negative characters in designing servicescapes needs to be further investigated.

Considering the potential benefits of confronting negative characters, the third study surveyed a larger group of consumers to a) confirm consumers' engagement with fantasy stories, and to understand the b) affective, c) behavioural, and c) brand responses to fantasy servicescapes, and to further, d) compare the impact of empathy with positive versus negative story characters on consumers' experiences.

The quantitative study of this research examined the relationship between the variables in the conceptual framework (Chapter 6, sections 6.6. to 6.8.) to understand how a plot and characters of a fantasy story that are conveyed via the atmospheric elements of a servicescape can affect consumers' affective, behavioural, as well as brand experiences. The study, in-turn, examined the underlying reason for these responses to elicit whether consumers' exposure to stories in a servicescape follows the same perceptual rule as when they read stories; in other words, whether they experience narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes. The study further examined whether empathy with the positive (versus negative) character of a fantasy story results in different consumer responses.

3.6.1 Quantitative research strategy

While researchers using qualitative methodology are encouraged to systematise observations or communication context, and to develop quantifiable schemes for coding complex data sets, as Vidich and Shapiro (1955) assert, "Without the survey data, the observer *[i.e., the researcher]* could only make reasonable guesses about his area of ignorance in the effort to reduce bias" (p.31). Therefore, quantitative methods, such as survey research make important contributions to fieldwork and vice versa by providing greater confidence in generalisability of the results (Jick, 1979). In addition, quantitative research help to avoid any personal bias that may exist during the collection or interpretation of interview responses (see Creswell & Clark, 2017). Following the two

qualitative studies, the third study (Study 3) employed a quantitative approach that is considered important in creation of scientific knowledge (Easterby-Smith, 2008).

Subsequent to the content analysis of the data obtained from the two qualitative studies of this thesis (Study 1 and 2), the extracted propositions were then, replicated as part of a survey design, together with other scales and constructs that exist in the literature, and were modified to best fit the specific context of this study. As the research was deemed to the positivistic scientific method, the existing constructs in literature were valued and accordingly, the most appropriate scales were used to inform the survey design in Study 3. The first two exploratory studies isolated which of the propositions were best for the research purpose. After exploring the propositions, the researcher then went back to the extant literature to see whether those propositions, scales, items, and measures, indeed, made sense for the third study.

Further detail on the conceptual framework, hypotheses to be tested and the scales utilised in the survey are included in Chapter 6 (Sections 6.2 and 6.3).

3.6.2 Respondent selection criteria

The number of respondents in a study depends on the strength of the measurement and structural associations being modelled, and to the complexity of the model being tested (see Bowen & Guo, 2012). The sample size in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is variously defined as a product or multiple of parameter number. The multiple varies from 20 to 5 responses per parameter where 20:1 is desirable and 5:1 is doubtful or minimally acceptable (Hair et al., 2010; Bowen & Guo, 2012). In addition, there is an assumption that sample sizes less than 100 are small and unsound, and more than 200 responses is considered large (Kline, 2010).

There is no real rule-of-thumb for the sample size to be employed in SEM. There is a general understanding that where normality is likely to be violated, specification error materialise, or an estimation method other than maximum likelihood (ML) be chosen, then the sample size should be larger (e.g., Hair et al., 2010). Between 10-20 subjects per construct is advised by Schumacker and Lomax (2010). Studies that employ SEM often survey 200 respondents on average (Kline, 2010). However, when multiple groups are being compared, as in Study 3, it is recommended to ideally have 200 responses per group (Bowen & Guo, 2012). With datasets with less than 200 respondents, it is advised to retain a 10:1 response to parameter multiple ratios.

Study 3 obtained 210 (for Case 1) and 219 (for Case 2) responses and meets the minimum requirements advised by Kline (2010) and Breckler (1990) for 200 respondents for the multiple-group invariance testing and the 5:1 respondent to item requirement suggested by Schumacker and Lomax (2010) and Bentler and Chou (1987).

3.6.3 Data collection procedures

Data was collected using an online survey. In general, questionnaires have a number of advantages over other methods of data collection such as interviews (Denscombe, 2003; Bowling, 2002), especially, given the large number of target population they reach (Jones, Murphy, Edwards, & James, 2008). An online survey was suitable for this study as it allowed the researcher to gain information that cannot be observed directly such as consumers' emotional responses (see Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). Online surveys also enable embedding videos to show stimuli (Jones et al., 2008) that allows the researcher to test the respondents' immediate reactions to stimuli (Mendelson, Gibson, & Romano-Bergstrom, 2017), and thus helps in assessing consumers' attitudes (Dessart, 2018; Dias, Dias, & Lages, 2017). Online surveys, also, provide extensive flexibility in data analysis (Vada, Prentice, & Hsiao, 2019a).

In January 2020, 210 (for Case 1) and 219 (for Case 2) respondents were drawn from a Qualtrics™ opt-in survey panel of individuals who were over the age of 16 and resided in New Zealand[1]. Online panels are common in marketing research as researchers find the obtained data as reliable with no bias in responses (Brandon, Long, Loraas, Mueller-Phillips, & Vansant, 2014). As a reputable global market research firm, Qualtrics™ was selected based on its research experience and their ability to reach the target consumers. By recruiting respondents from a voluntary, paid, panel, Qualtrics™ improves ease and speed of completing online surveys (Vada, Prentice, & Hsiao, 2019b). The related cost to the researcher varies, depending on the length of the survey and target demographics, from cents to several dollars per respondent (Garrow, Chen, Ilbeigi, & Lurkin, 2020; Chambers, Nimon, & Anthony-McMann, 2016).

[1] To ensure about the qualification of respondents, two screening questions were included to make sure first, for ethical reasons, respondents are above the age of 16, and second, be New Zealand residents to control for cross-culture effects.

In line with Green's (2005) research that suggests gender as a nonsignificant variable on narrative transportation and given that the effect of gender on consumers' engagement was beyond the scope of the current thesis, Study 3 controlled for the consumers' gender. To ensure equality in gender split in consumers, a stratified sampling process was used. Stratified sampling is a probability sampling type in which the population is divided to non-overlapping groups, or strata, along relevant dimension(s) such as gender, ethnicity, and so forth (see Salkind, 2010). Thereafter, the researcher collects a random sample of the population members from each stratum by ensuring that observations from all strata are included in the final sample, and that the sample perfectly represents the population (Jewell, 1985; Salkind, 2010).

The respondents were invited to take part in a 15-minutes online survey (Appendix D). Qualtrics™ further ensured respondent variety in terms of demographics by distributing the online survey across the country, and to different age groups.

After data cleaning, Study 3 obtained 202 (Case 1) and 214 (Case 2) clean responses and thus meets the minimum requirements advised by Kline (2010) and Breckler (1990) for 200 respondents for the multiple-group invariance testing and the 5:1 respondent to item requirement suggested by Schumacker and Lomax (2010) and Bentler and Chou (1987).

3.6.4 Stimuli

Stimuli included two videos recorded by a fan of the Walt Disney World[2] in a restaurant at Disneyland in Florida, United States, known as Story Book Dining at Artist Point with Snow White. Themed around the story *Snow White*, personnel costumed as the characters interact with the consumers in the servicescape, in-turn, further supporting the storyline.

Showing two different videos from the same restaurant to the two groups of respondents help the researcher to control for the consistency of the servicescape atmospherics at the holistic level while allowing comparison of consumers' responses to certain differences across the videos. Specifically, Case 1 video features the positive character, Snow White, with happy music and comparatively brighter lighting in contrast to the Case 2 video that features the negative character, the Evil Queen, and has dim lighting and fearful music. To confirm the content of the two videos corresponds with the researcher's interpretation

[2] YouTube channel for the Disney fan, MouseSteps: https://www.youtube.com/user/JeffLangeDVD/about

of positive and negative fantasy atmospherics, the stimuli were shown to six designers former to the survey administration.

As consumers' prior familiarity with a given story influences their level of engagement and subsequent responses to a story (Green, 2004; Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008), to control for familiarity as a potential confound, the characters were selected from the same story. Understanding the effect of familiarity on narrative engagement was beyond the purpose of this thesis and although respondents' level of familiarity with the story was questioned in the survey for the purpose of subsequent publications, the variable was not examined in this study.

The pros and cons of using video stimuli in surveys, the content, characters, as well as the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of each video is described subsequently.

3.6.4.1 Video stimuli

Online surveys offer options such as embedding videos for representing the stimuli that helps researchers in assessing consumers' attitudes (Dessart, 2018; Dias et al., 2017). Including videos in the survey allows to test respondents' immediate reactions to stimuli (Mendelson et al., 2017). The fidelity of video stimuli (versus verbal descriptions and/or images) in prompting respondents' memories, favours researchers' use of video-based question formats, as respondents who view the videos are more likely to indicate recall (Mendelson et al., 2017) and thus more likely to provide a definite versus a "not sure" response to questions.

Nevertheless, using videos as stimuli poses concerns regarding response accuracy and data completeness (see Shapiro-Luft & Cappella, 2013; Mendelson et al., 2017). First, respondents who use mobile devices are less likely to see videos, due to technical issues (Mavletova, 2013; Buskirk & Andrus, 2014). Researchers who intend to include videos must, therefore, consider whether and to what extent the sample will access the survey using a mobile device, and whether the level of missing data is acceptable. This aspect is especially important as mobile usage continues to grow (Anderson, 2015). The survey in Study 3 was not designed to be mobile friendly, requiring the respondents to access it on a computer. In addition, as questions had forced responses, there are no data missing.

Second, videos shown later in a survey are less likely to be viewed in their entirely than those shown earlier in the survey, and respondents who do not view the entire videos are

more likely to straightline the follow-up items, selecting the same option for all of the items, or provide more "not sure" responses (Krosnick, 1991). To address this issue, videos are shown to Study 3 respondents at the beginning of the survey, right after the introduction section. Moreover, data was checked for repeat responses and no cases of un-engagement were found.

3.6.4.2 Video content

To examine consumers' experiences of the fantasy servicescape and compare responses based on the type of character they confront and empathise with, respondents in Case 1 were exposed to a video of the restaurant which in the positive character, Snow White, enters the restaurant dancing with a happy music in the background. The lights are also brighter as compared to the atmosphere of Case 2 video. Snow White greets consumers as she passes their tables and interacts with them in a friendly manner (see Figure 3.1.). When the music is over, she talks to the consumers and recommends them to try the pies she bakes with the Seven Dwarfs. The character's dialogues are purely positive.

Video URL: https://youtu.be/_K5iQBGUfA8, last accessed, 13 Jan 2020

Figure 3. 1. Study 3 Case 1 (Snow White)

By contrast, Case 2 respondents saw the second video in which the negative character, the Evil Queen, enters the restaurant while a fearful music is played in the background. Walking fast and with facial gestures signalling hatred she stands in front of her Mirror that is illustrated on the wall. The mirror has dark colour combinations and aggressive facial expressions that further support the Evil Queen's dark personality (see Figure 3.2.).

Unlike Snow White who approaches the consumers herself, welcomes, and treats them as her guests, the Evil Queen only interacts with consumers who go to her while she is in front of her magical mirror. Her role-play represents how she enjoys being praised by the consumers but ignore the consumer herself, though with a subtle humour in her dialogues.

Video URL: https://youtu.be/gIUH6UttV3c, last accessed, 13 Jan 2020

Figure 3. 2. Study 3 Case 2 (Evil Queen)

3.6.5 Data analysis

The purpose of the quantitative approach in Study 3 was to measure the construct domains and establish associations that allow generalisable, reproducible research that ultimately contributes to theory development (Churchill, 1979). As is discussed later in Chapter 6 (section 6.6.), the construct measurement and examination of the associations between the constructs met Churchill's (1979) recommendations.

To analyse the survey data, Study 3 employed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equations Modelling (SEM). To have a rough idea of grouping variables that are intercorrelated and to identify items that are potential candidates for removal in the construct level CFA, the researcher also conducts the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). However, as EFA is normally conducted on a dataset different to that of CFA and SEM (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011), no items were removed based on EFA (The rationale and method for conducting EFA is presented in Appendix E).

In brief, the purpose of EFA is to establish if a factor structure exists before proceeding to the confirmatory measurement of the constructs (Harrington, 2009). This is justified on the ground that narrative engagement and empathy have not been frequently measured and operationalised in retail studies. As such, Study 3 makes a significant contribution by incorporating these scales in servicescape environment research for the first time.

A confirmatory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimation is conducted to verify the underlying structure of constructs, and to test the adequacy and fit of the measurement model with the observed data. The purpose of the CFA is to go further than the EFA to ensure about the measurement reliability and validity of constructs. While EFA may suggest presence of a distinct factor structure, but it is still necessary to confirm the presence of the factor structure. It is necessary to confirm the quality of construct scales and to ascertain if the proposed scales perform adequately (Bowen & Guo, 2012; Brown & Moore, 2012; Harrington, 2009). Further, the CFA is conducted to produce constructs that are generalisable in different design contexts based on the story character that dominates the design. The comparison of the two cases of the restaurant in Study 3 advances the extant knowledge of the role of story-based servicescape atmospheres in consumers' affective, behavioural, and brand experiences.

Constructs that emerge, it is proposed, are usable in different design contexts. The constructs can be employed in different consumer assessments of servicescape atmosphere, and thus are argued to be generalisable. It is explained, however, that it is necessary to delete items that do not reach minimum statistical requirements to generate unidimensional and reliable constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Williams, Vandenberg & Edwards, 2009).

The CFA approach to the measurement of constructs also characterises the development of measurement models and structural models suggested by Anderson and Gerbing

(1988) that are necessary when SEM is performed. Measurement model adequacy is considered using Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices and uni-dimensionality measures of individual parameter estimates for each construct as advised by Anderson and Gerbing (1988).

A systematic approach is therefore pursued in this study to delete items that improve the overall measurement models for both Case 1 and Case 2. Although it may prove necessary to selectively delete items that measure satisfactorily in one Case, it is proposed to not retain items that do not measure satisfactorily across both Cases.

Study 3 proposes measurement models for each construct that are demonstrated to be reliable, valid, and generalisable, with unidimensional properties that have been suggested by Hair et al. (2010), Bagozzi and Yi (2012), DeVellis (2003), Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), Williams et al., (2009), Fornell and Larcker (1981), Anderson and Gerbing (1988), as well as Churchill (1979). The constructs, the researcher argues, based on this approach, are usable within different design contexts and further, enable the comparison of different designs in the structural model (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010) that is central to the investigation of the research questions. The theoretical rationale for developing CFA is outlined in Appendix F.

The conceptual framework proposed in this thesis (Chapter 6), when subject to examination, emphasises rigorous measurement of the constructs in EFA and CFA before examination of the associations between these constructs using SEM.

CFA and SEM are advanced quantitative analyses techniques (see Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and although they are considered as large data techniques (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer, Bearden & Sharma, 2003), they offer advantages in examining the associations proposed in the conceptual framework (the rationale for why SEM is employed, and the SEM approach in this thesis is provided in Appendix G).

The SEM, as explained later in Chapter 6, concerns the directional and non-directional nature of how the latent constructs are related to one another (Brown, 2006; Bowen & Guo, 2012; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Intrinsic to SEM is its hypotheses-driven nature where the CFA is further examined in the SEM.

SPSS and AMOS 25 were used in this study. Conceptual models are easily tested using AMOS (Kline, 2010) and the results of Study 3 (Chapter 6) are based on AMOS output.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Alike all other research that collect primary data from human subjects at Massey University, the ethical risk of the studies in this thesis was assessed. Subsequently, following a review of each of the three studies proposal by Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC), all three studies were awarded a low risk notification (see Appendix H) allowing the research to proceed.

A number of ethical issues were identified in the proposals that include informed and voluntary consent, privacy and confidentiality, and participant/respondent ages in each of the studies. In relation to informed and voluntary consent, each subject participated on a voluntary basis and was provided with information explaining their rights as a participant in studies 1 and 2, or as respondents in study 3 prior to data collection.

The information sheets for Studies 1 and 2 were sent to the participants as attachments to the invitation email, and respondents in Study 3 were shown the related information prior to the survey questions (Appendix D) which allowed them to decide whether they were interested in participating or not. Participants in Studies 1 and 2 were asked to sign a consent form to confirm their agreement to participate in the interview.

In terms of privacy and confidentiality, the researcher ensured that participants remain anonymous and the names of all participants in studies 1 and 2 were changed in order to establish a degree of privacy.

No individuals below the age of 16 were interviewed in Studies 1 and 2 or permitted to answer the Study 3 survey. These guidelines were implemented to ensure that all practices in this thesis align well with the MUHEC code of ethical conduct.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter provided the ontological and epistemological approach that will form the theoretical foundation for data collection and analysis in this thesis. The research adopts a realist ontology, and a positivist epistemology indicating that the thesis is a value free (objective) enquiry, with the purpose of generating law-like, scientific generalisations of the issues under investigation. As the use of mixed-methods provide greater insight into a topic from a broader number of viewpoints and respondents, this thesis conducts both qualitative and quantitative studies to collect the required data. The specific reasoning for

the selection of participants and the strategies implemented to recruit the participants or respondents for the studies was also discussed.

This chapter identified and explained the method employed to investigate the questions of this thesis. The exploratory nature of Studies 1 and 2 and thus the need to employ qualitative techniques was explained. The chapter further justified the use of 10 in-depth interviews in Study 1 to generate rich, vivid and abstract information about the types of experiences designers create for consumers in servicescapes, followed by the types of stories implemented in servicescape design, reasons that encourage or discourage them from implementing stories in servicescapes, the circumstances in which they consider using a story for design, the servicescape elements that better represent a certain story, and the extent to which they recommend story mimicry. In addition, Study 1 provides insights into the affective, behavioural, and brand experiences that designers evoke in consumers in story-based servicescapes.

Following Study 1, 48 in-depth interviews are conducted with consumers in Study 2 to investigate real-world experiences of visiting The Green Dragon Inn, that is designed based on *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* fantasy stories at Hobbiton Movie Set in Matamata, New Zealand. Specifically, the purpose of Study 2 is to understand whether consumers engage with stories told through servicescape atmospherics, and to explore the antecedents and outcomes of narrative engagement. With regard to the designers' recommendation on keeping mimicry at a moderate level, Study 2 further examined the level of mimicry at the Inn, and how it affects consumers' engagement with the stories. In order to investigate the foresaid elements, the study asks visitors of the Inn about the servicescape elements that remind them most about the stories, and the level of mimicry at the servicescape. The interviews follow by asking questions to help the researcher understand whether consumers engage with the narratives, and the story characters that they imagine at the Inn. The study further investigated consumers' affective responses, intentions and behaviour, and brand experiences in the fantasy designed servicescape.

Consistent with the mixed-methods approach of this thesis, Study 3 involves surveying consumers to test the hypotheses that are developed based upon the literature, as well as the findings from the former qualitative studies (Studies 1 and 2). Through examining the relationships between the extracted propositions from the findings of Studies 1 and 2 and by reference to literature, the quantitative study of this thesis investigated whether, in general, fantasy servicescapes, result in narrative engagement and how retailers can

benefit by implementing stories in servicescape design, based on consumers' affective, behavioural and brand experiences in such story-based environments.

Considering the benefits of confronting negative characters as highlighted by designers in Study 1, and the inability of Study 2 participants to imagine and thus empathise with the negative characters of the story, due to the positive atmosphere of the servicescape, the quantitative study of the thesis (Study 3) surveyed 202 (Case 1) and 214 (Case 2) consumers to confirm their engagement with the story, *Snow White,* and their affective and behavioural responses, as well as brand personality perceptions of the restaurant, Story Book Dining at Artist Point with Snow White in Disneyland. To compare the effect of empathy with positive (versus negative) characters on consumers' experiences, the stimuli include two videos of the same restaurant with one highlighting Snow White as the positive character for Case 1, and the second highlighting the negative character, Evil Queen, for Case 2 respondents. Servicescape atmospherics in each of the videos support the related character.

Quantitative content analysis with an abductive coding approach was identified as the method to analyse the data from the interviews in Studies 1 and 2. Through quantifying the qualitative data, the exploratory qualitative studies attempt to maximise the validity of the constructs and hypotheses investigated in Study 3. Once appropriate constructs were extracted, Study 3 replicated them in its survey design besides other constructs and scales from the extant literature. Structural Equations Modelling was conducted, and the data was analysed with SPSS and AMOS 25 softwares. The following chapter presents the results generated from the interviews conducted with design practitioners in Study 1.

Chapter 4 Study 1

"Advice from a Caterpillar":

Incorporation of fantasy stories in the servicescape from a designer's perspective

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the strategy, design and method employed in this thesis. To contribute to addressing the research questions, the first study of this thesis explored the opinions of design experts on the use of fantasy stories in designing servicescapes. For this purpose, designers were asked about the types of experiences they create in a servicescape, the type of stories they use for servicescape design, and the reasons that might encourage or discourage them from implementing a story in servicescape design. The findings of this study also identify the circumstances in which design experts consider using a story for designing the servicescape, the servicescape elements that are more effective in representing the story, and the extent to which mimicry of the story is recommended in servicescapes. In addressing the research questions, the design experts also share about the affective, behavioural and brand responses they evoke in consumers by telling fantasy stories through servicescape atmospherics. In line with the purpose of this thesis, the discussions with, and thus the responses provided by the design experts for each of the questions starts by the use of stories in general and follows with a focus on the use of fantasy stories.

The following sections present the findings and primary insights from the data gathered through ten in-depth interviews conducted in the first study of this thesis. Accordingly, a detailed description of the key underlying themes and sub-themes identified from the obtained data regarding the determinants and outcomes of consumers' experiences of fantasy servicescapes is discussed back in relation to the literature and further supported with direct quotations from the interviews to establish depth and reinforce the existence of the depicted themes.

4.2 Types of consumer experiences in servicescapes

The main discussion with the design experts started by exploring the types of experiences the retailers plan to create, and as such, ask the designers to implement in servicescapes. The findings, classified in six categories, are presented together with illustrative quotes in Table 4.1. and subsequently discussed in relation to the literature.

Table 4. 1. Types of consumer experiences in servicescapes

Experiences	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Telling a story through servicescape atmospherics		8/10	P9: "It is not a bad idea to use a concept of a movie or animation that is somehow related to the product … I think it may help because people like to experience different atmospheres and obviously all fantasy stories have some fans *[whom]* like to go there to buy something."
Mental simulation of products and services		6/10	P1: "These days the ones *[i.e. brands]* that are doing extremely well are also using the sense of imagination … they can show you things and allow you to experiment with *[products]* in a store … *[Furniture retail company]* is one of the barer examples … they give you one little mini stage … where you go from one theatre side to the next theatre side … what they are doing is just taking away your imagination."
Simultaneous offering of products and services 4/10	Irrelevant	4/4	P7: "I went into a men's clothing shop … and it just felt like you'd almost walked into a cigar bar. It literally had a gin bar, and it had areas that you could sit down and read a magazine while they were doing kind of things for you. It really created a theme of kind of like an exclusive men's club. They were selling high-end men's clothing and men's shoes … but just, the whole story behind that set-up environment allowed you to want to stay, spend money. I mean, if you can get people to drink a gin *[at a men's clothing shop],* they're more likely to part with their money."
	Relevant	1/4	P1: "You could go in a *[variety store company]* supermarket and buy … chicken, vegetables, whatever you like, fish, and they will then cook the food in the supermarket, and you are going to eat it at a table … So, it's not a restaurant but *[it]* is, it's not a supermarket but *[it]* is, it's not where you do your normal shopping, but it is. It's all of it mixed into one, products and services blended into one."

Providing information		3/10	P9: “These days, people are getting more and more aware, so giving *[consumers]* information about the product and the company is one of the important points.”
Treasure hunting		2/10	P4: “When you walk in the door, you're stopped in your path by this piece of table … full of stuff. So, creating that almost … like a maze, that you have to navigate. It does build into the idea of creating these retail experiences that are about exploration, and discovery ... you are having to navigate a space, and … wander in and out of different areas … the store has different zones.”
Technological advances		1/10	P1: “Going into a bricks and mortars store can actually include elements of all new advances in technology ... *[Retail company]* hardware stores … for example, now employ … a robot which speaks 180 languages, works 24 hours a day, doesn’t get upset, and just knows it’s where around the store. And just as a pure curiosity it’s an interesting thing for people to see.”

The experience mentioned by the majority of participants (8 out of 10, subsequently noted as 8/10) relates to telling stories through servicescape atmospherics. This finding provides support to what extant studies (Kozinets et al., 2002; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003; Fog et al., 2005) suggested about the significance of incorporating stories in different aspects of branding, including the store design, for creating appealing experiences for consumers. According to the participants, designing servicescapes, such as restaurants, based on stories transports the consumers to a different space. As a designer shared:

> You see at *[theme park name]*, prime example, the restaurants are all designed based on movies and stories. I definitely think that a huge amount that can be done. Giving people that full breadth of experience would be pretty awesome. Taking, whether it's books or movies, and developing those into *[servicescape]* spaces ... I guess, it's almost like transporting *[the consumers]* into a different space. (P4)

What the designers in this study suggest, about consumers’ transportation to stories told through servicescape design, is in line with previous studies (e.g., Van Laer et al., 2014; Green, 2005; Green & Brock, 2000, 2002) that contend the power of other story formats (e.g., text) in transporting consumers. Therefore, this finding, in-turn, helps address RQ1; designing servicescapes based on fantasy stories is likely to engage the consumers with the story and make them feel present in a different space which the story presents.

The second type of experiences involves simulating how a certain product could be used or how an offered service is likely to feel (6/10) through setting a similar arrangement in the servicescape. According to the design experts, when retailers simulate consumption of their products or services, the experience captivates consumers to purchase that offer. For example:

> A travel shop, you go in there, you can book your flights, or whatever, and they do put gloves on *[for you]*. You can go off bungee jumps, and you can experience, get a taste of what *[the experience]* is going to be like. You can go through into a space that's designed to be like some caves somewhere. You're giving people a taste of that, in a way, of what they could be booking. There's lots of opportunities to kind of use that level of sensory … to captivate us *[i.e., the consumers]* and to sell that *[experience]*. (P4)

When consumption of products and services is simulated, as shared by the participants, consumers imagine of themselves in a scenario in which they are using the represented product or service. The imagination of using a product or service is conceptualised in extant research (Escalas, 2004a; Elder & Krishna, 2012; Nardini & Lutz, 2018; Le et al., 2019; Yim, Kim, & Lee, 2020) as "mental stimulation", an experience that involves the cognitive construction of hypothetical scenarios" including rehearsals of future events (Escalas, 2004a, p. 37). Mental simulation is important as when the consumers imagine experiencing the retailer's offer, they are less likely to evaluate the offer or consider its negative aspects (Green & Brock, 2000; Nardini & Lutz, 2018). Small (2008) asserts that imagination of a certain product (or service) can seem so real that consumers might feel as if they have already experienced owning the product. The act of imagining ownership then, motivates the consumers to purchase the product or service (Mou, Gao, & Yang, 2019; Soliman, Buehler, & Peetz, 2017). An example shared by a participant clarifies this notion:

> I stand in that showroom and look at that car and picture, in my brain, myself driving it down the street … The guy in the showroom will start the car up. It makes a big loud noise, and you go, "Gosh, I can imagine myself driving that down the road or putting the roof down and doing all this cool stuff." And it's all fantasy. It's not real. But it's interesting, the effect that has on me as a consumer, because I will then go, "Ugh, I really want one of those … How can I afford it?" … You've been going in there, pretending that it *[i.e., the car]* is mine … "Imagine how cool my life would be if I had that car or … this object or experience." So, that sense of excitement and wonder makes me then go, "Well, what am I going to do with my life to get there?" … "How do I turn this from a

> fantasy into a reality?" … It gets my brain going, "Right, I need to work really hard. Save lots of money." (P5)

Simulation of using a product or service can, therefore, evoke consumers' imagination which then, motivates them to actually purchase it. Considering that mental imagery is a precondition of transportation (e.g., Van Laer et al., 2014), as participants discussed, simulation of products or services transports consumers to the consumption situation as they imagine of themselves in that space (Escalas, 2004a). As a participant shared:

> Adventure stores like *[retail-store company]* … display their products in a way that you *[i.e., the consumer]* feel as though you, too, could do it that way. You could be climbing that rock-face, or you could be camping by the fire and enjoying that moment … they'll set up a tent and a fire and sleeping bags in an arrangement so that you can see that product in place. You can see how it can be used, and you can sort of imagine yourself in that space. (P8)

To create a point of difference in servicescapes, the third type of consumer experiences requires the retailers to offer both products and services in a single servicescape (4/10) regardless of whether those products or services are irrelevant (4/4) or relevant (1/4) to one another. In this regard, retailers selling purely products or services were argued by the participants as struggling to survive, since the emergence of electronic commerce. For example, a participant shared that there are not many bookstores left, except those that extend their business by adding, though an irrelevant service, such as a pub as part of their business. Although irrelevant to the offered product, incorporating a pub as part of a bookstore could be a point of difference for the retailer, as consumers could look at the books while they sit in the cafe having a cup of coffee. The participant shared:

> When *[electronic commerce company]* started back in *[year]*, … you would have thought that bookstores will have a hard time surviving, and in fact many of them have struggled to survive … you don't find many bookstores left over … But *[bookselling company]* is still a traditional bookstore, except … some of their new stores, have pubs in the store. So you can go into a *[bookselling company]* where you can have a really interesting experience with books, but at the same time, you can sit in the *[coffee company]* or whatever the pub might be, and have a glass of wine or a cup of coffee or a meal or whatever. And it's in the middle of the stores that they are trying to create a space which is a happy, inviting space to be while you have a look at the books … … because you can't just sell books anymore and expect to do well unless you are *[offering a]* very unique point of difference. (P1)

As another example, a retailer that mainly offers service, such as a restaurant, could also sell products (e.g., stuffed animals for children) besides their food service. By doing so, as shared by the participants, the retailer reminds the consumers about their experience. As a participant described:

> The *[restaurant company]* also sells products … selling plushies, stuffed animals and things like that for children to sort of carry away, to extend that experience. (P6)

By contrast, the products, and services a retailer simultaneously offers can be relevant to each other. For example, some supermarkets cook the raw food and the ingredients that the consumers purchase, for them to eat in the same store. A participant shared:

> You could go in a *[variety store company]* supermarket and buy … chicken, vegetables, whatever you like, fish, and they will then cook the food in the supermarket, and you are going to eat it at a table … So, it's not a restaurant but *[it]* is, it's not a supermarket but *[it]* is, it's not where you do your normal shopping, but it is. It's all of it mixed into one, products and services blended into one. (P1)

A fourth type of experiences retailers create in servicescapes is to provide information about their products and services (3/10), including how the products are produced and the benefits of using those products. For example:

> *[Some retailers]* use a lot of educational navigation … they don't just say "Here's the wine", they say "Here is the organic wine, and this is how it's made, and this is what it's about". They give you education. They don't just say "There are the tomatoes". They go "This is a cherry tomato, it has so much vitamin A, so much vitamin B … and it's really good for this, this, and this". And "There is the potatoes, and these potatoes are Agria or Purple Rose", whatever they're called … and "This one's good for chopping, and this one's good for frying, and this one's good for mash", and *[so forth]*. (P1)

Referred to as "Treasure hunting" by a participant, the fifth type of experiences (2/10) involves designing servicescapes in a way that would require the consumers to browse for items they intend to purchase, as there is no clear categorisation for item placement in the servicescape. A participant described:

> A business like *[retail company]* … has an entire principal called the "Treasure hunt", and at Treasure hunting … you don't actually know where anything is. When you go into the store, you have to go and find it … when you go into *[retail company]*, you never quite know what you are going to experience, you never quite know what you are going to get … every time you come across a new product in the store ... Even

> a bulk store has that interesting feel to it … the treasure hunt, *[where]* you just don't know what you are going to find. (P1)

The sixth type of experiences, as a participant shared (1/10), relates to the availability of technological advances, such as robots, in servicescapes. In this regard, the participant provided an example of a hardware company using robots in store besides their staff to help consumers find products around the store in different languages. He described:

> Going into a bricks and mortars store can actually include elements of all new advances in technology ... *[Retail company]* hardware stores … for example, now employ … a robot which speaks 180 languages, works 24 hours a day, doesn't get upset, and just knows it's where around the store. And just as a pure curiosity it's an interesting thing for people to see. (P1)

4.3 Types of stories told through servicescape atmospherics

In line with the purpose of this thesis, when designers shared about retailers' interests in telling stories through servicescape atmospherics to create an experience for consumers, the discussion followed by asking the participants about the types of stories they use for designing servicescapes. Table 4. 2. provides the categorisation of the discussed stories together with sample quotes.

Fantasy (9/10) and real (9/10) stories were equally recommended as two story themes to be used when designing servicescapes. In the fantasy category, however, stories adapted from famous books or movies (9/9) were most cited. Retailers were shared as adapting a fantasy story that has been written/created a long time ago and is, therefore, known to many consumers for their servicescape design. As shared by a participant:

> *[Retail company]*, for example, is a really amazing apparel store … *[They]* recently partnered with *[theme park name]*, and so, in their *[Country name]* store … they have a whole *[themed]* area … So, there was a story that was created a long time ago, and all you're doing is recreating that story, in its most entertaining way, inside a Bricks and Mortar Store … *[such as]* the Mickey Mouse *[story]* … So, people know *[about the story]*, or they have an expectation of what they're gonna get before they even go inside the store. (P1)

The prevalence of adapting famous fantasy stories for designing servicescapes, in-turn, supports the importance of investigating consumers' experiences of fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics. When choosing between existing fantasy stories for designing servicescapes, however, retailers are advised to consider the relevance of the

story to what they offer to consumers, such that the adapted story relates to the offered products and/or services. According to a participant:

> The biggest issue with that *[i.e., designing based on famous stories]* is … you want the brand and the story to link *[i.e., match]* … I think that involves the thinking … how you create a story, that links so closely to what's being offered. And when you've got that, then you're alight. Then, you'll be providing people with an experience. (P4)

Alternatively, retailers generate relevant or irrelevant fantasy stories from scratch (4/9) to promote their offers and entertain consumers. For example, a restaurant serving food in an unusual manner develops its concept for design as a haunted factory supporting its distinctive service. A participant described:

> *[Restaurant company name]* with his crazy food. In his restaurants … he does this weird stuff … *[the food they serve]* looks like a peach but you cut it open, and it's actually a steak … its super, super weird. … So, you've got some guy, a fancy chef, or a guy *[who is]* making this wacky, wacky food … what do you do in terms of designing a space *[that would match]*? … So, the food is like this wacky guy, making … crazy inventions … things with steam coming of them, they're on fire … they're ridiculous … you think, "Okay, if the food's that ridiculous, how can we make the space that matches?" … When you've got something like that … you can take a little piece of it and twist into something that's going to be awesome in the retail environment. … create steel pipes, and concrete walls that have been roughed a little … pulled apart. Then, get vines running through it and into the cracks of the concrete. … Then, you can think about going to the bathroom and you get a little bit lost … But at its core, it's always got to link back to the product … details may not directly relate to the product or offer. But the overarching concept should. Like, for example, the crazy man *[i.e., chef]* … cooking lots of crazy food is inside this haunted factory. So, a haunted factory is your concept for the retail space. (P4)

By contrast, the story that a retailer incorporates for its servicescape design might not be related to the offered product or service, but yet, entertain consumers. For example:

> The one example that I can think of is at *[restaurant company name]*, there is a large moose, with a Canadian monkey's hat that tells stories. … He's a piece of taxidermy … So, he hangs on the wall, and every 15 minutes all the sudden he sort of wakes up and tells a silly story or something like that. (P6)

As earlier mentioned, the retailers also use real stories (9/10) in designing servicescapes. Classified in three types, real stories represent brand, product, or consumer stories (7/9), exoticize existing, distant locations (6/9), or are stories about real characters (3/9).

As cited by the majority of the participants (7/9), company or brand stories describe the history of a certain company or brand, and its values, whereas product stories provide information such as how a product was invented (Lundqvist et al., 2013). With regard to brand stories, as a participant shared:

> It's often stories … about the brand … Why does the brand exist? What is the motive for being in business? … A lot of the stories that give theme … to a store, is about, what does the business stand for? Why are they in business? Why should I shop here? What's your point of difference? What makes you better than the shop next door? (P7)

Typically, product stories describe how the consumers have solved a problem by using a product that was invented as a remedy for that problem (Mossberg & Johansen, 2006). These stories normally share information about the (e.g., natural, or ethical) ingredients of products, and why the product is useful for consumers (e.g., Lundqvist et al., 2013). For example:

> The story that *[supermarket company]* tell is an ethical one … about the removable, unethical, or not better for your products or ingredients in products … like organic versus non-organic, but also where their farmers are, what their farmers use, what chemicals have been removed from drinks and breads and shampoos and whatever else … they will consistently be reminding you in many locations in the store that whatever you are buying is better for you. (P1)

Telling genuine, real stories about the experiences of consumers with products can help potential consumers empathise with existing consumers as they imagine of themselves using those products. This type of stories could, in-turn, lead to mental simulation that transports people to the scenario of using the product (Escalas, 2004a), and persuades via positive feelings and reduced critical thoughts (Green & Brock, 2000). For example, a shoe store telling the story of the experiences of its consumers was described as being effective in connecting people with the existing consumers. According to a participant:

> Stories that are most affective are stories that are real … *[Shoe store]* have real stories … they have photographs of their staff members and the experiences that they have got with the brand. They've got customer testimonials. So, they've got photographs of customers who have had a really good experience with the store, and that information is placed all around their environment. And that type of story, I think, is really important because I wonder around and I read those and go, "These are real human beings. These are real people who shop here, and they've had this experience" ... This is their real experience. They're really happy with their product. They're not paid advertising people. They're genuine stories and I think it helps for you to connect with them and go,

> "Yeah, I'm like that. Oh, they're just like me." People like to experience situations where other people have been in their shoes … Because it's almost as if they've listened to me even though they've never met you before. So, I think having true scenarios and real stories is a really effective method. (P5)

The second type of real stories used in design involve exoticizing cultures, and theming the stores to mimic existing, albeit distant locations (6/9) that will transport consumers to those locations. In this regard, a participant shared:

> One example that pops into my head obviously is the Polynesian Hotel at *[theme park name]* … It is designed to be a Polynesian experience, with long houses and large carvings … there are restaurants there … the entire hotel is themed in that way. So, this was a way that you could be in *[city name]* which is in many ways American Deep South, then all of the sudden, walk through a gate and be in Polynesia. … often it was sort of exoticizing … other cultures … *[the hotels]* have large tikis out front and big masks and take … the visual iconography from different Pacifica cultures. … the bringing of sort of ancient Egyptian elements into a restaurant like *[restaurant company name]* is sort of the same. It's often a form of sort of exoticizing places that are far away, places that are different, whether it's historical or other, and putting our families into it. (P6)

The third type of real stories relates to theming servicescapes around the life stories of real personas or displaying celebrities and well-known people using the products of a certain brand (3/9). Alike consumer stories, telling stories of famous people via design was shared as resulting in consumers' connection to, and emphasising with that person. As such, consumers could experience mental simulation and be transported to the story (Escalas, 2004a; Nielsen, Escalas, & Hoeffler, 2018). A participant described:

> The *[footwear manufacturing company]* want to evoke the story of athleticism and of being cool in *[their]* shoes outside. So, they will try and show you … pictures of sports people and other people who are celebrities or whatever, wearing their products in particular settings that you *[too]* could be in." (P8)

Table 4. 2. Types of stories told through servicescape atmospherics

Story genre	Story type (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Fantasy stories 9/10	Fantasy stories adapted from books or movies	9/9	P9: "*[Servicescape design]* depends on the product. Some products inherently have some characteristics that can be bold. For example, a store which sells shoes for kids may use Cinderella story as a theme for designing."

	Fantasy stories by the company	4/9	P2: “You *[could record]* a 10 second movie, and then show still images of … people dressed like that person from *[your]* movie and populate the stores … that becomes identifiable with the brand, it becomes quite powerful. … That's something that could be carried from this advertising campaign, either in print or … *[as]* video in the stores”.
Real stories 9/10	Brand, product, and consumer stories	7/9	P4: “The only thing I can think of are stores that are designed around the ethos of the product … *[Company name have]* a very authentic, and clean, and pure product. And the way that they translate that into a retail space, they use … well known designers in the country … *[and]* create something, again, that's very pure … to the location that the space is in. So, for example the one in Melbourne is using timber that's native to Australia, and it's from nearby forests. The way they've used that and turned it into panels, it really becomes the feature of the store.”
	Exoticizing existing distant locations	6/9	P8: “I've been to a restaurant … in Washington D.C. … it was a Thai restaurant; Thai-Vietnamese, and went you went in there was ropes and nets and the colours, and you honestly felt the idea was you were in a small village. Obviously, there were tables and chairs, and it was a restaurant, but the way the kitchen was set up and it was all open and exposed and the types of materials that they used to serve the food in and stuff. It felt like you were in a remote Thai village and there was flags and there was everything … You hear them yelling across, the chefs, and they're talking to each other. It's the whole theatre, and creation of the experience … It's a totally different idea. So, it's more of an add-off to see; you're in the middle of Washington D.C. on a cold winter's night, but you're walking in the door, and you go into this space, and it feels like you can be in a warm, humid Vietnamese village.”
	Theming based on real characters	3/9	P6: “Probably the queen … in terms of character, would be *[person name]* … *[She]* actually has her own theme park, called *[theme park name].* … She's got a famous story of growing up very poor and then becoming very wealthy, and the entire theme park is themed around her and her life.”

4.4 Encouraging and discouraging reasons for telling stories

Having identified the types of stories used for designing servicescapes, the participants were asked about the reasons that encourage or discourage storytelling in servicescapes.

In line with previous studies demonstrating consumers’ detachment from the real world when confronted by a story (Green & Brock, 2000; Green, 2005, Van Laer et al, 2014),

the designers shared that, regardless of whether a story is fictional or real, when used in designing a servicescape, consumers transport to that story (8/10). Consumers were said to imagine of themselves experiencing the story (7/8) or imagine the story events (4/8), conditions that are required for "narrative transportation" (e.g., Green & Brock, 2000). For example, exoticizing distant geographic locations through design of restaurants was shared as transporting consumers to that location as they imagine scenes of the location based on the represented design. As a participant described:

> *[Brand name]* restaurants … use a lot of wooden chairs … a lot of colours that are found on the streets of LA. The different bright coloured buildings, and the stuff *[you would see]* at Venice Beach … the graphics on the walls, the flavour in the food … the way the menu is written … the person who's greeting you at the counter … And then you walk in there, and suddenly you're transported to a different time, almost in a different place. (P4)

Transportation was shared as the most encouraging reason to use storytelling in design, especially, because of its effectiveness in persuading consumers to purchasing the offer (Escalas, 2004a). According to a participant, for example, when the design of a store reinforces the music and scenery from a story, consumers feel the vibe of that story to the extent they decide to purchase something from that store. The participant explained:

> I think the main thing … is supporting the storyline, to keep people in that thought … keep them in the story. … *[For example]* they go into *[store name]* gift shop, and it's reinforcing the music, the scenery *[from that story]* … It's maintaining the vibe … to the point where you can select one piece of that experience and take it home. (P2)

Similarly, another participant described how consumers purchase a figurine that would remind them of their experience of fantasy designed servicescapes:

> It *[i.e., the fantasy servicescape]* takes you out of the normal life, and you go and get to play in the fantasy-land for a while … then you go back to normal life again. You take a memento with you, which is the purchase of whatever it is that you've bought, the Harry Potter figurine or the Mickey Mouse or whatever it is that you've bought, and you go back to normal life and life carries on. (P1)

Although the participants shared about the ability of story-based designs in transporting the consumers, as earlier discussed, consumers' experiences of detachment from reality while lost in stories in servicescapes is referred to as narrative engagement in this thesis. Also, as consumers' imagination of themselves in and events of a given story specifically

correspond to the presence dimension of narrative engagement, designers' description of consumers' transportation to stories is considered as narrative presence in this study.

In addition to consumers' presence in stories, the second reason that the design experts shared as motivating the use of stories in designing servicescapes relates to the potential of both positive and negative story characters in attracting the consumers. According to the participants, regardless of characters' positive or negative personality, what designers deal with is implementing influential characters that help connect the servicescape design to the story much faster. Relatedly, a participant shared:

> If you're creating a fantasy world, certainly revealing both the positive and negative characters actually helps to draw people in. … Often, both positive and negative characters are used in theming … We don't not want *[i.e., we do not refuse]* to go on a roller coaster because it has a bad guy around it versus a good guy. I don't think that would change for us … to walk into a restaurant and seeing that kind of dichotomy between sort of a good … and a bad character. (P6)

Given their potential in attracting consumers' attention, positive and negative characters are therefore, both, recommended to be embedded in servicescape design. This finding, in-turn, helps address RQ5. The design experts perceive positive and negative characters to be as effective in attracting consumers to a servicescape. The design experts, however, did not share how empathy with different characters influences consumers' responses.

Although positive and negative story characters are, both, used for servicescape design, the designers' opinions about consumers' empathy with fictional (versus real) characters were controversial. In contrast to extant research suggesting that people empathise with fictional characters the same as they do with real people (Walton, 1978; Harold, 2000; Harrison, 2008), a participant in this study shared that consumers feel more connected to real people, unless the fictional character is a superhero. According to the participant:

> Often in many of the themed restaurants, it's more about ambiance. There are abstractions and characters. But how do they get connected to them is the big question … do they really get connected to them? … For example, *[person name]* will put his name on a chain restaurant. Now he's never there. He's not cooking the food. He probably created the menu and then walked away. But people feel connected to him as a character. … But these are all real characters, and I can't think of any fictional characters … in those environments *[whom]* people feel very connected to, outside of, maybe, superheroes, or something like that. (P6)

However, as explained by another participant, although consumers become connected to real characters, they are more excited to visit story-based servicescapes where they can connect to any fictional character they want to. As described by the latter participant:

> I think what's awesome about fantasy environments is sometimes … for human beings, life can be boring … the thing with fantasy *[is]* … they *[i.e., consumers]* can be anything they want to be … there's also a level of excitement and wonder that you get with a fantasy *[story]* that a real story doesn't necessarily tell *[i.e., provide]* … So, a real story will allow you to connect with that person *[i.e., the character]* … in the story, but with fantasy it *[i.e., the character]* can be anything you want it to be … favourite superhero characters. Characters from TV, Fictional characters. … So, I think it is exciting … if it can be applied … depending on the environment that it's in … that way it helps. (P5)

In addition to the potential of different story characters in attracting the consumers and engaging them, as discussed subsequently throughout the chapter, the design experts referred to the affective, behavioural and brand experiences that the use of, particularly, fantasy stories in design, helps retailers to evoke in consumers. Although the designers considered the latter consumer experiences as reasons that, in-turn, encourage the use of fantasy stories in design, the findings are presented in sections that address the relevant research questions (RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4).

Despite the beneficial outcomes of implementing stories in servicescape atmospherics, story-based servicescapes were said to be hardly found in New Zealand, unless the story is about what the retailer offers, "In New Zealand retail, it's really hard to come across *[a servicescape]* where there's a lot of a real essence of storytelling within. … A lot of it tends to be based on mainly *[the]* product, because at the end of the day, it's there to sell the product … but (to) move the client *[i.e., the consumer]* to the region of creating an experience *[for them in the servicescape]* … rather than just selling them *[the]* product, it's sort of hard to come by in New Zealand" (P3). There were a number of reasons that discourage retailers from designing servicescapes based on stories that will be discussed subsequently in the section.

Table 4.3. illustrates the benefits of implementing stories in designing servicescapes that are considered as encouraging reasons for retailers when making decisions regarding whether or not to use storytelling in the servicescape design.

Table 4. 3. Encouraging reasons for telling stories

Reasons	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Narrative presence 8/10	Imagine themselves in the story	7/8	P2: "You feel like you're in somebody's house and they're not there, the character is not there. … You're waiting for them to return or you're … *[imagining of] Beorn* from *"Lord of the Rings"*, "What's he *[i.e., Beorn]* going to eat? Is he going to come back as a bear and kill us all?"
	Imagine story events	4/8	P8: "I've been to a restaurant … in *[City name]…* and it was a Thai restaurant; Thai-Vietnamese, and when you went in there was ropes and nets … you honestly felt the idea was you were in a small village. … the way the kitchen was set up and it was all open and exposed and the types of materials that they used to serve the food in … It felt like you were in a remote Thai village and there was flags and there was everything. … You hear them yelling across, the chefs, and they're talking to each other … the whole theatre and creation of the experience."
Consumers' attraction to and empathy with characters		5/10	P10: "Regardless of the personality *[type]* of the characters being positive or negative, we mainly deal with the influential ones, as they connect the decoration to the story much faster."

Besides the favourable outcomes of telling fantasy stories through servicescape design, there seem to be a number of reasons that might discourage retailers from using them. According to the participants, regardless of whether fantasy stories are adapted from an existing source, that requires purchasing the intellectual property, or if generated by the company itself, the designing and management of such servicescapes is too expensive (5/10). In addition to the expenses involved, these types of stories might not be favourable by all age groups, or interests (3/10). Fantasy based designs were further, considered to be short-lived (1/10), in the sense that once having visited such servicescapes, consumers would be less likely to return for a repeat visit. An exception for this situation are stores that offer a different experience for consumers on each visit.

Table 4.4. provides sample quotes for the foresaid discouraging reasons of using stories in the servicescape design.

Table 4. 4. Discouraging reasons for telling stories

Reasons	Number of participants	Example quotes
Expensive to design and manage	5/10	P2: "*[It's]* like paying the devil's bargain for that intellectual property. These things are so expensive for licensing and conditions of use, *[and]* that's why you're not going to be showing *"Lord of the Rings,"* because you'll get a cease and desist letter from an attorney. And if you do use *"Lord of the Rings,"* are you going to really get enough foot traffic in your restaurant or retail store to justify the cost? Building your brand from scratch *[and]* getting your own story through an advertising campaign is probably better … *[because for]* using stuff straight out of their episodes, you're going to pay $500,000 just up front for nothing, just for the rights to use *[a story].* So, translating those stories, either from publisher's rights or a studio's rights is a tremendous financial burden … So, you have to figure out, "Is it worth it?", "What are we going to sell?" Sometimes it's worth it. I mean, *[if]* intellectual property is … used well in connecting with a product … *[it]* can be very effective, but you have to know when to use it … or you have to spend a lot on an ad campaign to dream up some idea; the equivalent, that will cement the brand, and that can be very effective."
Not favourable by all ages or interests	3/10	P9: "I think if someone uses an animation theme for the design, *[they]* will attract some customers who are fan of that animation and will miss the opportunity to be a good place for everyone."
Short-lived	1/10	P8: "Themed environments are cool, but they need to have something that's changing *[each time],* and something that's moving, because people will go back … but if there's not something different to see each time, people tend to get bored with the same experience over and over. … There is a lot of money spent on creating a particular environment … *[and]* what they're trying to do is draw people back … they wanna try and get that return element going on, *[whereas]* if people come once, and they've seen it, they've done it, they don't necessarily wanna go *[back]* … *[So]* they might be short-lived."

4.5 Circumstances in which designers consider telling stories

Considering the challenges that retailers and designers face in designing servicescapes based on stories, the participants addressed the circumstances in which, implementing a given story in design would be worth the effort (See Table 4.5.).

The most cited factor was the relevance of the implemented story with the offer (7/10). In line with previous studies that find as the congruence of atmospheric stimuli with the product increases, they are more effective in enhancing consumers' product evaluations (e.g., scent, in Bosmans, 2006), the design experts believed that story based designs are

most effective when the story dominating the design supports the product or the service being offered. As described by a participant:

> You want the brand and the story to link ... that involves thinking *[of]* how you create a story that links so closely to what's being offered. And when you've got that, then you're alright. Then, you'll be providing people with an experience. (P4)

The participants also referred to retail categories that could use stories for their design. In this regard, product categories (7/10) and service categories (7/10) such as restaurants and cafes as well as companies providing experiences were mentioned as being as much suitable for telling stories in their servicescapes.

Regarding appropriate target audience, a considerable number of the participants (6/10) believed that although fantasy servicescapes could be more interesting for kids, they are not exclusively, designed for kids. According to a participant, the fantasy genre does not exclusively target children, although adult fantasy might be more complex and describe more sinister elements. The participant shared:

> When you're talking about fantasy, *[it's]* not necessarily talking about children's *[stories]*. *[For adults,]* you might be talking about a more complex fantasy or something maybe a little bit more sinister than what you might originally think … of a childhood fantasy. (P8)

This finding provides support to Van Laer et al.'s (2014) study that identifies age as a non-significant antecedent of transportation. Consumers from all ages are likely to be transported into fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics. As explained by a participant, the reason why adult consumers visit environments that are themed upon fantasy stories is that it transports them back to their childhood. As parents, consumers take their children to themed environments for them to have a similar experience to their own childhood.

> Adults will probably relate to that *[i.e., fantasy stories]* because it's taking them back to their childhood and *[their]* childhood memories. … themed environments … evokes those thoughts and often makes a parent want to take their child back through the same journey or the memories they had as children … A parent may wanna *[i.e., want to]* try and have a sense that their child has had a similar experience in their childhood to what they had when they were a child. (P8)

Table 4. 5. Circumstances in which designers consider telling stories

Circumstances	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Relevance of the story and offer		7/10	P1: "Depending on what category you are involved in the experience has to change quite dramatically. … If you are going to place hype around a bricks and mortar business, or for a physical retail store, that hype has to be congruent with what customers expect from the category that they are engaging in. So, for example, if I want to go to a sports store, then what you are trying to do is create a story around fitness, and agility, and strength and health and wellness and so forth … at it's very essence, you are trying to tell a story that is congruent with what the customer is trying to get when he or she comes into the store. What you don't want to do is create something which is incongruent."
Retail categories suitable for using a story in design	Products	7/10	P8: "If you can bring an element of it *[i.e. fantasy]* in there and create that mystery and mystique around a particular product or *[a]* section of the store, then that's certainly something we're trying to do." P5: "If you can find a way to bring that level of energy *[that fantasy themed environments provide]* into a store fit out that's selling pots and pans or selling mobile phones, that's awesome."
	Services	7/10	P7: "Fantasy themes in relations to sitting down and having a cup of tea … *[are]* totally supportive." P10: "*[Fantasy*] stories could be used for the design of fast food stores and cafes." P3: "I think if it's an experience that you're trying to sell to someone *[i.e., the consumers],* for example, skydiving … then having a story behind that in the space before people go up to jump, that could work quite well, because it *[i.e., the story]* helps build up some enthusiasm, and interest."
Target audience	Children and adults	6/10	P9: "When we are talking about designing a store based on an animation, probably it *[i.e., the theme]* is more interesting for kids, not saying it is exclusive for kids."

4.6 Servicescape atmospherics effective in telling a story

In line with Eroglu and Machleit's (2008) holistic approach in studying consumer-environment transactions, the participants in this study also highlighted the importance of considering servicescape elements as a gestalt system (4/10). According to designers, the atmospherics are "sort of like jigsaw pieces. Essentially, they all go hand-in-hand.

They all work together to help create this environment for customers to shop in," (P5) and the "integrity of *[atmospherics]* altogether is so important, maybe more important than each one separately" (P9).

Having said that, however, there are a number of elements considered by the designers as more effective in presenting a story. Understanding these elements are important for the retailer and design practitioners in making decisions about elements that better connect the servicescape design to a given story and thus facilitate consumers' engagement with and presence in that story.

With regard to ambient elements, light (8/10), music and sounds (6/10) and scents (5/10) were noted as highly influential. For example, the power of lighting in a servicescape was described by a participant as:

> I think that light, in many ways, is what creates some of the most transformative effects, because we are very much removed from the outside world. … Lighting is something that hits us in a visual way. (P6)

Design elements are categorised into interior and exterior factors. For interior design, colour (9/10), wall coverings (8/10), layout (7/10), and materials (7/10) were most cited. In addition, participants referred to visual merchandising and product displays (6/10), ceiling and decor (6/10), furnishings (5/10), floor and carpets (5/10), accessories (4/10), signs, tagging and fonts (3/10), as well as fixtures and racks (2/10) that present a story. The only factor cited for the exterior design relates to store front and display windows (4/10).

Staff characteristics (7/10) and costumes (2/10) were the two social elements addressed by participants. Table 4.6. illustrates a complete list of the discussed elements together with representative quotes.

Table 4. 6. Servicescape atmospherics effective in telling a story

Servicescape elements	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Ambient	Light	8/10	P3: "Lighting could be a really big thing … Using lighting to simulate an atmosphere or ambience in a space, and to have focal points established from the space through lighting to draw people in … lighting would be probably the number one approach *[in design].*"

	Music and sounds	7/10	P2: “To carry the theme through … music is very important … Music supports the story in a very big way … sound is probably one of the greatest *[atmospherics]* to my knowledge.”
	Scents	5/10	P4: “Something that's underused *[in design]* is definitely smells. … The smells they use … triggers something in you that brings a level of interest, and kind of motivation ... we don't utilise it enough, as I wish.”
Interior design	Colour	9/10	P2: “*[Colour is]* generally lifted from the story boards, from either the animated version of the story, or film captures. And so, what happens is … they will have a still image from a video, or they'll have a print image from a book, whatever the reference is, whatever the storyline is. And then they will have colours designated on that page as a block, it looks almost like an architect's working drawing, but it has a pictorial on it, and that pictorial has the designated colours. So, it's quite important what hues they're drawing on. And then that becomes the DNA for the interior designer group to select wall coverings, paint finishes for organic things like artificial branches and trees, and then paint colour, carpeting, things like that.”
	Wall coverings	8/10	P6: “They *[i.e., a themed restaurant]* got talking animals on the walls. They've got talking taxidermy, including a large moose that sings to you.” P10: “As for wall decorations, two dimensional designs in architecture are not of much value. It would be better to design walls on 3D scale. Otherwise, the design would look cheap and of low value.”
	Layout	7/10	P8: “The way they structure their stores around the idea of all those different types of stories that are in your childhood … you go into different areas and it's themed; like the pirate section or the space section, there might be one on the technical, or there's the whole city section, that sort of thing … There might be a dessert island with the pirates around it or you can go into a space themed component, or you might get one that castles and knights. There's all the different types of areas and you can sort of transverse through them.”
	Materials	7/10	P10: “I would usually use uncommon and new elements in the design concept that would make the consumers remember that store. This could sometimes happen by selecting uncommon material.”

			P2: “You have the very princess *[design style].* The stone is dressed and cut … much nicer metal work.”
	Visual merchandising and displays	6/10	P7: “Clothing retailers will do *[storytelling]* in terms of, “here is a hat and a jacket and a pair of trousers and …” … that's what we call great visual merchandising which tells a story.”
	Ceiling and decor	6/10	P2: “Going through the *[gift shop]* … you won't have a terrible suspended ceiling, or a painted gib ceiling; you'll have recreated raw timber like a sort of crude wood construction like … animals might build in the forest with Christopher Robin, the Winnie the Pooh story.” P10: “If the story shows the interior of a house, you simulate walls and ceiling of that house in the store and hang objects from the ceiling.”
	Furnishings	5/10	P3: “You could create a retail environment, an interior, which would play on people's perception of scale, like Alice in Wonderland, where there's really an odd sense of scale in that story. I think if you create a space that would maybe having an oversized table and chairs, so it feels like people are sitting in a big king's chair or something like that, and then having that contrast with another piece of some other objects and space, it would contradict it. I think people would start to see that there is something, some sort of story taking place here, describing a scene from the film or a book.”
	Flooring and carpets	5/10	P2: “The flooring is very plush … that takes you back to … “So, I feel like I'm in a palace.””
	Accessories	4/10	P10: “The accessories of any two stories would not be similar … and each story would require us to decide about the accessories that would relate to that particular story.”
	Signs and tagging and fonts	3/10	P7: “We're going to be very careful about what kind of fonts we use in store for signage.”
	Fixtures and racks	2/10	P2: “Fixtures … in the merchandising area … are more refined, more gold, copper and metallic and filigrees and things like that *[are]* more decadent.”
Exterior design	Store front and display windows	4/10	P5: “The shop front is possibly the most important element *[in representing the story]* inside a retail fit out because that's your first impression. Your shop front is your opportunity to get the customer's attention straight off the bat … *[and]* to bring them into the store. Because if you've got rubbish on display, or

			your merchandising isn't very good, people don't want to come in … *[First,]* how your shop front is designed, and secondly, how your shop front is merchandised, are the two most important factors for me in a store design and implementing a story and a theme."
Social	Staff characteristics and customer service	7/10	P1: "In fact, more than anything, how retailers execute their brand is through the thousands and thousands of one-to-one interactions ... That's where the brand is really executed. … *[The staff]* can either be friendly and upbeat and help or can just go "I've got no idea" … doesn't know, doesn't care, uneducated, lazy, all the negative ones, or the other one would be really useful, very knowledgeable, friendly, ... the other good labels you can have." P3: "Customer service; the interaction with staff, that's quite a big thing … sometimes, the experience does come down to the service that you receive in the store. It could be a store that looks fantastic, like design wise, but if the customer doesn't feel like they're being looked after or their needs addressed, then it could be not such a good experience and people probably won't go back."
	Staff costumes	2/10	P2: "Cast members *[i.e., staff]* dressing and responding to the storyline, doing their best to maintain that suspension of disbelief."

4.6.1 The extent to mimic a story in servicescapes

Having explored the most effective atmospherics for presenting stories in servicescapes, the participants were asked about the extent to which they would consider mimicry (see Batuman, 2016) of a particular story in design.

While some design experts recommend a higher level of mimicry (4/10) when the story is famous, in order to meet consumers' expectations (2/4), or in cases when the retailer has enough budget to cover the required expenses (2/4); high mimicry is, nevertheless, considered as distracting consumers' attention from what a retailer offers. Accordingly, most of the designers recommend a moderate level of story mimicry (6/10) to support the retailers' offers (3/6). A moderate level of mimicry was, further, believed to attract a larger group of audience (2/6), enhance consumers' engagement with the offer (2/6) and increase return intention (2/6). Table 4.7. illustrates designers' perspectives on the level of story mimicry together with sample quotes.

Table 4. 7. The extent to mimic a story in servicescapes

Mimicry level	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Moderate mimicry 6/10	Support the retailers' offers	3/6	P7: "In any retail environment … the product that you're selling is the hero, not the design. So, if you can add a feature design element which enhances the experience, or enhances the brand story, or enhances the ability to sell more products, then it's successful. But, if the design overtakes the retail experience or the product, then it's a fail. … If the design is too much … You just end up being there to look at the design." P4: "It's really easy to be a bit massed with *[design]*, to go, "Okay, we've been kind of completely overboard with this theme" and suddenly, … you get focused too much on the story, and not enough on what the store is there to do … like its product, or its offer."
	More audience	2/6	P6: "The ultimate, probably the most successful would be … done in such a light and subtle way that casual diners can walk in and just say, "Oh, this is an interesting looking place." That probably has the widest audience. And as it goes deeper into the high theming, I think the audience probably gets smaller and smaller. Places that *[consumers]* like my parents wouldn't be looking to go eat. And the people with kids maybe going to eat or people who are passionate about certain themes would be open to do that … places like *[restaurant company]* are designed for volume and scale. Still have a sense of that storytelling and theme, but it's softened up. It's not so strong that people are pushed away or feel that they're excluded from it." P8: "One of the risks *[associated]* with heavily themed environments is that … You're putting some people off by creating an environment that … they'll feel like it's … not suited to them. Then there's less chance of them going there … less chance of them purchasing. So, we do probably design carefully around being too heavily themed around stories or fantasy or whatever."
	Consumer engagement	2/6	P3: "I would probably try and allow the consumer … change the outcome of the story, and that would make it *[i.e., the experience]* a bit more engaging. I guess it depends on what you're trying to build up, but I think, in principle, if you allow *[consumers]* to change part of the story to see a different outcome, but still have a similar meaning behind *[the story]* It'd be like having an interactive exhibition in a shopping environment … something like that could work out quite well. It just comes down to applying it in the right context product. … People would be a lot more engaged because they want to come back a second time and *[each time]* try something different to see what the outcome would be. Hope for different outcomes. Almost like a game."
	Return intention	2/6	

High mimicry 4/10	Famous stories	2/4	P1: “If you have a brand expectation that is *[created]* through movies or through other experiences, and then you let down somewhere else *[for example, in design],* that's a big fail. That would have a very negative effect. … In a crazy kind of way, the more well-known or the greater *[the]* expectation of your brand or your story, the greater the opportunity … to be disappointed, because there's more things that they *[i.e., consumers]* can be disappointed for.” P6: “In a good themed restaurant … there's less sense of disappointment … because we're able to compare and contrast different things we have familiarity with, and say, "Oh, no, that's not correct." But it also depends on how much familiarity you have with the stories and all those kinds of things. I think that it has to be done well, and it has to be done a 100 percent. ... You can't bring elements like this into a restaurant and not go all the way … it will feel really inauthentic. Right? It will feel really fake. … That's often I think why it's expensive to create these kinds of environments. Because they really have to be at a certain level of sort of immersion.”
	Enough budget	2/4	P2: “I think people appreciate detail. Anything you can do *[in servicescape design]* that's cute or interesting or shows extra effort … is good … Anything that makes it look special … can help you … but you have to look at your investment *[i.e., budget]* … Because your budget is going to begin as some finite amount.” P9: “Depends on the money *[i.e., the retailer’s budget],* more money, more detailed design.”

4.7 Affective responses designers evoke in servicescapes

Previous research has proven the influence of servicescape elements, either at a holistic (e.g., Eroglu & Machleit, 2008) or individual level (e.g., Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000) on consumers’ affective and behavioural responses within servicescapes. Nevertheless, a high volume of extant studies examine consumers’ (versus designers’) perspective on the emotions experienced in servicescapes with less research conducted to understand the responses that are favourable from designers’ perspectives, and how these responses are manipulated (Turley & Milliman, 2000), for example, by telling a story through the servicescape atmospherics. This study helps address RQ2 by asking design experts about the affective responses they aim to evoke in a) all servicescapes and b) particularly, in fantasy servicescapes.

This section first presents the affective responses that designers, generally, aim to evoke in consumers in servicescapes, and follows by identifying the emotions that stories can help evoke in consumers.

Excitement (6/10) was the most cited affective response that the design aim to evoke in any servicescape. According to the literature, excitement is the central reason for why consumers go to shopping malls (Stoltman, Gentry, & Anglin, 1991; Cockerham, 1995; San Santoso, Joewono, & Sunanto, 2018). Excitement was, futher, shared as resulting in impulse buying (Chang, Eckman, & Yan, 2011; Sohn & Lee, 2017; Xu, Zhang, & Zhao, 2020). Relatedly, a participant shared:

> You might go there to make a purchase of A, B or C, but you almost inevitably leave with much more than you aimed to buy … because it is an exciting store … it's a place that you are going to fossick around and … look for certain things. (P1)

The second affective response designers plan to evoke in consumers is happiness (4/10) (Minton & Liu, 2019; Gaston-Breton, Sørensen, & Thomsen, 2020) which, in-turn, was shared to result in impulse buying (Chang et al., 2011; Sohn & Lee, 2017). According to the participants, when consumers feel happy in a servicescape, they would like to take part of their happy experience back home to remember it and thus they are more likely to purchase items from the servicescape. As a participant described:

> It's just a happy scene and a child that *[who]* wants to connect with the happy scene and take that home. (P2)

After excitement and happiness, the designers referred to comfort (4/10), as an emotion they would like to create for consumers. As shared by a participant:

> Essentially, what you want to do is you want to create an environment where a customer feels comfortable. (P5)

The designers believed that for consumers to be willing to stay longer and engage with the retailers' offers, the servicescape needs to be designed in ways that provide comfort. However, as more discussed later in the section, the level of comfort was said to depend on the retail category, with a higher level of comfort advised for product categories, and a lower level for food categories. This is due to the reason so that consumers would not stay too long, for example, in a cafe, for retailers to be able to serve more consumers.

Nostalgia (3/10) was another affective response the designers aim to evoke, particularly, in cases where the servicescape theme triggers consumers' memories of old times and

historical locations (Havlena & Holak, 1991; Hirsch, 1992; Holak & Havlena, 1992; Baker & Kennedy, 1994; Chen, Yeh, & Huan, 2014; Ju, Kim, Chang, & Bluck, 2016; Heinberg, Katsikeas, Ozkaya, & Taube, 2019), therefore, transporting us to those times and locations. As a participant shared:

> Each *[company name]* store has a different theme … At *[city name]*, their theme was *[based on the]* Air Force … the entire shop is using references to that … there's markings on the concrete floor, there's a parachute in the window … They trigger that memory of things that *[we have]* seen, or historical reference. … Visitors to New Zealand, who've travelled around and gone to various places *[in the country]* and seen New Zealand's history would … recognise that *[i.e., design]* … so you've got that strong link going on. It's almost transporting people back to those places. (P4)

Although nostalgia is at times perceived as bittersweet (Holak & Havlena, 1992, 1998), principally, it is a positive emotion (Routledge, Arndt, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2008). Nostalgia is, therefore, categorised as a positive emotion in this thesis.

Designers also shared about their intentions to encourage and aspire or give hope (3/10) to the consumers to achieve valuable goals by using the products or services offered by a particular brand. As a participant described:

> The emotion depends … to the brand … whether it encourages you to do more with your life, or it's motivating. … You go to a sports shop … and almost feel like you want to get out … you want to go running. ... it's about pushing yourself to go further … all the branding are like, "Just do it, just go harder, get out there" … that would be more about giving me maybe the sense of motivation and more confidence. (P4)

Retailers design stores in a way that would make consumers believe that the extra amount they pay for a given brand (versus the others) is worth it, as what they get in return is better, bigger, or newer. This sense of aspiration and hope then, adds value to a brand, intriguing consumers to pay more for it (See Table 4.8.).

The last positive emotion shared by designers was wonder (2/10); often evoked through the sense of scale, including the size of elements or spaces devised in the environment. Enormous and wide spaces were said to result in consumers associating characteristics such as strength and power to a servicescape brand.

Table 4.8 presents the affective responses that designers intend to evoke in consumers in all servicescapes, together with illustrative quotes.

Table 4. 8. Affective responses designers evoke in servicescapes

Affective responses	Number of participants	Example quotes
Excitement	6/10	P4: "Make a space *[i.e., servicescape]* that's exciting, rewarding to the senses ... Whether that be *[through]* smell, touch, *[so forth]*."
Happiness	4/10	P4: "I guess, *[an emotion designers aim to evoke is]* happiness. Because I always struggle with how we *[are]*, as retail designers, deceiving people … trying to sell people as much stuff as possible … we want the retailers to be successful. They employ us because they want to make these stores look good, so *[that]* they can make lots of money … But to get to that point, you've got to make people like the store. So, what are the people who come into the store, going to like? I don't think I'm going to want to be depressed."
Comfort	4/10	P7: "*[Company name]* was one of those environments where it had to be created to look and feel like a place you wanted to stay. It had to be comfortable. You had to want to hang out, *[because]* we had to get people to engage with the phones and the product."
Nostalgia	3/10	P3: "Certain props or objects that we would put in the space, *[like]* eclectic objects, which would give the space a sense of nostalgia. Like with *[company name]* we used … various sign machines, 1950s radios, to try and create this kind of mixed eclectic look about it, because it related to the product that there were selling at the time, and it just helped make the store feel a bit more funky."
Encouraged and hopeful	3/10	P1: "A lot of shopping concepts … are clearly designed to heighten the sense of aspiration *[and hope]* … Aspire to something better, something bigger, something newer ... What the marketer saying is, "with a little bit more money … you can get something better" … that's all they ever said … "You can be like this if you do this, if you do that" … that's very aspirational … *[So,]* what emotions are they trying to get you to pursue *[i.e., to experience]*, if I'm a marketer for a brand, I absolutely want to put value in the brand, and get you to believe that the brand has a lot of value, and so you pay more for it, because there's an aspirational element to that. … That's what a lot of designing is trying to do inside the store."
Wonder	2/10	P6: "Often *[the emotion the designers evoke]* is a wonder. Because a lot of the times it's done at a sense of scale. A *[company name]* is an enormous restaurant … having a column that's 7 to 10-feet wide … you start moving into a scale that brings that sense of wonder, and strength, and power, and all of those kinds of things."

4.7.1 Affective responses in fantasy servicescapes

After exploring the positive and negative emotions that the design experts aim to evoke in servicescapes, to address RQ2, participants were asked about the positive and negative emotions that consumers are likely to experience, particularly, in fantasy servicescapes.

Consistent with the emotions most designers aim for consumers to feel in servicescapes, telling fantasy stories through the atmospherics is expected to evoke excitement (3/10) and happiness (2/10). As competition between servicescapes increases, retailers create distinctive experiences to make consumers feel excited (e.g., Wakefield & Baker, 1998; San Santoso et al., 2018) and happy (Minton & Liu, 2019; Gaston-Breton et al., 2020; Gilovich, Kumar, & Jampol, 2015; Schmitt, Brakus, & Zarantonello, 2015). As the most common type of experiences, telling stories through servicescape atmospherics evokes excitement and happiness.

Consumers were further, shared as experiencing wonder (2/10) in fantasy servicescapes, which, in-turn, is an emotion that designers aim to evoke in any servicescape.

Another important emotion the designers believe telling stories evokes in consumers, relates to their level of patience and forgiveness (1/10) with the quality of the service or product the retailers' offer. As the only emotion specifically attributed to servicescapes that tell a fantasy story, a participant explained how having a story theme helps retailers "mask" the level of their service quality, relating the reason to consumers' presence in or engagement with the story.

In spite of the progress that has been made in understanding the mediating influence of consumers' emotions (e.g., Vukadin et al., 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020), most studies have focused on the positive emotions (see Holbrook & Batra 1987; Batra & Ray, 1986; Hosany, Prayag, Deesilatham, Cauševic, & Odeh, 2015) with limited studies examining the role of negative emotions on consumers' behaviour (Larsen, Brun, & Øgaard, 2009; Ou & Verhoef, 2017; Gao, Kerstetter, Mowen, & Hickerson, 2018). Recognising this void in extant knowledge, consumer researchers underscored the need for further studies on the effect of negative emotions on behaviour (Batra & Ray, 1986; Allen, Machleit & Marine, 1988; Hosany et al., 2015). In response to this call for further research, Moore and Hoenig (1989) proposed that the arousal of negative emotions may, at times, result in positive rather than negative responses (e.g., positive change in consumers' attitudes towards an ad and persuasion). Moreover, Arnould and Price (1993) confirmed the role of negative emotions (i.e., fear) in inducing positive outcomes such as fun, satisfaction, and high recommendation levels in extraordinary, leisure experiences.

Relatedly, recent research on the use of negative characters in marketing and advertising have found that the negative emotions experienced as a result of confronting negative

story characters strengthen consumers' brand experiences (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010; Campbell et al., 2020), and result in enjoyment of the experience (Dessart, 2018).

Similar to what Arnould and Price (1993) and Dessart (2018) suggested, the participants in this study mentioned that the fear (3/10) and tension (2/10) of consumers' exposure to negative characters in fantasy servicescapes results in enjoyment and fun. Relatedly, a participant shared:

> Even a horror story is a happy story … because *[despite]* it scared us … but you had fun being scared … it's fun to be terrified. (P1)

Table 4.9. presents the positive and negative affective responses that designers intend to evoke in consumers in fantasy servicescapes, together with illustrative quotes.

Table 4. 9. Affective responses in fantasy servicescapes

Affective responses	Number of participants	Example quotes
Positive affective responses		
Excitement	3/10	P2: "You have to see *[fantasy servicescapes]* … through the eyes of a child. … Some people who are more astute can do this *[and]* those things activate their excitement."
Happiness	2/10	P1: "There's a very real emotional attachment to that *[i.e., a store designed based on a fantasy story],* because it is a happy place, *[with]* a happy story."
Wonder	2/10	P5: "Stuff *[required for designing fantasy environments]* is actually quite expensive here *[i.e., in New Zealand]* because it comes from so far away. … I think, if you can find a way for store designers … to bring that *[fantasy]* stuff in *[servicescapes]* to *[evoke*] that sort of excitement and wonder, something that gets your heart racing … your pulse going, "Whoa, where am I?" … That's really important and I think there are a lot of retail environments that don't do that. … So, they just do the same thing day in and day out. They have the same store design, the same background … you don't generate any business that way. You don't generate new customers by doing the same old stuff. If you do the same old thing, people *[will]* go elsewhere." P6: "In a good themed restaurant, if you *[i.e., designers]* are able to create that sense of wonder, the hope is that people don't really have a full understanding of what they will be experiencing until they experience it. I think that's the way things *[i.e., servicescapes]* like *[Restaurant company name]* work."
Patience and forgiveness	1/10	P2: "Having a story will probably give *[consumers]* more patience ... forgiveness, for the level of service from the wait staff, cause level of service is everything, and some people won't care once there's a *[story in the store].* You can mask a lot of things when you have that

		type of *[experience].* … I mean, you could say it's taking a little bit of the load or the burden off the operators of the store including the employees because you have a story … *[but]* puts a little bit of more burden on design. … they can forgive certain levels of detail or quality because that story is going through, *[and]* they're kind of in the story now."
Negative affective responses		
Fear and scared	3/10	P2: "The child *[i.e., the consumer]* is scared of the evil stepmom in Cinderella and they're excited by that, and they want to confront it, or they want to have time to process that feeling. Some of them might gravitate toward the more scary things like a poisoned apple or the witch, or some element of the costume from the stepmother, *[or]* whomever … the challenge to themselves to confront the fear … *[but]* the fear would only be part of the experience." P4: "*[As]* retail designers, we're always, potentially, looking at the positive emotions. Maybe not trying to make things negative … *(to)* take people through the highs and lows of something. *(But)* people want to feel a range of emotions, and not always just positive ones ... I think there's a huge opportunity for retailers to … *(evoke)* a few more emotions ... *(But)* it's a tricky thing. Because you want to give people a wide range of emotions … through a big amount of ideas, but then you don't want to put them off. But people also go to the movies and watch sad movies, and they enjoy it. So why can't retail *[design]* be different? … So that the overall experience is positive but the parts that make up that space … can have *[i.e., evoke]* fear, bits are frightening, and all of those kinds of things."
Tense	2/10	P2: "There's some points of tension where you see the evil person and the story trajectory and those are the things that when you go to the gift shops … the background music, the overall story arc is positive [with a] happy ending, but there is tension in there [too]." P6: "I think that, for example, having a *[negative]* character like Saruman or Sauron have a presence *[in the servicescape design]* is actually really key for the story. The idea here is to bring all of that together because you need that tension, and the question is how that arises. Do people want to spend all their time sitting beneath him? … Or does the negative characters have to have an appearance at some point to create that sort of dramatic arc. Often if it's a dramatic arc you're trying to create through a 90-minute dining experience, how does that happen and how often does it happen? Those kinds of things. In the *[restaurant company name],* at some dedicated interval, the lights go out and it rains … that will happen once while you're eating. You don't know when it will happen, but you know it will happen. And it's the same way. It's that sort of change in tension to sort of ramp things up a little bit."

As consumers feel a variety of positive and negative affective responses in servicescapes that are designed based on a fantasy story, it could be interpreted that they emotionally engage with those stories. Emotional engagement with a story increases the likelihood of experiencing narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). Therefore, in answer to RQ1 consumers not only experience narrative presence but also emotionally engage with

fantasy stories told through the servicescape atmospherics and therefore they are likely to experience narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes.

4.8 Behavioural responses designers evoke in servicescapes

According to the literature, consumers' affective states mediate the relationship between a store environment and their shopping behaviour, leading them to either approach or avoid a store (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Vukadin et al., 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020). For example, the positive emotions consumers experience result in approach behaviours such as spending money, willingness to return, spending more time, purchase intention, and impulse buying (Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2003; Tantanatewin & Inkarojrit, 2018; Sohn & Lee, 2017; Roggeveen et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2020). Considering the mediating role of consumers' emotions on their behaviour, to address RQ3, the designers were asked about the intentions and behavioural responses they evoke in a) all servicescapes and b) particularly, in fantasy servicescapes.

Not unexpectedly, spending money (9/10) was the behaviour shared by most designers, "The most important behaviour is *[to]* purchase. Because stores are established to sell" (P10), shared a participant. "When you are inside the store, *[the retailers]* want you to spend as much money as you can. It's pretty straightforward" (P1).

Following money, spending time in a servicescape (6/10) was the next behaviour mostly cited by designers. In contrast to the wide stream of previous research that manipulate various atmospheric elements to keep the consumers for a longer time in a servicescape (Morrison, Gan, Dubelaar, & Oppewal, 2011; Sherman et al., 1997; Baker et al., 1992; Tantanatewin & Inkarojrit, 2018), the design experts believed that the reasonable time to stay in a servicescape depends on the retail category. While most product categories (e.g., gift stores) encourage a longer dwell time (5/6) with the hope that the consumers spend more money, by contrast, food related categories were advised to be designed in a way that get the consumers through quickly (3/6). For example, the purposeful use of uncomfortable seating in a fast food restaurant is meant to discourage consumers from staying for long (e.g., Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000). As a result, consumers are likely to leave as soon as they have had their food, and the retailer can serve more consumers. Relatedly, a participant shared:

> A fast food store is all about fast product movement. It's all about trying to get people through quickly. They wanna come in, they wanna get

> their food, and they wanna get out. Whereas if you're looking at something for a gift store, you want people to slow down, you want people to dwell, you want people to be able to see other different types of product around. Most times when you go to a fast food store, it's all about having a simple, clear product range and menu that you can choose from quickly. Make choices, pay, and get moved through. Whereas in a gift store, for argument's sake, you want people to be spending time and considering their choices. (P8)

Participants also shared about their efforts in creating good feelings in consumers that in-turn, increase their intentions to return (5/10) to that servicescape.

Consumer attraction and courage to visit (5/10) was the next favourable behaviour that participants shared about, as they aim to "Design *[the servicescapes]* in a particular way to encourage people to come in" (P1). In this regard, the shop front was highlighted as retailers' "opportunity to get the customer's attention straight off the bat" (P5), and the retailers were advised to use forms and colours, or uncommon and attractive objects at the display windows to attract consumers to their stores (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000).

Designers also shared about their effort in getting consumers engaged with the products and services that a retailer offers (4/10). Vivek, Beatty, Dalela, and Morgan (2014) refer to consumers' engagement as "The level of the customer's interactions and connections with the brand or firm's offerings or activities" (p. 401). Consumers' engagement with retailers' offers was reported as resulting in purchase intention. A participant explained:

> I guess the main thing is we want them *[i.e., customers]* to be really engaged with the product and their surroundings from the store. … we'd try and set up these little areas from the store where the people can just go and feel comfortable talking with the staff member about the product or solutions that they're after. Or having like an area where customers can try things, like a sample station. So, creating those sorts of areas … so customers can really engage with the product, and it also helps in gaining understanding of it, and we hope that in the end, that will lead to a purchase. (P3)

Pleasing aspects of design, especially in terms of product displays, were also shared as effective in triggering consumers' purchase intention (4/10) (see Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Lam, Ho-ying Fu, & Li, 2017; Zhang, Qin, Wang, & Luo, 2020).

Furthermore, the willingness to explore and browse and discover (4/10) a servicescape is encouraged in consumers (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000; Grewal, Noble, Roggeveen, & Nordfalt, 2020).

In addition, the participants also shared about their effort in designing the servicescapes in ways that encourage impulse buying (4/10) (Atulkar & Kesari, 2018; Xu et al., 2020). Beatty and Ferrell (1998) defined impulse buying as "a sudden and immediate purchase with no pre-shopping intentions either to buy the specific product category or to fulfil a specific buying task" (p. 170). According to a participant:

> You're trying to get them *[i.e., consumers]* to look at things they may not have considered purchasing *[before],* while they're there. (P8)

In this regard, the participants believed that consumers' excitement of being in a certain store can result in making impulse purchases (Harmancioglu, Zachary, & Joseph, 2009; Sohn & Lee, 2017; Xu et al., 2020).

In line with research demonstrating the evolution of consumers' shopping values from utilitarian towards hedonic motivations, that are associated with fun and playfulness (e.g., Kozinets et al., 2002; Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Le et al., 2019; Pina & Dias, 2020), the participants in this study also highlighted the importance of providing entertainment, enjoyment, and fun (4/10) in servicescapes, as crucial factors in the retailers' success. For example:

> In certain parts of the world, malls are dying; they are literally becoming deserted places. But the malls that are doing really well are those … *[where]* there is lots of entertainment and fun inside the mall. It's not just a shop where you buy stuff … they include fun, services, products, entertainment, and shopping, all as one … So, if you are in a mall where they just sell products, there is a really good chance that you are in a mall which is dying. If you are in a mall where there is way more than just products, but entertainment, and theatre … then you are probably in a mall which is thriving. Because people want more from the experience these days than just getting a decent item at a decent price, because that you can do with your fingers online. … *[For example]* when you go into the *[chocolate company]* store you just wanna have fun, and so, that's all that they give you, just fun. They just take you out of reality for a short while, for the hour you're in the store. (P1)

Participants also aim for consumers to get involved in positive Word of Mouth (3/10) and to share their pleasant experience of a servicescape with others (Anderson, 1998; Sanjaya & Yasa, 2018; An, Do, Ngo, & Quan, 2019). As described by a participant:

> When it comes to creating behaviour … what you'd want more than anything from your customers is that they spread, by word of mouth, how good you are … to become a reference point. (P1)

Another behaviour a participant referred to, relates to their efforts in designing stores in a way that facilitates consumers' interactions (1/10) with each other and with staff (see Ladhari, Rioux, Souiden, & Chiadmi, 2019; Bailey, 2019; Grewal et al., 2020). This is especially important in stores in which one must "rely on sales staff to describe and explain the items in the store" (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000, p. 141).

Design practices were, also, said to target consumer loyalty (1/10) (Yoon & Park, 2018; Liu, Bogicevic, & Mattila, 2018). A designer shared, "You want to keep them *[i.e., the consumers]* loyal" (P5). Loyalty is defined as a "deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronise a preferred product/service consistently in the future … despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour" (Oliver, 1999, p.34).

The intentions and behaviour designers aim to evoke in all servicescapes are illustrated together with sample quotes in Table 4.10.

Table 4. 10. Behavioural responses designers evoke in servicescapes

Intentions and behaviours	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Spend money		9/10	P5: "The first one *[i.e., behaviour]* is getting them to spend money. That's important."
Spend time 6/10	Longer in product categories	5/6	P1: "If you're in a place where they're selling food ready to consume right now … in the nicest possible way, they'll hurry you along. … you can sit and eat and take your time, but it's not designed to be overly comfortable … they need you to move after half an hour so somebody else can come and eat. … They want you to move on … Whereas if you're in a store, they won't, *[because]* the longer you're in the store, the likelier you are to purchase. … most stores will encourage dwell time."
	Shorter in food related categories	3/6	
Return intention		5/10	P7: "You want to give people a good feeling. … *[but]* you don't necessarily want people to know why they've got it … it's one of those really subconscious, subliminal messages that if people feel good in an environment … they'll just keep going back … Just having a really nice feeling will allow repetition and people to come back more."
Consumer attraction and courage to visit		5/10	P10: "Using forms and colours or uncommon and attractive objects at the display windows

			has a great impact in attracting consumers' attention to the store."
Consumer engagement with retailers' offers		4/10	P1: "*[Multinational conglomerate company]* have … a store called *[store name]* where it is just a temple to *[brand name].* I don't know if they are actually selling anything outside the store, but it's just a chance for anybody to go and experience everything that they want to be known and famous for *[through]* virtual reality, engagement with the products, gamed play with whatever … they're doing, looking at where they want to take the brand, and the technology they have."
Purchase intention		4/10	P8: "Basically, at the end of the day, it's all around trying to make sure you sell product. So, it's about displaying the product in a way that is going to entice the customer to come in the store and be attracted to the purchase of particular product within the store."
Explore and browse and discover		4/10	P4:" We're creating stores that … our design is allowing people to discover … to explore, along with the shopping."
Impulse buying		4/10	P5: "I might have only come out to spend money on a shirt, but because of how the clothing's positioned in the store … I'm far more likely to spend money." P7: "I have ended up buying something that I never thought I would buy."
Entertainment and enjoyment and fun		4/10	P4: "You've got to make people like the store … to have fun, enjoy themselves."
Word-of-Mouth		3/10	P7: "You want people to … *[tell]* "I went into that shop. I had such a good time. I brought this and I bought that." That's what you want … telling the story of visiting that store."
Interaction with other consumers and staff		1/10	P7: "Some of the other behaviours you want to have, more personal behaviours, you want *[consumers]* to have really good interaction with staff that manage the retail environment and the people that are coming to purchase."
Consumer loyalty		1/10	P5: "You want to keep them loyal."

4.8.1 Behavioural responses in fantasy servicescapes

After exploring the behavioural responses that design experts evoke in all servicescapes, in order to address RQ3, participants were asked about the intentions and behaviour that consumers are likely to experience, particularly, in fantasy servicescapes. The designers

referred to evocation of a number of intentions and behaviour as reasons that, in-turn, encourage them to implement fantasy stories for servicescape design.

In line with the behaviours that designers generally expect for consumers to experience in servicescapes, telling fantasy stories through the atmospherics is expected to enhance consumers' engagement with and understanding of retailers' offers (4/10). According to a participant:

> I think if it was possible to create that connection between a story or an idea with a product … I would see it as coming across as being definitely more effective … because it shows a lot more depth to the product, and to the brand. It's not just something that they've put on the shelf for people to buy … There's a lot more meaning behind the product that they're selling … This is trying to engage the customer … And I believe that the consumers, or customer would have a better understanding of the product itself, and what it means to them … because there'd be an idea of a story behind it, which would draw them in, as opposed to not having one. I think that having a story behind that definitely helps reinforce that level of engagement with the customer, and the brand. (P3)

Telling fantasy stories through servicescape atmospherics, further, increases consumers' purchase intention (4/10), encourages them to spend money (2/10) and time (1/10), and to explore and discover (1/10) the servicescape. Relatedly, a participant shared:

> It's wonderful, the first thing retailers achieve by implementing stories in design, … makes consumers to spend more time in the servicescape as they discover elements of the story. (P10)

The use of fantasy stories in design was also said to be fun for the consumers (1/10):

> *[Fantasy stories]* are not real … so, whether they are funny stories or horrifying … it doesn't matter … it's escapism, so, that's great fun. You can have a lot of fun in a place like that because it's not real. (P1)

Table 4.11 presents the intentions and behavioural responses designers intend to evoke in consumers in fantasy servicescapes, together with illustrative quotes.

Table 4. 11. Behavioural responses designers evoke in fantasy servicescapes

Intentions and behaviours	Number of participants	Example quotes
Consumer engagement and understanding of retailers' offers	4/10	P9: "*[Having a story in design]* may help because people learn better indirectly, and when they learn something about the product and its company by following a story, that would be more impressive."

Purchase intention	4/10	P5: “I take my hat off to *[Mass media company]* stores because it's not just about the soft toys … on display, but you go in there and the walls *[have]* crazy colours … It's got a huge Mickey Mouse’s face right there in the middle of the shop … that is just mind blowing. It's just the coolest thing that you've ever seen, and all the kid wants to do is go, "I want that. I want that. I want that." … The kid is just in total overwhelm in ecstasy.”
Spend money	2/10	P1: “*[The story]* gives you an escape from normal life. You're in a fun place. It's like going to *[theme park name]* … You take a memento with you, which is the purchase of whatever it is that you've bought.”
Spend time	1/10	P10: “It’s wonderful, the first thing retailers achieve by implementing stories in design, … makes consumers to spend more time in the servicescape as they discover elements of the story.”
Explore and discover	1/10	
Fun	1/10	P1: “*[Fantasy stories]* are not real … so, whether they are funny stories or horrifying … it doesn't matter … it's escapism, so, that's great fun. You can have a lot of fun in a place like that because it's not real.”

4.9 Brand responses designers evoke in servicescapes

In addition to its potential to influence consumers’ affective and behavioural responses, different dimensions of a servicescape are further, proven within the previous literature to communicate the personality of servicescape brands (Kumar, Garg, & Rahman, 2010; Brengman & Willems, 2009). Therefore, in addressing RQ4, the participants were asked about the brand responses they evoke in a) all servicescapes, and b) particularly, in fantasy designed servicescapes.

The researcher referred to Aaker’s (1997) brand personality dimensions for categorising designers’ opinions on different personality factors and traits they associate to brands. Table 4.12. illustrates this categorisation together with the frequency of each trait and example quotes. In cases where participants directly referred to a personality factor and not its descriptive traits, the personality itself has been mentioned in the table.

Most participants stated that by manipulating the servicescape elements, they intend to associate the personality of competence (4/10) to the brand. This personality dimension relates to consumers’ perceptions of a brand’s knowledge, expertise, and performance to complete a job and satisfy their needs (Coulter & Coulter, 2002). Competence, by itself, has a number of sub-dimensions or “traits” that further describe its nature. In this study, participants referred to traits of leader (3/4), and confident (1/4) that relate to the facet,

"Successful". Another participant also shared about the trait of security (1/4) that relates to the facet, "Reliable" (see Aaker, 1997).

The next personality the designers shared about is sophistication (4/10). The participants either described this personality by referring to the factor itself, as sophistication (2/4), or by sharing their efforts in making a servicescape look upper-class or high-end (2/4) and glamorous (1/4), as personality traits that relate to the facet, "Upper-class".

Following sophistication, participants also referred to excitement (4/10) as a personality they aim to associate to brands. In this regard, they referred to the personality trait of being unique (2/4), that relates to the facet, "Imaginative". Designers also referred to the personality facet, "Up-to-date" (2/4), and to a trait of this facet known as contemporary and current (1/4). Being young (1/4) and cool (1/4) were other personality traits shared that both relate to the facet, "Spirited".

Sincerity (3/10) was the next personality dimension with participants referring to their efforts in associating personality facets such as Cheerful, upbeat, and jovial (3/3), and being honest (1/3) to a brand.

Designers also referred to the personality factor, ruggedness (3/10), and their efforts to associate the traits of outdoorsy (2/3) and masculine (1/3) to a brand. These traits relate to the facet of being "Outdoorsy" (Aaker, 1997).

Table 4. 12. Brand responses designers evoke in servicescapes

Brand Personality factors	Traits (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Competence 4/10	Leader	3/4	P7: "A personality that makes them the experts or the best in their field."
	Confident	1/4	P2: "At large … it's confidence. Why you need to … pay 200 dollars for a 25 dollar item? It's probably the confidence. ... *[The]* brand is the reason that you're paying 400 percent on an item that's been made offshore."
	Security	1/4	P1: "I definitely do need risk and safety and security when I'm in a *[company name]* store. And I say risk and safety, not because it's insecure or unsafe, but because I'm spending a lot of money on something, I wanna know it's gonna work properly and I will understand it *[i.e., the product]* … can I depend on

			someone if I need help? That's what I mean by risk and safety and security."
Sophistication 4/10	Sophistication	2/4	P8: "*[Resembling brand personality]* comes back to … how a product is displayed. You can go into men's stores and there might be 30 suits in a row, or you can go into another men's store and there's … 10 suits, and they are displayed very differently … it's not cluttered. I think there's a big difference between stores that are trying to pump as much in, they're usually discount type stores because they don't have the staff and the space to accommodate the amount of people that are going through. They just wanna sell it as quickly as they can … Whereas, if you go into a more sophisticated store, there's more customer service … And generally, people know the difference, people know when they're walking into a retailer that is more about, "I've got to find it myself" versus … choosing a retailer that's gonna be creating an environment that's all about me … what I need and what I want. The physical environment is typically less cluttered. There's typically more expensive materials. There's typically better lighting. There's typically scents and music. The tone of the music and the type of the music."
	Upper-class or high-end	2/4	P4: "For example, at *[company name],* you walk in there and … everything is brightly lit, there's lots of mirrors, there's lots of shiny ornate objects around. … We associate the mirror with something refined, and classic, and glamorous, high-end, expensive. So, you wouldn't use that in a store that's selling knick-knacks, a $2 shop, a takeaway restaurant or something like that."
	Glamorous	1/4	
Excitement 4/10	Unique	2/4	P9: "As a general rule, I believe that everyone tries to be unique, and transfer this feeling to customers" P10: "In designing the interior atmosphere of an apparel's store, we transfer a sense of uniqueness to consumers."
	Up-to-date	2/4	P7: "Making sure that they *[i.e., brands]* don't feel like they're old-fashioned, so they're being current. …. they want to kind of be young. They're definitely interested in understanding … the millennial market and understanding how shopping is changing … Probably, just if anything, in alignment with what their brand stands for, would be the personality."
	Contemporary and current	1/4	
	Young	1/4	
	Cool	1/4	P8: "If you go to a surf shop, they'll have *[i.e., show]* world champion surfers who are standing there with the product, going "Look, I use this and I'm cool." That's the way that it's done … It has helped sell the product through them and … that personality. It's more about the character of the type of person that they want you to feel like you're gonna be, when you're using or wearing that product."

Sincerity 3/10	Cheerful and upbeat and jovial	3/3	P7: "*[The design]* comes back to their brand. If their brand is light-hearted and jovial … they'll want their brand to reflect *[that personality through design]* … some brands have humour to them, *[relatedly]* their advertising might have … cheek or plays on words. This needs to be reflected in their brand *[design].* Other brands that are not light-hearted and jovial, we would call *[as]* serious. For example, banks are often serious, same with insurance. Light-hearted and jovial would be the opposite to serious. I guess, … a pharmacy would be a bit more serious … so, it's usually their brand that underpins what the store design will look like in terms of the personality."
	Honest	1/3	P1: "From a personality perspective, stores, not a lot of them, but some of them do clearly want to be associated with certain key words; loyal, faithful, honest, all those other kinds of good things."
Ruggedness 3/10	Outdoorsy	2/3	P2: "*[Sportswear company]* is aligning itself with the street experience." P4: "The personality they *[i.e., footwear company]* are trying to present is that they are super sporty, always outside, active, eating healthily, always on the go, super motivated … they sponsor athletes … the brand associates themselves with those people or that kind of personality.
	Masculine	1/3	P3: "I did a little bit of work on *[company name]* … by creating an environment that would … make them *[i.e., consumers]* feel comfortable, but also at the same time creating an aesthetic that was somewhat masculine … So, like black steel, distressed concrete floors, and worn out brick walls, and sort of traditional, black steel windows joinder … with some nice LED lighting, spot lighting. So, creating a bit of drama in the space using the lighting and the finishes."

Besides associating different personalities to brands, a participant also mentioned about retailers' efforts to achieve brand loyalty (1/10):

> Essentially, you know what your customer wants, and you want to keep them loyal. *[So,]* you've got to stay ahead of what the trends are … trying to maintain and keep customers … you want the store to feel like they know what they're talking about, and they know that they've got your best interests at heart. (P5)

This finding supports extant literature suggesting that the environmental elements of a brand's store, including its design, form an emotional attachment to the brand and lead to consumers' loyalty toward that brand (e.g., Koo & Kim, 2013).

Moreover, a participant shared the importance of providing diverse in-store experiences that enhance a brand's value (1/10) by increasing consumers' awareness of that brand. The participant shared about the efforts of e-commerce companies in reducing the prices of products to the most basic level without any marketing hype they could have around and thus destroy the value of brands. In an effort to enhance brand value, retailers are advised to invest money in increasing public awareness toward their brands, and make consumers believe that the extra value paid for branded products or services is worth it, and to differentiate their brand, by providing aesthetically pleasing experiences in return (see Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Sands et al., 2009; Borghini et al., 2009; Lim & Kim, 2018; Alfakhri et al., 2018). As the participant explained:

> Businesses like *[electronic commerce company]* are in many ways destroying brand value … they reduce brand to its bare components which is the real value of the product without the marketing hype around it … forcing a lot of their customers to think about the value of certain things at their useful level as opposed to their brand level. So, brands are facing an enormous challenge like that. The brands that are successful in the next five or six years, will be those that can enhance the value of their brand … to such an extent that they are not reduced by that kind of challenge from online businesses … and so, what a lot of them are doing, is they just invest more and more money into brand awareness … They just create this question in your head about … "Are you looking for *[the mere product or service],* or are you looking for a complete out of world experience?" … So … they're doing it *[i.e., creating the brand]* by getting you to contrast the different values that you have inside yourself. … *[For example]* when you go to *[chocolate company],* you are going there for the theatre primarily, and then you are going to buy some chocolate ... you probably wouldn't go there if you only wanted to buy *[chocolate],* you just buy them at the local dairy … So, clearly, it's not about the *[chocolate],* it's about the experience, and that's all about design. Their waterfalls of colour on the walls are just incredible … the *[chocolate]* figures, *[or]* figurines in the store. … You are going there for the experience but … you end up buying chocolate, or whatever you chose to buy, you buy something, that's for sure … because it's a reminder that you've visited *[that store],* you have ticked something off the list. (P1)

Atmospherics of servicescapes were, also, reported as reflecting brand identity (1/10). As shared by a participant:

> The store fit out reflects the brand identity. (P5)

4.9.1 Brand responses in fantasy servicescapes

After exploring the brand responses that designers evoke in all servicescapes, to address RQ4, the designers shared about consumers' brand experiences in servicescapes that are designed to tell a story. In answering this question, the participants considered not only the effect of telling fantasy stories in servicescapes, but also telling real stories.

In line with extant studies (e.g., Lundqvist et al., 2013) suggesting the effect of stories on brand personality, telling stories through atmospherics was mentioned as reflecting a servicescape brand's personality (2/10). No specific personality dimensions were shared by participants. However, participants explained how, generally, telling a story reflects the servicescape brand's personality. For example:

> When you go through that journey of the story, the story shows you bits of the brand personality. Saying like, "We are pure. We are bright. We are bold. We are vibrant." Then, as that story leads you through, and as you discover more in that retail environment, or environment of any sort, those elements that you discover, and build, overtime, … gets put in your memory bank, as part of the brand personality. (P4)

Telling stories was, moreover, believed as increasing brand loyalty (1/10). According to a participant:

> The thing about the difference when you don't [versus you do] have a story is, why should I go to that pharmacy over that pharmacy? … you try and pull out … particularly in a retail environment, to bring brand loyalty or even to drive buyers. If there is a whole lot of people selling these similar types of products, how do you stand out? So, that's where the story becomes really important. (P7)

In addition to reflecting a servicescape brand's personality and increasing brand loyalty, telling stories through atmospherics was shared as increasing consumers' trust towards the servicescape brand (1/10). According to previous research, information shared in a story format is perceived as more convincing than facts, thereby, increasing brand trust (see Mossberg & Johansen, 2006). Relatedly, a participant described how a company creates trust towards its brand by telling the story of how their products are made:

> *[Company name]* was one of the stores that I worked on. The client was quite specific about wanting to actually tell the story of how their product is made to the customers … they're like, "This is quite a genuine, organic, healthy product," and … "This is the process that's gone into producing it, and these are the people involved." So it gave the customer a real sense of understanding about the product, but also, … an element of trust, because there'd be photos of people working on

> beehives and we'd show the location of it, and then there'd also be some video playing on the display screen, which is built into some of the joinery units and … just tells about the process, and where the honey came from, and how it was made. I'd say that would be a good example of using storytelling in a retail environment. (P3)

Regardless of the relevance of a certain fantasy story with a given product, such stories were also believed to create an image for the servicescape (1/10). A participant shared:

> *[Fantasy]* stories can create *[an]* image, even *[if they are]* not related to the product, but *[they]* make that store famous, and people *[will]* remember that store by that image. (P9)

4.10 Chapter summary

The above exploratory inquiry provides an understanding of the types of experiences that are created in servicescapes for consumers, including the different types of stories that could be implemented in the servicescape design to create an experience. The data collated in this study, further, help understand the reasons that encourage or discourage designers from implementing a story in servicescape atmospherics, and circumstances in which designers would consider such practices. The participants, further, referred to those atmospheric elements in the servicescape that, regardless of the importance of the integrity between them, are considered more influential in representing a story through servicescape atmospherics, as well as the extent to which a story is recommended to be mimicked in servicescapes. The ten participants' interview data also uncover significant findings regarding the affective, behavioural, and brand responses that designers evoke in consumers, especially, in story-based servicescapes.

The participants supported previous research on the importance of providing consumers with entertaining experiences in stores and highlighted it as being a crucial factor for the retailers' success. In this regard, designing the servicescapes based on different stories was the most cited type of experiences that could be created for the consumers in stores.

When asked about different types of stories that are implemented in servicescape design, the participants mostly referred to fantasy stories adapted from famous books or movies followed by real stories about brands, products, and consumers.

Regardless of the type of story being fantasy or real, however, participants shared that when stories are told through atmospherics, consumers imagine themselves in the story and the story events, empathise with characters, and as a result, feel present in the story.

In answer to RQ1, stories told through servicescape atmospherics can evoke consumers' imagination and result in narrative presence.

Despite the advantage of telling fantasy stories in servicescapes to transport consumers, however, story based designs were believed to be hardly found in New Zealand, and the stores that have a story to support them, were said to be about the products being sold. According to participants, whether being adapted from external sources, or generated by a company itself, the design and management of such servicescapes is a) too expensive, b) not favourable by all age groups or interests, and that c) fantasy based designs could be short-lived, in the sense that once having visited, consumers would be less likely to return for a repeat visit. Therefore, retailers need to carefully evaluate the circumstances when using a story in servicescape design would be worth the effort.

The design experts believed that story based designs are most effective when the story supports the products or services offered. In terms of the appropriate audience, it was believed that although fantasy based environments could be more interesting for kids, they are not exclusively designed for kids. Participants also referred to retail categories that could consider using fantasy stories for design. Product and service categories were mentioned as being as much suitable for telling stories in their servicescapes.

Participants also highlighted the importance of considering servicescape elements as a gestalt system. Having said that, however, there were a number of elements considered by designers as more effective in implementing a story in servicescapes. With regard to ambient elements, light, music and sound, and scents were noted as highly influential. Design elements are categorised into interior and exterior factors. As for interior design, colour was the most cited element, followed by wall coverings, store layout, materials, visual merchandising, and product displays. The only factor reported for exterior design relates to store front and display windows. Staff characteristics and costumes were also the two social elements addressed by participants.

The participants were, further, asked about the extent to which they would recommend mimicry of a particular story in design. While some designers recommend a higher level of mimicry when a story is familiar, to meet consumers' expectations, or in cases when the retailer has sufficient budget to cover the required expenses; high mimicry was, nevertheless, considered to be distracting consumers' attention from the retailers' offers. Therefore, a moderated level of story mimicry was recommended to support the offers.

A moderate level of mimicry was, further, believed to attract a larger group of audience, enhance consumers' engagement with the offer, and increase return intention.

The implementation of stories in the servicescape design was demonstrated to result in excitement, happiness, and wonder, as positive emotions designers generally evoke in any servicescape. Telling stories, moreover, increases consumers' level of patience and forgiveness with the retailer's offer. The findings, further, revealed the fact that not only positive emotions, but negative emotions such as the fear and tension of evil characters or scenes of a particular story, presented through servicescape atmospherics, can result in excitement, fun, and enjoyment of consumers' experiences of fantasy servicescapes. Accordingly, to answer RQ2, the design experts evoke not only positive but also negative affective responses in servicescapes that tell a fantasy story.

As consumers feel a range of positive and negative affective responses in servicescapes designed based on a fantasy story, in further addressing RQ1, the consumers emotionally engage with and thus, experience narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes.

Telling fantasy stories in servicescapes, further, results in consumers' engagement with and understanding retailers' offers, increases purchase intention, encourages consumers to spend money, spend time, explore, and discover, and to have fun in the servicescape. These behavioural responses, together, address RQ3.

In answer to RQ4, the findings of this study support extant literature about a story's effect on brand experiences including brand personality, brand loyalty, and the power of stories in increasing brand trust. In addition, fantasy stories were believed to create an image for the servicescape.

Given their potential in attracting consumers' attention, positive and negative characters can be both used in design. This finding helps address RQ5. The design experts perceive positive and negative story characters to be as effective in attracting the consumers to a certain servicescape. The design experts, however, did not share about how empathy with different characters influences consumers' responses.

Following what the design practitioners in this study shared about their motivations and purpose of designing fantasy servicescapes, the following chapter (Study 2) presents the findings from the in-depth interviews with consumers about their experience of visiting an Inn, designed based on a fantasy story.

Chapter 5: Study 2

"An Unexpected Journey": Consumers' experiences of fantasy servicescapes

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the variety of in-store experiences that the retailers create for consumers, and developed a categorisation for the affective, behavioural, as well as brand responses the designers aim to evoke in fantasy servicescapes. Based on what was shared by the designers, consumers' experiences of narrative presence in the servicescape is the most encouraging reason for incorporating fantasy stories in the servicescape design as it results in favourable outcomes such as increasing the consumers' intentions to spend money and time in the servicescape. Study 1 findings also indicated that the consumers emotionally engage with the story which in-turn, increases the likelihood of engagement with the story in the servicescape.

The thesis followed by examining consumers' experiences of visiting The Green Dragon Inn, based upon *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* fantasy stories, located at Hobbiton Movie Set, in Matamata, New Zealand, in Study 2. Specifically, the purpose of Study 2 was to understand whether consumers engage with fantasy stories that are told through the servicescape atmospherics, and to explore the outcomes of engagement with stories. Considering designers' advice on the level of story mimicry, the study also examined how the level of perceived mimicry at the Inn influences consumers' presence in the stories.

This chapter presents the findings and primary insights from the data gathered through forty-eight in-depth interviews conducted in the second study of this thesis. To address the research questions the study first started by asking visitors of the servicescape about servicescape elements that reminded them most about the story and their perceptions of story mimicry at the Inn. The study then follows by examining the different dimensions of narrative engagement and identifies the type of characters consumers empathise with. The study further investigated consumers' affective, behavioural, and brand responses at

the Inn and compares consumers' responses based on their experiences of presence to understand the outcomes of presence in stories.

The following sections present a detailed description of the key underlying themes and sub-themes identified from the obtained data regarding the determinants and outcomes of consumers' experiences of fantasy servicescapes. The findings are discussed back in relation to the literature and further supported with direct quotations from the interviews to establish depth and reinforce the existence of the depicted themes.

5.2 Servicescape atmospherics effective in telling the story

As earlier advised by design experts (Study 1), servicescape atmospherics work together as a gestalt system (see Eroglu & Machleit, 2008). However, in line with what designers in Study 1 expected the consumers in Study 2 find a number of atmospherics as being more effective in reminding them of the story. Accordingly, the researcher enumerated the elements that were shared by consumers more often and classified them into themes and sub-themes, as presented together with illustrative quotes in Tables 5.1. to 5.4.

With regard to ambient elements, light (35/48), and music (33/48) were respectively the two elements most referred to by visitors. This is consistent with what designers also expected to be influential in conveying a particular story to consumers in a servicescape. In terms of the light level, most participants (21/35) described the lighting of the Inn as being dark, alike what they remembered from the related movies, and the darkness was said to help them feel present in the story or its related movies. For example:

> *[The Green Dragon Inn]* was a bit dark, but otherwise, if it would've been daylight bright, wouldn't have fit the whole vibe … I thought it was great. (P25)

While dark lighting was cited as the most influential servicescape element, by contrast, there were visitors who perceived the level of light as darker (12/35) or brighter (2/35) than what they expected from the servicescape. A visitor shared:

> The lighting was very dull and dark which was why I moved outside. (P5)

Considering the significance of music in conveying the story, most consumers (20/33) mentioned about the Inn playing music relevant to the storyline. By contrast, however, some others (6/33) shared that there was no music played at the background while they

were at the Inn, with another few (2/33) visitors perceiving the music as being irrelevant to the storyline. As shared by a participant:

> I heard Metallica, I guess … I think that is a little bit different. (P7)

Relatedly, a considerable number (20/33) of the visitors wished there would have been a live band playing at the Inn, for a better experience of the vibe of the stories or movies. In this regard, a participant shared:

> I was initially wondering whether the music was live, whether there was a fiddle player or not. I realised it was definitely not … Even if just one or two *[fiddle]* players … would be nice. That would increase the authenticity of everything. (P38)

The third ambient element considered as helpful in reminding the visitors of the story or movie scenes was weather (18/48). Relatedly, 9 consumers visited the servicescape on a sunny day, while the other 9 visited on a rainy, cold day. For the full experience of the movie set, however, it was believed by both groups of visitors that it is better to be there in sunny days, as what visitors remembered about the movies, had happened in the sun. According to a participant:

> The first time I was there it was quite cloudy and a bit misty … not the kind of vibe of Hobbiton that you have when you're watching the movies, because it's always sunny. But the second time I went there it was beautiful; blue sky, no clouds, just very peaceful, and that's how I experienced Hobbiton in the movies. … So, it depends on the weather … I think for the full experience, the weather is a big factor, just like everything else. (P25)

The participants, further, described the level of noise (16/48), temperature (8/48), and scents (6/48) at the Inn. Table 5.1. illustrates the list of the described ambient elements together with representative quotes.

Table 5. 1. Ambient elements effective in telling the story

Ambient elements	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Lighting 35/48	Dark (Sets the mood)	21/35	P19: I think, the lighting helped ... It's a little bit dim … That specific type of lighting gives you that type of mood, then you imagine a certain atmosphere. That really helped." P18: "The lighting really set the mood, being kind of darker. The only lights there were very dim, acting like candles and all. That helped set the mood."

			P27: “It's very English style pub … A little bit on the dark side, but I liked that because that's a real typical atmosphere of an English pub.”
	Darker than expected	12/35	P14: “It's probably a little bit darker in there than what some of the movies was.” P29: “It would be nicer if it's brighter and if, … *[there were]* kind of some lanterns or something. It's a bit dark inside.”
	Brighter than expected	2/35	P30: “It was brighter than you'd expect it to be.” P35: “It wasn't too dark … It needed to be darker.”
Music 33/48	Relevant music	20/33	P10: “It *[i.e., the music]* was related to the story … Like, chilled-out music.” P21: “They're playing that music in the background … you know, like “*The Hobbit*” music. … I loved the music and the vibe.” P6: “It was the movie music. I liked the music.”
	No live music	20/33	P13: “A live band would be really cool. A live band, live music, that would be fun.” P35: “I think, maybe, if they had live music in there, that'd be quite nice.”
	No music	6/33	P18: “There was no music.”
	Irrelevant music	2/33	P33: “It was not the movie music.”
Weather 18/48	Sunny and bright	9/18	P5: “It was too bright and sunny.” P24: “It was a very sunny day.”
	Rainy and cold	9/18	P19: “Both times I went to just on the edges of rain.” P23: “It was raining” P38: “It was raining, so it was cold" P20: “Outside was really cold”
Noise 16/48	Not noisy, good	9/16	P21: “It's not that noisy. It's just basically people trying to get around, trying to talk to each other, trying to ask questions.” P28: “I put it on the verge of quiet … If it was noisy, I'd probably get out of there”
	Noisy	4/16	P25: “I think it was noisy, but just because it's a pub and pubs are supposed to be noisy.” P34: “It is a bit noisy place.”
	Not noisy, dull	3/16	P5: “A little dull … I recently went to Harry Potter World in Universal Studios … That was dark, too, but I think the noise just made it feel less boring.” P10: “The atmosphere was a bit dull.”

Temperature 8/48	Warm and nice	8/8	P21: “I would say warm.” P22: “The temperature is good; it was warm, but not hot for us.” P23: “It's warm and nice.” P26: “It was warm. It was nice.”
Scents 4/48	Favourable	3/4	P17: “I smelt some of the food, and the beers … The aromas just really got me to salivate.” P25: “The smells were amazing.”
	Unfavourable	1/4	P23: “The smell wasn't very pleasant … I can't remember what the smell *[was],* but I just don't feel like I want to stay inside … maybe because it was raining during the day that I came.”

Design elements are categorised into interior and exterior factors. As for interior design (see Table 5.2.), the furniture (25/48) of the Inn were most cited as reminding the visitors of the story or related movies. In this regard, participants described the furniture as being old (7/25), wooden (7/25), and round shaped (3/25). Amongst all furnishings, however, what seemed to be of interest to the majority of visitors was the open fireplace (18/25) inside the servicescape described as being “cosy” (see Figure 5.1.).

Figure 5. 1. The Green Dragon Inn – Fireplace

Next to furniture, visitors mentioned about the colours (15/48) used in the servicescape; being mainly brown (13/15), green (8/15), and red (3/15).

Following colours, the visitors shared about the materials used in different elements of the Inn from walls to the furniture as being dominantly made of wood (8/48) (Figure 5.2.).

Figure 5. 2. The Green Dragon Inn - Wooden materials

The visitors also described the wall décor (7/48), referring to photos on the wall (5/7) and that there were not enough photos (2/7) (Figure 5.3.).

Figure 5. 3. The Green Dragon Inn – An illustration of Bilbo Baggins on the wall

In terms of utensils, visitors described the mugs that the drinks were served in as being "fun to hold" and "cool" (6/48) (Figure 5.4.).

Figure 5. 4. The Green Dragon Inn – Mugs

Regarding signage (6/48), visitors described little notes (3/6) and shared that there were no signs with information about the story (2/6). Also, a visitor described the menu (1/6) (Figure 5.5.).

Figure 5. 5. The Green Dragon Inn – Menu

Visitors, further, described the Inn's layout (5/48), the flooring, and carpets (1/48).

Table 5. 2. Interior design elements effective in telling the story

Design elements	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Furniture 25/48	Fireplace	18/25	P23: "It's got a fire pit … I like the fire pit, and we'd been sitting there for a little bit." P1: "There was this open fireplace *[at the Inn]* with cushy seats there, that was nice." P21: "I remember the fireplace … very, very cosy."
	Old furniture	7/25	P11: "Everything was prepared in an old-fashioned way and what I mean with that is it was clear that it's not contemporary furniture or anything, it's a very wooden form that you can imagine that it was real furniture back in the days when the movie was supposed to take place." P22: "*[The furniture]* were a little bit old … I think … *[the designers]* intentionally kept them in those old conditions to remind people about the movies." P36: "*[Furniture]* were rough wood, well-polished, but roughhewn wood, and sort of sculpted round, and … Authentically aged" P16: "Old, dark, wooden furniture."
	Wooden furniture	7/25	
	Furniture shape	3/25	P13: "Everything's *[shaped]* rounded. There were no sharp angles, and I quite liked that." P19: "Most of the *[tables],* they're round … I think that makes it more real … kind of craftsmanship. Quite a lot of round tables and chairs."
	Leather furniture	2/25	P12: "I liked the leather sofas." P25: "Old leather armchairs … very cosy."
Colours 15/48	Brown	13/15	P28: "Brown. Light, dark, just different shades of brown *[colour]*." P38: "Various shades of brown." P25: "Brown, and a dark green, and a dark red. Very comfortable colours, I'd say" P43: "I remember being a little bit of greens and a little bit of red kind of *[colour]* mixtures."
	Green	8/15	
	Red	3/15	
Materials 8/48	Wooden	8/8	P19: "The material they used *[at the servicescape]* … the wood, the timber … the timber is what gives it a theme, because that's what differentiates that type of bar from other places. … It has this specific look that you know is unique kind of theme." P37: "There were wooden frames and the windows and the doors on the side, we noticed a lot … and

			also we went into the bathroom and we saw that the interior were all wooden even the toilet seat was wooden and the handle … it was all wooden ... I talked to my friends about it after, I was like, "They're really thoughtful in designing it that way."" P25: "Everything was made up wood."
Wall décor 7/48	Photos and carvings	5/7	R18: "They had pictures, maps *[on the wall].*" P14: "I liked the timber carvings with the dragon." P19: "The only *[décor]* thing I noticed really was that Green Dragon on the bar."
	Not enough photos	2/7	P10: "They could have put more pictures on the *[Inn's]* wall, or something related to the hobbits."
Utensils	Mugs	6/48	P21: "Especially, the mugs are pretty interesting ... They're pretty fun to hold." P37: "The mugs that they handed us the drinks in was quite cool." P45: "Their mugs were just such a great touch."
Signage 6/48	Signs and notes	3/6	P3: "I was just excited to be in there … see all the little details and the little signs" P4: "I … enjoyed looking at the little notes and stuff that have been pinned up around the place … about random events happening."
	No signs	2/6	P5: "Maybe, if there were like signs outside the Green Dragon *[Inn]* explaining the significance of the storyline … that would be easier *[for visitors]* to place into context."
	Menu	1/6	P26: "Maybe they can have more exciting name of the drinks. Yeah, yeah, something that's related to Hobbiton instead of just having, like, ginger beer. … better if you have more theme-related drinks or snacks."
Layout 5/48	Spatial arrangement	3/5	P36: "It's got a central bar and a restaurant area at one end, and a small snug at the other, which is where we sat and had our beef and ale pie." P43: "There's two different rooms; there's the main kind of room with the big dragon above the bar … as well as the fireplace."
	Furniture arrangement	2/5	P9: "It's setup in a way that caters the needs for today with like the tables for the tourist groups and all that. But I think the original setups was like with the long benches … So, I think that's kind of more what I was expecting going in."
Flooring and carpets	Carpets	1/48	P25: "They had carpets everywhere."

With regard to the exterior design elements, the Inn was shared to have unique windows and curtains around (7/48). Visitors also found the Inn's surroundings (5/48) interesting, especially the view of the lake right in front of the entrance which they shared as being "nice" to see (Figure 5.6.).

Figure 5. 6. The Green Dragon Inn - Lake view

The architecture of the servicescape (4/48), and especially, the size of the building (4/4) was another element the visitors mentioned about; being larger than what they expected it would be based on what they remembered from the movies. Relatedly, a participant described the roof of the Inn as being thatched, giving it "The impression of being a real antiquated English pub" (P32). This supports what journalists (e.g., Arfin, 2019) report about the prevalence of thatched roofs in English villages, "When most visitors imagine a typical English village, it's usually full of thatched cottages" and that "there are more thatched roofs in the UK than anywhere else in Europe." The resemblance of the Inn to English pubs could be, as such, relatable to Tolkien's idea about "Little English man, the average English man", as he represents Bilbo Baggins as having a "Humble, sort of a sturdy moral fibre" in the story (Adler, 2008). The resemblance of the Inn's roof to English pubs, and Bilbo's English personality characteristics might be, in-turn, reasons for the Inn's visitors to become transported to the related stories and movies (Figure 5.7.).

Figure 5. 7. The Green Dragon Inn - Thatched roof

Another exterior design element was the green door at the entrance (3/48) that visitors perceived as reminding them of the story. Table 5.3. illustrates the list of the discussed exterior design elements with representative quotes.

Table 5. 3. Exterior design elements effective in telling the story

Design elements	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Windows and curtains 7/48	Windows	6/7	P3: “The little windows and stuff were pretty cool to see”
	Curtains	1/7	P19: “I think the windows are quite unique. … it reminds me the same kind of feeling I experienced in the movie through mostly the windows.”
			P21: “Outside of the Green Dragon *[Inn]* has windows all the way around and it was a good vibe.”
			P12: “I liked the windows.”
			P25: “*[The Inn had]* small curtains you would see at your grandma's place.”
Store surroundings		5/48	P2: “The view, from the lake … *[is]* pretty nice.”
			P12: “I really liked the view of the lake … the flowers … it was nice to sit outside *[the Inn]* and watch the area.”
			P19: “The only thing I saw outside … was kind of like a blacksmith or a stable just right next to it *[i.e., the Inn].* It's like, "Oh, that's where you *[would]* put your horse if you came with your horse."”

Architecture 4/48	Building size	4/4	P11: “You realise that the bar is bigger in real life than in the movies … otherwise, real people would not fit in.”
	Building roof	1/4	P32: “The thatched roof … gives the impression of being a real antiquated English pub, Old English.”
Entrance and doors		3/48	P18: “Obviously putting the green *[wooden]* doors for the Green Dragon *[Inn]* made it more real.”

In terms of social elements, visitors described staff customs (34/48) (tangibility of staff, Hou & Wu, 2011). About half of the total visitors (26) shared that what the staff were wearing at the Inn was not what they expected. These visitors expected to see the staff in characters’ costumes that would fit the storyline. Relatedly, a participant described:

> *[The staff]* wearing hobbit costume … would be great and funny … to recreate the atmosphere of the movie, which wasn't inside *[the Inn]*, like I didn't think so. (P15)

By contrast, there were a few (8/34) consumers who said that the uniforms looked fine as they were. Instead, these consumers preferred to see extra staff dressed as characters, performing role-plays within the servicescape. For example:

> I think *[staff customs]* is okay like how it is … I think it would be not comfortable for the staff *[to be dressed in costume]* first of all. And second of all, I was quite happy imagining everything, so, I don't need people running around like Hobbits … I don't want the staff to do that. (P42)

> I think *[staff customs]* can remain as they are but adding character*[s]* will be more fun, for experience. (P20)

As for personality characteristics (22/48), staff were described as informative (11/22). Information provided by some of the staff was, however, perceived as being more about the movie set, and less about the servicescape of interest. Staff were, also, described as being friendly (2/22). In addition, some visitors (10/22) did not perceive staff as being interactive at the Inn, neither having communications with, nor performing role-plays to engage the visitors. The only two visitors who shared about the staff being interactive, indeed, referred to what they experienced before getting to the Inn (2/22) at other parts of the movie set. Staff were, furthermore, described as helpful (2/22), humorous (1/22), patient (1/22), and serious in their job (1/22).

Another point shared by visitors related to the limited number of staff at the Inn (6/48). Wicker (1973) defines this condition as “Undermanning”, when the number of people in

an environment is less than what the setting requires to function properly. According to the undermanning theory, the number of staff available in a servicescape is important to consumers' satisfaction. Greater number of staff are proven to result in a more pleasant, active, and arousing store environment and to increase satisfaction (Baker et al., 1992; Lucia-Palacios, Perez-Lopez, & Polo-Redondo, 2020). Relatedly, a visitor shared:

> I was always imagining people, … a very rowdy scene, but it was just two bartenders standing there. Not what I imagined a pub, at least in this storyline, to feel like. (P5)

Visitors, also, shared about the crowding level (5/48) at the Inn. In this regard, a few of the visitors (4/5) perceived the Inn as crowd, and only one person (1/5) reported the Inn as not very crowded. While some studies (Blut & Iyer, 2020) perceive human crowding as a cue for positive store evaluations and find crowded stores to increase intentions and actual behaviour, in line with Albayrak et al. (2020), the participants in this study shared about not wanting to stay very long at the Inn, when they perceived the atmosphere to be crowded. A visitor shared:

> It's pretty crowded … too many people in there … getting pictures, you feel like "Oh my god, you're in somebody's space" … It's like, "Just go, have a feel, get out" kind of thing. (P21)

Table 5.4. represents the aforementioned social elements together with example quotes.

Table 5. 4. Social elements effective in telling the story

Social elements	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Staff costumes 34/48	Incongruent costumes	26/34	P11: "It would be great if *[staff]* were dressed up in a way that the hobbits were dressed … like serving any food or the complimentary beer in a more movie-like official type … it might increase *[i.e., improve]* the experience." P12: "Maybe it would be nicer to have some waiters and waitresses dressed in the attire in the movie. That would be a nice extra thing … you would feel like a participant at the real bar."
	Costumes are OK	8/34	P41: "I'm not sure if they need to change … to have costumes. I think it's cool like that."
Staff characteristics 22/48	Informative	11/22	P20: "In general *[the tour guide]* was really good … a lovely guy who was explaining everything really nicely." P31: "Our *[tour]* guide was really nice. He really explained everything about the movie set and the

			Green Dragon *[Inn],* too. He explained all the scene*[s]* from the movie."
	No interactions or role-plays	10/22	P19: "*[The staff]* were quite transparent. I didn't notice much about them … they neither add nor affected any activity to my experience." P38: "I felt the staff were fairly inconspicuous. Mostly behind the bars. And so, I didn't feel like we interacted them … I didn't feel like they were very visible in that space." P26: "Maybe *[the staff could]* have interaction, like more interaction with the guests … they can connect with the Green Dragon, like pretending that they are hobbits or something, like some sort of role-play."
	Interactive	2/22	P20: "The tour guide we got, he was telling part of the movie and he was asking question … They *[i.e., visitors]* were answering the question … good interaction between them." P37: "Tour guides were telling us about which *[movie]* scenes took place, and they even did a little question and answer, the quiz interactions."
	Friendly	2/22	P1: "Everyone was extremely friendly." P18: "All the workers I had the occasion to talk … were really friendly, yeah, really helping you with everything … taking the role on seriously"
	Helpful	2/22	
	Serious in job	1/22	
	Humorous	1/22	P13: "The staff were great. Our *[tour]* guide … was really funny."
	Patient	1/22	P22: "The tour guide … was very patient and nice, although he knew most of us could not understand his language, but he still asked … who could speak or understand English better and suggested us to translate or explain things for him. He also respected us when he noticed we would like to take photos and wanted to stay a little bit longer in one place, he would just wait for us quietly."
Staff numbers 6/48	Not many staff	6/6	P19: "I only saw two to three staff." P20: "I think there was three staff members … So, one who was serving the ginger beer, and one was by the coffee and the snack, that part, and another lady was just there as a supervisor"
Visitor crowd 5/48	Crowded	4/5	P37: "It was quite crowded."
	Not crowded	1/5	P23: "It wasn't very crowded on that day."

5.2.1 Story mimicry in the servicescape

Having explored the most influential servicescape atmospherics in conveying the story, the visitors were, further, asked about the extent to which they perceived these elements as mimicking the story. Consumers compare servicescape atmospherics, such as décor and staff characteristics (Paul, Sankaranarayanan, & Mekoth, 2016; Dedeoglu, Bilgihan, Ye, Buonincontri, & Okumus, 2018; Barros, Petroll, Damacena, & Knoppe, 2019) to what they initially expected. In the satisfaction literature, expectations are considered as predictions about what is likely to happen during an impending transaction or exchange. Expectations serve as standards by which consumers compare subsequent experiences, resulting in evaluations of satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 2002).

The opinions of visitors with regard to the level of story mimicry at the servicescape are categorised into three groups; first, relates to visitors who believed that the elements, overall, highly mimic the storyline (9/48) and thus met their expectations (Table 5.5.).

> *[The Inn]* looks exactly like the design … of "*The Hobbit*" movie. So, they adapted much many things of the film and put it in the Green Dragon *[Inn]* … they tried to create this atmosphere that you have, when you watch the *[story related]* movies … So, you really felt like being in the movie, and being in Hobbiton … it was quite like how I expected it. (P42)

Table 5. 5. High mimicry of the servicescape with related stories or movies

Mimicry level	Number of participants	Example quotes
High	9/48	P17: "Exactly as I planned … It all just flows together. Like the wood that's in there, the music, and just the smell … the beers as well, just the aromas … It Just felt like a hobbit pub." P41: "Everything woody things … Even the beer cups, it really resembles the movie. It *[i.e., the design]* does the actual work to be in the movie. It was really, really nice and interesting."

The second group of visitors perceived the elements as mostly congruent with what they remembered from the story, and therefore, what they expected to see at the servicescape (see Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Barros et al., 2019). Nevertheless, these visitors referred to a number of elements as not matching the story concept (27/48) and relatedly, shared their suggestions on how the retailer could improve these elements to meet their expectations and therefore, achieve a better consumer experience (Table 5.6.).

Staff costumes (14/27) was the most cited element in this category, as visitors believed that if staff were in characters' costumes, it would help recreate the story's atmosphere. As participants suggested:

> Maybe they could have *[staff]* more dressed to look like in the film … rather than how they have got their own uniforms … character based. That'd be good. (P14)

> I was disappointed that no one *[from staff]* was in costume. I thought … in the pub, it would have been easy for them to be in costume and … a lot of the tour would've been really highlighted. (P45)

The second element related to the light level at the servicescape (12/27). In this regard, while ten visitors perceived the lighting as darker than in the movies, two others said that the Inn was brighter that in the movies and that they expected it to be darker than it was.

Following light, a number of visitors shared about the lack of background music (6/27); identifying it as an element that sets the story vibe, "Music would've definitely helped to set the tone" (P30), a visitor described.

The next element visitors perceived different was the size and layout (6/27) of the Inn. These visitors did not expect the Inn to be as big as it was. According to a visitor:

> There were old chairs and everything, like pub tables and that stuff. That was kind of like I would imagine the *[Green]* Dragon pub … *[But]* the Green Dragon *[Inn]* was like a real house … I was surprised that it was that big and you can actually walk and sit in it." (P8)

Relatedly, another visitor remembered a different table arrangement from the movies:

> I didn't expect it to be ... the tables, like they were … I just had a different view in my head … I imagined the scene at the end, and I couldn't see where the table was. (P44)

Another element in this category related to the interactions and role-play by staff (5/27). As earlier discussed, some visitors were not happy with the effort that staff, especially, at the Inn, put towards communicating with or engaging the visitors. A visitor shared:

> *[Staff]* can add to the experience, such as dressing up, or if someone played some instruments, or even someone sings, or someone dances, because in the movie, the people dance, the people sing, … say stuff. It's a different atmosphere. (P19)

Table 5. 6. Moderate mimicry of the servicescape with related stories or movies

Mimicry level	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Moderate 27/48	Staff costumes	14/27	P3: "Maybe, some of the workers *[could have]* dressed up as characters … like a wizard or maybe hobbits or things like that." P4: "If they had ... some people dressed up pretending to be normal hobbits or something … That could have been quite cool." P16: "I think *[the design]* is fantastic. It all fits perfectly together … I wondered whether they *[i.e., staff]* would have been more in costume. They looked very much just like a café staff."
	Lighting level	12/27	P14: "The *[Inn's]* whole atmosphere was good … *[but]* it's probably a little bit darker in there than probably what some of the movies was." P30: "It was brighter than you'd expect it to be." P35: "It needed to be darker."
	Lack of music	6/27	P15: "It looks pretty much like the same *[bar in the story-related movie]* … it looks really good … Would have been great, if there was *[also]* some music to recreate the *[story]* atmosphere … we could just listen strangers speaking in different languages … I didn't hear any music." P30: "The atmosphere wasn't as lively as it is depicted in movies … *[and]* more quiet than you'd expect it to be as a depiction of a tavern. … Actually, I don't think there was any music when I was there … music would've definitely helped to set the tone."
	Building size and layout	6/27	P30: "One thing that I thought was maybe a bit different to what I expected was the ceiling … maybe it was taller than I expected it to be, so, I thought the ceiling was a bit off. " P25: "It all fitted. it all made sense … *[except]* I expected the bar to be bigger … *[The Inn]* had two little separate bars *[while]* I thought it's just one big bar. But other than that, everything was like how I expected it to be."
	Staff interactions and role-play	5/27	P2: "Maybe *[add]* some actors … to drink on the table inside … with costume, to get it live." P12: "I would just add some human beings or characters walking around there in the area of *[the]* restaurant, so you could feel like you are really in the movie."

Having discussed the opinions of two groups of visitors about the level of story mimicry at the Inn, now it comes to describing the viewpoints of the third group of the visitors who did not, for the following reasons, consider the servicescape elements as matching the story concept at all (5/48).

Not surprisingly, as mentioned by the second group, these visitors also expected staff to be dressed in costumes (2/5), interact with visitors and perform role-plays (2/5), albeit, to a stronger degree. The other reasons for which these visitors did not perceive the Inn as mimicking the story include lack of live music (2/5) or irrelevant music (2/5) and the level of lighting being very dark (1/5). In addition, the layout of the servicescape (1/5), particularly, with regard to its table setups was shared by a visitor as being different to what they expected (Table 5.7.).

Table 5. 7. Incongruencies of the servicescape with related stories or movies

Mimicry level	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Does not mimic (Incongruent) 5/48	Staff costumes	2/5	P5: "*[The staff]* were in flannel shirts, just like plain shirts, that is a little out of character."
	Staff interactions and role-play	2/5	P5: "*[Having]* a bunch of very rowdy hobbits just like dancing around … would have added to the experience. Something in costume." P7: "Maybe we can see the *[story]* characters … people with the dress up of the movie or something like that."
	Live music	2/5	P10: "In the movie it's … a party atmosphere. … I thought there would have been some stuff going on … some real live music would have been cool … like how they have the party with the violins and the fiddles and stuff." P33: "I was thinking different kind of set … I don't know how to explain it. How I view it in the movie … it's not the same … everything is so quiet … maybe would be better if a band was playing music."
	Irrelevant music	2/5	P33: "It was not the movie music."
	Lighting level	1/5	P5: "The lighting was very dull and dark which was why I moved outside."
	Layout	1/5	P9: "To me it *[i.e., the Inn]* didn't really recall anything *[from the movie]* … Obviously, it's setup in a way that caters the needs for today with like the tables for the tourist groups and all

			that. But I think the original setups was like with the long benches … I think that's kind of more what I was expecting going in."

Based on the findings on story mimicry, regardless of the retailers' considerable income (e.g., the annual revenue for Rings Scenic Tours Limited was $41.6 million in 2016/17, Brown, Copeland & Co Ltd, 2017) and the budget that was put into the production of the trilogies (US$330 million for all three *The Lord of the Rings* movies, Bruce, 2003; Mathijs, 2006) and reputation of the stories, The Green Dragon Inn is designed in a way that for most visitors (27/48), its atmosphere moderately mimics the storyline, whereas, consistent with Study 1, visitors expect higher mimicry at this servicescape.

5.3 Consumers' experiences of narrative engagement

RQ1 aims to address whether exposure to stories told through servicescape atmospherics results in consumers' experiences of narrative engagement; the sense of detachment from reality while being lost in the world created by a narrative (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008, 2009; Sukalla et al., 2015; Bilandzic et al., 2020).

Although design experts in Study 1 referred to consumers' imagination of themselves in a given story, and story events, as reasons that encourage the use of stories for design, these aspects only reflect one of the dimensions of narrative engagement, as a construct that has four dimensions. As earlier discussed in Chapter 2, consumers' imagination of themselves in the story and the story events seem to reflect their presence in that story. Narrative engagement has three other dimensions, and to have a better understanding of consumers' engagement with stories in servicescapes, Study 2 asked relevant questions to cover all four dimensions of narrative engagement, as discussed subsequently.

5.3.1 Narrative presence

In line with designers' opinions about consumers' presence in stories, Study 2 explored whether visitors of the fantasy servicescape imagined a) themselves in the story, and the b) story events. Although the two aspects are generally used to examine transportation, as the items for measuring presence (Busselle & Bilandiz, 2009) seem challenging to be discussed in an interview format, and given that the two concepts, more or less, describe the same phenomenon (De Graaf, 2010), to be consistent with Study 1 findings, Study 2 examined the transportation aspects to understand consumers' presence in the story.

Moreover, presence is considered as the central dimension of narrative engagement in this study, such that a higher probability of presence concluded from the analysis means that consumers are more likely to engage with stories. At its core, narrative engagement is about forgetting oneself, becoming transported, and feeling present in a world created by a narrative. Accordingly, the terms transportation, presence, and lost in the story are interchangeably used throughout this study.

Amongst all the participants, 15 visitors shared about having imagined the story events and themselves in the story. There were also visitors who only imagined the events (10), and others who only imagined themselves in the story (3) without necessarily imagining any specific story events. Although not thoroughly transported, the latter two groups of visitors were also, to some extent, lost in the stories and therefore experienced presence. The remaining visitors (20/48) neither imagined the events nor themselves in the stories.

Based on these findings, more than half of the visitors were lost in the story, at a higher or lower level and, as such, we could say they experienced narrative presence at the Inn. Table 5.8. presents consumers' experiences of presence categorised by their imagination of the story events and themselves in the story.

Table 5. 8. Consumers' experiences of narrative presence

	Factors (if any)	**Number of participants**	**Example quotes**
Narrative presence 28/48	Imagination of the story events and self in the story	15/28	P4: "I think there is a scene where Frodo gets them *[i.e., the other hobbits to]* dance. It's such an immersive experience because everything is made to look as if it's part of *[related]* movie … We dressed up a bit … did a dance … kind of, pretended we were in it *[i.e., the story]*."
	Imagination of the story events	10/28	P11: "Everything is arranged in a medieval way … you could imagine the events that took place in the movie."
	Imagination of self in the story	3/28	P21: "Because I had done the whole scenario of Hobbiton *[movie set]* and I wanted to feel like a hobbit ... My brain was immediately thinking, "Oh, this is how a hobbit would probably feel." … you go to an extent where you actually think hobbits are real … you end up trying to think, "Oh, if I were a hobbit, I would do this, … would drink like that". We all went to fantasy."

5.3.1.1 Narrative presence: The impact of story mimicry

Considering designers' opinions on the level of story mimicry at servicescapes designed based on famous fantasy stories (Study 1), and that most visitors perceived the Inn as moderately mimicking the story, visitors' experiences of presence is compared based on their perceptions of mimicry to understand the relationship between story mimicry and consumers' presence in the story (Table 5.9.).

In this regard, the majority of visitors (7/9) who perceived story mimicry as high, and a considerable number (18/27) of visitors who perceived mimicry as moderate felt present in the story, either having imagined the story events, imagined themselves in the story, or both. By contrast, a small ratio of visitors who perceived the Inn as not mimicking the story experienced presence. Thus, there seems to be a positive relationship between consumers' perceptions of mimicry and their presence in the story such that the higher they perceive story mimicry, the more likely they are to feel present in that story.

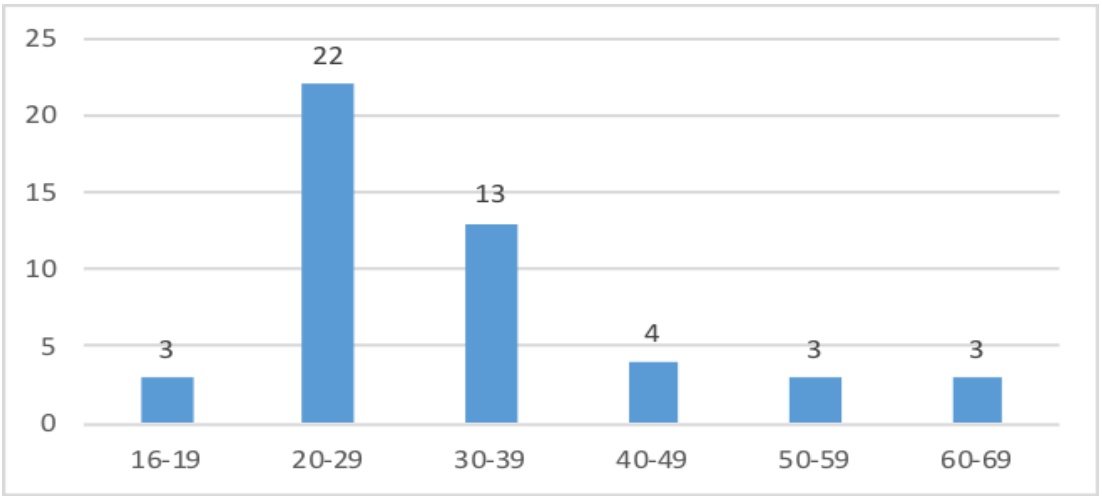
Table 5. 9. Consumers' experiences of narrative presence classified by story mimicry

	Mimicry level		
Narrative presence	High mimicry	Moderate mimicry	Does not mimic
Imagination of the story events	0/9	9/27	0/5
Imagination of self in the story	1/9	2/27	0/5
Imagination of the story events and self in the story	6/9	7/27	1/5
Total	7/9	18/27	1/5

5.3.1.2 Narrative presence: The impact of age

The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 67, with the majority being 20-29 (Figure 5.8.).

Figure 5. 8. Consumers' age classification



In line with what design experts in Study 1 contend about fantasy servicescapes being, not exclusively, designed for certain age groups, no coherent relationship between age and presence was found in Study 2. In this regard, while all visitors in the ages of 16-19, to a higher or lower extent, felt present in the story, by contrast, only half of the visitors in ages of 20-29 felt present. Despite this decrease in presence for the latter age group, however, the ratio of visitors in ages of 30-39 who felt present increased in comparison to those in ages 20-29. The likelihood of presence, once again, decreases for visitors in ages of 40-49, and subsequently, more visitors feel present in ages of 50-59 and 60-69 (Table 5.10.). The relationship between age and presence thus does not seem coherent to help make a conclusion about how age affects presence in the story. The results, however, might have turned out different with a larger sample size or a different age categorisation.

Table 5. 10. Consumers' experiences of narrative presence classified by age

	Age					
Narrative presence	16 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69
Imagination of the story events	1/3	2/22	4/13	0/4	2/3	1/3
Imagination of self in the story	0/3	2/22	1/13	0/4	0/3	0/3
Imagination of the story events and self in the story	2/3	7/22	4/13	1/4	0/3	1/3
Total	3/3	11/22	9/13	1/4	2/3	2/3
%	100	50	69.23	25	66.66	66.66

5.3.1.3 Narrative presence: The impact of gender

In terms of how gender affects presence, Study 2 findings contradicts those research that either suggest women become more transported (Green & Brock, 2000) or other studies that do not find a gender difference in transportation (Green, 2005; Brusse et al., 2017).

Amongst the 48 participants interviewed for Study 2, 24 included men and 24 women. Having compared visitors' experiences of presence based on their gender, in support to Denham's (2004) study, the ratio of men who experienced presence at the servicescape (17/24) was higher than the ratio of women (11/24) (Table 5.11.). Also, when the visitors were asked about the story characters that they imagined about, out of the 18 visitors who recalled the characters at the servicescape 11 were men and 7 were women. Given that the number of male consumers who imagined the characters is higher, men are therefore, more likely to empathise with the characters than women.

Table 5. 11. Consumers' experiences of narrative presence classified by gender

	Gender	
Narrative presence	Female	Male
Imagination of the story events	5/24	5/24
Imagination of self in the story	1/24	2/24
Imagination of the story events and self in the story	5/24	10/24
Total	11/24	17/24

5.3.2 Attentional focus and narrative understanding

This section describes how this study examined consumers' focus on or distraction from (attentional focus) and understanding the story and characters (narrative understanding), as the second and third dimensions of narrative engagement.

As earlier discussed throughout this thesis, consumers are not often exposed to a story from beginning to end in a retail environment, but instead, presented with related décor, as well as other atmospherics of the servicescape. As such, it does not seem reasonable to expect, especially consumers unfamiliar with a story, to have a clear understanding of a story told through servicescape atmospherics.

Given the qualitative nature of Study 2, the researcher found it challenging for consumers to answer the items that are used to measure attentional focus and narrative understanding. Asking the related items in open ended question format were likely to result in YES/NO answers or consumers' level of agreement with the item. As such, regardless of whether the consumers felt present in the story or not, they were asked about the elements they consider helpful in keeping them focused on (i.e., attentional focus) and making sense of (i.e., narrative understanding) the story, thereby, increasing the likelihood of presence in the story.

The findings are grouped into two categories: first, are elements that helped 28 visitors experience presence at a higher or lower level (Table 5.12.). The second category relates to what all visitors, regardless of experiencing presence or not, shared as elements that if the retailer provides, and activities that if done, could help (further) concentrate on and make sense of the story and thus feel (more) present (Table 5.13.).

Prior familiarity with the story and its related movies was the most cited element in the first category, with 27 of the 28 transported visitors being very familiar or familiar with the story before their visit. A participant described:

> *[I could imagine]* a bit where they all get back at the end of the third "*Lord of the Rings*" and they're … sitting there, having their drinks… Or the bit in the first one where they're all kind of partying it up. (P14)

Consumers' familiarity with the presented story, therefore, influences their focus on and understanding of that story. thereby, increasing the likelihood of presence in the story.

Next to familiarity, visitors referred to story mimicry (11/28) as helpful in keeping their focus on the presented story. Visitors who felt the atmospherics highly mimic the story found it easier to imagine story events and/or themselves in the story, compared to those whose expectations of mimicry were not met and thus were distracted from the story. Relatedly, a participant shared:

> I believe I could see myself in that movie there. The way they set it up is exactly as the movie was, so it was really easy to believe that I was a part of it … I was impressed with the detail. (P18)

Following mimicry, an element that some visitors mentioned as helpful in presence was the drinks offered at the Inn (9/28). For example, a participant felt as if he was actually drinking at the bar in the movie, even though he did not consider the Inn as mimicking

the story at all. Offering story-related products or services thus transports consumers to the story, even when their expectations of story mimicry is not met.

> The drinks that they gave us helps to feel like *[we are]* in the real bar. (P7)

The information provided about the relevance of the Inn to the stories, mostly through the videos played on the bus on the way to the movie set (3/28) was another element that helped visitors feel present in the story. According to a participant:

> The video they displayed really got us in the moment. (P18)

Relatedly, another visitor shared that the staff inside the Inn provided information that helped them get the vibe of the stories and feel present (1/28). The visitor described:

> I got the whole vibe; very relaxed life, just like real hobbits had … especially when the waitress said all the things, where Gandalf was coming in here … where things happened, that really, really helped. (P25)

In addition, there were costumes from the characters available at the servicescape and a visitor (1/28) had dressed up and danced as the characters that helped him feel present in the story.

> We dressed up a bit … did a dance … kind of, pretended we were in it *[i.e., the story]* (P4)

Table 5.12. outlines the elements that helped the 28 visitors experience presence with illustrative quotes to support the findings.

Table 5. 12. Elements that helped consumers experience presence

Helpful elements	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Familiarity		27/28	P19: "*[I imagined]* the scene *[of]* the beginning of the second movie, … "*The Hobbit*", where they started in the Green Dragon … it was night-time. It was raining, … Gandalf was there, and this dwarf prince was there."
Story mimicry		11/28	P1: "There was all these details there, and I just could imagine to live there … I could imagine to be a hobbit. … That was great." P19: "I think the whole thing looked like the time frame *[of the story],* even the lamps, the shape of the tables, and the windows."

Story-related offerings		9/28	P3: "*[I felt]* pretty much, as if I was having a drink with the other characters in the story, so, it's pretty cool … just being inside, and then them offering beer and food just kind of helps add on to it, too."
Information provided	Video	3/28	P3: "*[I could imagine the story]* from seeing the videos on the bus." P7: "The video that they put us on the bus helps a lot."
	Staff	1/28	P25: "I got the whole vibe; very relaxed life, just like real hobbits had … especially when the waitress said all the things, where Gandalf was coming in here … where things happened, that really, really helped."
Dress-up and role-plays by the visitors		1/28	P4: "We dressed up a bit … did a dance … kind of, pretended we were in it *[i.e., the story]*."

Regardless of experiencing presence or not, visitors were, all, asked about elements that could (further) help them focus on and understand the story. Visitors, further, referred to elements that could help them imagine the story characters.

In this regard, an element raised in participants' discussions related to the opportunity of virtually, seeing scenes of the related movies and the story characters at the Inn (42/48). While 28 visitors shared their interest in experiencing virtual reality at the servicescape to see the story characters, however, by contrast, other visitors (14/42) believed that the Inn needs to look "authentic", and that technology would break the current realistic vibe of the servicescape. Illustrative quotes from visitors who either support or were against a virtual experience at the Inn are presented in Table 5.13. Relatedly, visitors mentioned that the enjoyment of the virtual experience could depend on one's age, and to the time allocated for visitors to try this technology.

In addition, visitors referred to dressing up and role-plays as the story characters (21/48) as an activity that, if they had done, it could help them feel (further) present in the story. These visitors either did not know about the availability of character costumes at the Inn and suggested the retailer to inform visitors about the opportunity to dress as characters, or saw the costumes but referred to time limitation and the cheap quality of the costumes as reasons for not dressing up as characters.

Following virtual reality and role-play, the level of story mimicry (19/48) at the Inn was another reason shared by the visitors as hindering them from feeling present in the story. This group of visitors either perceived the level of story mimicry at the Inn as being low

or as not mimicking the story at all. Lack of interactions and role-plays by staff (10/19) and incongruent staff costumes (9/19) were the two mostly cited elements that visitors believed could have helped them get the story vibe and feel present. Another reason that seemed to decrease visitors' ability to focus on the story was the level of noise (7/19) they perceived as being either lower (4/7) or higher (3/7) than expected, thus hindering them from becoming (further) present in the story. Visitors also referred to music (5/19) and their expectations of experiencing live (4/5) or relevant music (1/5) to the story. The limitation of story-related photos on the walls (4/19), darker lights (1/19) as well as the table layouts (1/19) were also amongst elements shared by visitors as being different to what they expected in terms of mimicry, thus distracting their focus from the story and hindering presence.

Visitors, also, shared about information (16/48) that the retailer could provide at the Inn, mostly as movies shown on a screen (11/16), to help focus on, and understand the story. These visitors believed that showing parts of the related movies on a screen, at the Inn, could help (further) connect to the story and feel present. Some other visitors, however, preferred the staff (4/16) to remind them of what happened in the stories or movies or explain certain areas where some of the scenes were filmed:

> Personally, I'd prefer if the guide would take me through the inn and then, remind me … or explain some of the scenes that were filmed in certain areas ... that would really help. (P19)

Next to information, visitors shared that they were not very familiar with the storyline; either not having read the books or watched the movies, or that it had been a long time since they did (10/48). 7 of these visitors had not felt present at all, and the 3 who did, shared they could have been further transported if they were more familiar. In line with what I earlier discussed about familiarity, as a reason that helped the former 28 visitors feel present in the story, the latter 10 visitors referred to their lower levels of familiarity as hindering them from presence in the story. Relatedly, a visitor explained:

> I didn't recognise the scenes where it *[i.e., the movies]* happened … because I *[had]* seen the movies some years ago, so, it was a quite a long time that stopped me from imagining anything. (P22)

Time limitation to be at the Inn (3/48) as part of the entire tour to the movie set was also a reason shared by some visitors as hindering them to get the story vibe and feel present.

These visitors believed the time allocated to explore the Inn was not enough. As shared by a visitor:

> You need more time to get in, get through the story, and start to feel all the things you want to feel. (P33)

Based on what designers mentioned about retailers' preference to have consumers spend less time in restaurants to serve more people, and with regard to what consumers in the second study perceive as the least, decent time required to feel present in a given story, this thesis suggests retailers allocate, at least 30 minutes, for consumers in servicescapes that are designed based on a story for them to be engaged.

The visitors also referred to "Character identification" (2/48); a concept defined in the literature as the "similarity between the consumer and the character" (see Dessart, 2018, p. 290, see also Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003), as a reason hindering them from presence in the story. While transportation or presence relate to a story receiver's absorption in the story plot, identification focuses on how a consumer relates to a certain character (Tal-Or & Cohen, 2010). Despite being a distinct phenomenon from transportation, however, identification could be influential in consumers' involvement with a story. The two visitors in this study could not identify themselves with the story characters as they considered themselves taller than what the characters of the related stories are, and therefore, they did not experience presence.

The elements discussed above have the potential to influence consumers' focus on and understanding of the story and therefore, increase or decrease the likelihood of presence in the story (Table 5.13.).

Table 5. 13. Elements that could help consumers further experience presence

Helpful elements	Factors and subfactors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Virtual reality 42/48	Interested	28/42	P13: "If you could see Frodo and Sam in there, *[virtually,]* that would be kind of cool." P21: "*[Virtual reality]* is a great idea actually … a lot different than a digital display. It's more personalised … But then you look at the people, everybody's different … So, you can just have a crowd of people that they're the new gadget generation, they're the millennials, and they are people from the 80s, and they go like gen X and gen Y, and they go like, "okay, this is not for me"

			But then the millennials are fully on the phone, and the gadgets, and they really don't mind it … I would give it a try. Definite." P9: *"[Virtual reality]* is always cool … as long as there's enough capacity, because if you have a thousand people coming *[to visit]* through a day, if you have to wait 45 minutes to do a 2 minute VR experience, that's gonna annoy people. But generally, I think VR is a good idea." P11: "That opportunity would definitely increase the customer experience."
	NOT interested	14/42	P38: "I think that would change the experience … Once you walk into the Green Dragon *[Inn]*, you feel like … transformed into Middle-earth *[i.e., the story's location].* If you then, were given virtual reality glass, it kills it *[i.e., the story vibe]* a little bit … I don't think I would be interested." P10: "I wouldn't agree … Because then, it kind of breaks *[the Inn]* away from being old school and fantasy. These *[stories]* were written like a hundred years ago, whenever it was … I just like the physical experience." P25: "No way, I'm not a big fan of this *[i.e., VR].* … Technology doesn't belong there. Doesn't fit the whole vibe." P47: "It would feel too artificial, like the level that augmented reality is now, I wouldn't enjoy it … because it needs to look very authentic and genuine, and if you have these visual images, they won't look that realistic anymore."
Dress-up and role-plays by the visitors		21/48	P27: "I didn't see any costumes … I probably would've *[dressed-up]* if I'd known … would've been nice, actually *[to]* have some interaction as a hobbit, to feel like *[a hobbit]* … that would've been fun." P45: "If they had it available for hire … even just part of a costume like the ears or the something, … I would try on costumes." P34: "When the clients *[i.e., visitors]* come in, you can ask them that if they want to wear any Hobbits costume and if they want a photograph with it … Like you can wear hobbits, you can become like a hobbit, and you can have a photo … I want to dress up like a hobbit one day." P37: "We were there for twenty minutes … didn't *[even]* finish our drink … I think you could dress up, we didn't … but that would've helped with the experience." P9: "I saw the costumes hanging on the wall, the dress up costumes. And I actually thought … "It's so expensive to come here ... they could, at least,

				make some kind of effort, and not just have a Halloween costume kind of thing there." … that was my ideas walking by. I just saw it hanging there, I was like, "It looks cheap." I think they could've made a bit more effort with the costume things, and maybe, more people would actually want to do it then … I'm sure there are people who would really like to do that, and then the pictures … look *[bad]* because it's cheap. "
Story mimicry 19/48	Staff interactions and role-plays		10/19	P22: "If they *[i.e., staff]* could dress or they could perform the similar characters in the movies … little bit like cosplay or whatever, that would be more attractive … Maybe they could have some performance like singing or dancing … related to the movies" P37: "*[The staff]* could dress up as a merchant walking past *[the Inn].* Merchants that travel between cities … and sell stuff that's unique to their culture. That would be cool."
	Staff costumes		9/19	
	Noise 7/19	Not noisy but dull	4/7	P10: "The atmosphere was a bit dull." P30: "More quiet than you'd expect it to be."
		Noisy	3/7	P22: "*[The Inn]* was not peaceful … there were many people there, actually."
	Music 5/19	No live music	4/5	P23: "I think it's better if they put more music … The music is very important … If they can play live … for certain time of the day, it would be more liveliness."
		No music	1/5	P31: "*[The Inn]* was silent … I think some music … would be nice."
	Photos on walls		4/19	P22: "Probably, if there was some photos of the scenes happened in the Green Dragon *[Inn]* … it would help." P31: "Some pictures on the walls … of scenes that happened there *[at the Inn]* would be nice … I could see, ''Oh yeah, it's exactly there.'"'
	Lights	Darker	1/19	P31: "More lights … It's quite dark inside, so, you don't really want to stay inside because it's too dark … I think a bit more lights *[would help]."*
	Layout	Table setups	1/19	P9: "It's setup in a way that caters the needs for today with like the tables for the tourist groups and all that. But I think the original setups was like with the long benches … So, I think that's kind of more what I was expecting going in."
	Video in the Inn		11/16	P26: "I would put some clips … of the movies … inside the Green Dragon *[Inn]* … like showing

Information provided 16/48			that scene *[that happened inside the Inn]* or just some parts … *[to]* connect with the movie." P20: "They could do a 3D or 4D set where you … watch few parts of the movie that will make you feel like, "Oh, you are living that moment." … That would be cool … that's a good idea."
	Staff	4/16	P26: "Maybe tour guide can spend time with us more there … I think tour guide would be very, very helpful." P27: "He said they rebuilt it six times because they burnt it. He didn't explain what happened in *[at the Inn inside]* the movie … that would help understand the storyline … because I didn't actually know if the Green Dragon *[Inn]* had been in the movie. *[So,]* I had to ask my partner "Oh, was this in the movie, or have they just put this here at the end of the tour?""
Familiarity	Not very familiar	10/48	P8: "Because I didn't watch the movies … I think I didn't get the real experience."
Time spent at the Inn		3/48	P15: "Not really … we didn't really stay inside. That's probably why." P24: "I really didn't had chance to stay inside for too long."
Character identification	Height difference with characters	2/48	P14: "No, I am a bit tall." P31: "I think I am too big for that."

5.3.3 Emotional engagement

The fourth dimension of narrative engagement relates to one's emotional engagement with a given story. To examine this aspect, the visitors were asked if they, in general, experienced any emotions while they were at the servicescape. Emotional engagement relates to the emotional arousal component of narrative engagement and not necessarily to any specific emotions (Ravaja et al., 2006). To understand how engagement in stories evokes specific emotions in consumers, the study, subsequently, asked the visitors about the specific emotions they felt in the servicescape (see Section 5.4.)

The majority of visitors (43/48) shared about having felt emotions at the servicescape, even those who had not experienced presence. While 42 of these visitors had a mixture of positive and negative emotions, another visitor only experienced a negative emotion. The specific emotions visitors experienced are shared subsequently when addressing the second research question. The remaining 5 visitors had experienced neither any positive nor any negative emotions at the Inn.

The specific emotions experienced by consumers who felt present in the story is outlined in the following section and compared to those who did not feel present. It is important to mention that the 5 visitors who did not feel any type of emotion had not felt present in the story. In other words, regardless of the level of presence, the experience resulted in positive and/or negative emotions in consumers. As such, presence in the story influenced consumers' emotional engagement in that story.

Based on what was discussed about consumers' presence in the story that is told through the Inn's atmospherics, having identified the elements that help focus on and understand the story and with regard to the fact that the visitors emotionally engage with the story at the Inn, in answer to RQ1, the researcher argues that consumers in this study experienced narrative engagement in the servicescape.

The following section describes the types of specific emotions the visitors experienced, to address the second research question.

5.4 Consumers' affective responses

Based on the literature, when consumers become transported into a story, their emotions (Escalas 2004a; LaMarre & Landreville, 2009; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019) can change to reflect that story. Accordingly, to address RQ2, this study explored a) what affective responses visitors of the servicescape experienced, regardless of whether they felt present in the story or not, and thereafter (b) compared visitors' affective responses based on their presence in the story. The visitors' emotions were compared based on, particularly, the presence dimension of narrative engagement because presence is considered as the central dimension of narrative engagement.

Table 5.14. outlines the affective responses all visitors experienced, regardless of their presence in the story.

Happiness and joy (24/48) was the most cited emotion as half of the visitors felt happy at the Inn. Therefore, it might seem reasonable to suggest that, regardless of whether consumers engage with a story told through servicescape atmospherics, they feel happy; a feeling that the designers also aim to evoke in fantasy servicescapes (Study 1).

Visitors also shared about feeling relaxed, peaceful, and calm (23/48), comfort (16/48), excitement (7/48), warm-hearted (7/48), nostalgia (5/48), contentment (3/48), surprised and amazed (2/48). A visitor also mentioned that she felt lucky (1/48) to realise she was

at the Inn, “This is not the place that everyone can come, so it's very unique, and I just feel *[i.e., felt]* like, “Oh, I'm lucky to be here.”” (P23).

In addition to the foresaid positive affective responses, visitors had also experienced negative affective responses. For example, some visitors (3/48) felt rushed and worried due to the time limit. Also, another visitor felt bored, as she expected to see staff to be dressed-up in character costumes to engage people (1/48).

There were, also, visitors who neither felt any positive nor any negative emotions (5/48) and were neutral in feelings. One of these visitors shared that, to him, the servicescape looked like any other pub, which was why he had no feelings for it.

> “None, really … *[I felt]* very neutral … *[The Inn]* just seemed like any other pub.” (P9)

Table 5. 14. Consumers’ affective responses in the fantasy servicescape

Affective responses	Number of participants	Example quotes
Positive affective responses		
Happiness and joy	24/48	P22: “I felt happy.” P46: “I was just really happy.” P13: “Happy and joyful.”
Relaxed, Peaceful and Calm	23/48	P21: “It was relaxing.” P32: “I felt peaceful, relaxing.”
Comfort and cosy	16/48	P42: “I felt really comfortable.” P46: “Cosy. It was just very comfortable.” P41: “Cosy is the right word, comfortable.” P37: “It's quite cosy inside *[the Inn].*”
Excitement	7/48	P3: “I was just excited to be in there.” P27: “I felt excited.”
Welcomed and warmth or Warm-hearted	7/48	P25: “I felt very homely and welcomed … just like I've been there before. Even the first time that I was visiting it, I got the feeling that I was there *[before]*.” P42: “You felt welcome.” P43: “It kind of felt like a little bit of warmth and friendship kind of a feeling.”
Nostalgia	5/48	P4: “A sort of nostalgia, even though it's a fantasy world … Like, I've watched the movies and read the books so many

		times, and sort of feel like you become a part of their world. And so, when you're in there, it just feels like you've entered back into that. But you can actually see it with your eyes rather than imagining it, yeah." P45: "Nostalgia from the movies." P27: "I felt nostalgic for the past … I lived in England, so, I enjoy old buildings."
Contentment	3/48	P32: "I felt contentment."
Surprised and amazed	2/48	P8: "I was surprised that it looked like it looked, because the *[hobbit]* holes weren't *[big enough]* to go into … [But] the Green Dragon *[Inn]* was like a real house … I was surprised that it was that big and you can actually walk and sit in it." P24: "I was like amazed that I am experiencing the real movie scenes."
Lucky	1/48	P23: "When I was small, I've seen *[the related movies]* on the TV, I've seen on YouTube videos … I feel like, "Oh, ... eventually I'm here." … I feel really rewarding. This is not the place that everyone can come, so it's very unique, and I just feel *[i.e., felt]* like, "Oh, I'm lucky to be here."
Negative affective responses		
Rushed and worried	3/48	P11: "A bit rushed." P6: "Worried due to time limit."
Boredom	1/48	P23: "Honestly, I feel *[the Inn was]* a little bit boring … I really wanted to see a real person actually dressing up … maybe the waiter or the waitress *[could]* wear something … cosplay and walk around. A lady with a basket full of eggs and veg or something she harvests. I think it would *[help the Inn to]* be more like the movie for us."
Neutral, no affective responses		
Neutral	5/48	P2: "*[I felt]* nothing specific."

Visitors' affective responses, as classified by their experiences of presence, is outlined in Table 5.15. As shown in the table, the total ratio of visitors who experience presence and felt happiness and joy, relaxed, peaceful, and calm, warm-hearted, and nostalgia is higher than visitors who were not lost in the story. Visitors who experienced presence, also felt contentment, an emotion experienced only by those who were lost in the story. Visitors who become lost in the story, as such, are more likely to feel happiness and joy, relaxed, peaceful, and calm, warm-hearted, nostalgia and contentment.

By contrast, the total ratio of visitors who did not experience narrative presence and felt comfort and cosy, excitement, surprised and amazed was higher than visitors who were lost in the story. The only visitor who felt lucky to be at the Inn was not lost in the story. Visitors who do not become lost in the story are more likely to feel comfort and cosy, excitement, surprised and amazed, as well as lucky to be at the Inn.

As ratios of the experienced positive emotions is mostly higher amongst visitors who were lost in the story, compared to those who did not experience presence, the findings support extant literature suggesting that transportation or presence causes consumers to express more positive affective responses (e.g., Escalas, 2004a; Chang, 2009).

In addition, three of the transported visitors experienced being rushed and worried that they related to the time limit to be at the Inn. While the number of visitors who reported being rushed and worried is not considerable enough to conclude that presence results in being rushed and worried, these emotions were not experienced by visitors who did not feel present. As such, I argue that when consumers pay attention and imagine the events and themselves in a given story, their interest to stay engaged with that story for longer might lead to feeling rushed and worried, when there are time concerns.

Another reported negative emotion was boredom that was experienced by a visitor who did not experience presence. As proven in previous studies (e.g., Van Laer et al., 2014; Lim & Childs, 2020), when the consumers engage in story processing, they engage in mental imagination and therefore become lost in the story. Consumers' engagement in processing a story and getting lost in the world created by the story, in-turn, could be the reason for why visitors who were lost in the story did not feel bored. Nevertheless, some other studies consider boredom, by itself, as an antecedent for transportation since "individuals in a boring … situation may long to be elsewhere, and thus, might be more motivated to transport themselves into a narrative" (Green & Brock, 2000, p. 720). A bored visitor at the Inn might, therefore, eventually transport her/himself to the context of the stories, perhaps, if they were allocated more time to linger in the servicescape.

Moreover, in line with previous studies that suggest transportation or presence results in story-consistent affective responses (Van Laer et al., 2014; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Bilandzic et al., 2020), visitors who experienced no emotions at the Inn were amongst those who were not lost in the story.

Table 5. 15. Consumers' affective responses classified by narrative presence

Affective responses	Narrative presence				
	Imagination of story events	Imagination of self in events	Imagination of events and self	Total of presence	Not present in the story
Happiness and joy	3/10	2/3	10/15	15/28	9/20
Relaxed, peaceful and calm	3/10	2/3	10/15	15/28	8/20
Comforted and cosy	2/10	1/3	6/15	9/28	7/20
Excitement	0/10	0/3	3/15	3/28	4/20
Welcomed and warmth or warm-hearted	1/10	0/3	5/15	6/28	1/20
Nostalgia	2/10	0/3	2/15	4/28	1/20
Contentment	1/10	0/3	2/15	3/28	0/20
Surprised and amazed	1/10	0/3	0/15	1/28	1/20
Lucky	0/10	0/3	0/15	0/28	1/20
Rushed and worried	3/10	0/3	0/15	3/28	0/20
Boredom	0/10	0/3	0/15	0/28	1/20
Neutral	0/10	0/3	0/15	0/28	5/20

5.5 Consumers' behavioural responses

According to the literature, not only consumers' affective responses, but their intentions (e.g., Green, 2008), and behaviour (e.g., Dal Cin et al., 2007) is affected as a result of transportation to a given story. However, empirical research on the behavioural effects of transportation or presence are limited (Van Laer et al., 2014). Therefore, to address RQ3, this study explored a) what intentions and behaviours the visitors experienced regardless of whether they felt present in the story or not and (b) compares visitors' intentions and behaviour based on their experiences of presence.

Table 5.16. outlines consumers' intentions regarding spending time at the servicescape. Each normal (versus for example, private) tour is allocated about 20 minutes time to be at The Green Dragon Inn. However, a considerable number of visitors (30/48) wished

they could have spent more time at the Inn. In this regard, although the preferred times range from 30 minutes up to an hour and more, mostly (12/30) mentioned that the time allocated to be at the Inn is better to be "At least 30 minutes, just to get more time to explore it all" (P1).

By contrast, some other visitors (16/48) perceived the timing reasonable. For example:

> *[The time]* was fine as it was … it's the last part of the tour. You have these 20 minutes to enjoy with the rest of the group *[and]* with the tour guide. You can ask more questions. You are just free to have a look around at the rest of the set that is on that side of the bridge. (P39)

Table 5. 16. Consumers' intentions to spend time in the fantasy servicescape

Intentions	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Spend time	More time	30/48	P42: "I wished to stay in there for at least half an hour." P3: "It would have been nice to spend more time there … Maybe 45 minutes?" P11: "I could imagine myself spent more time there while having lunch or dinner, if we were allowed to. You could spend it inside or outside, watch the scenery, etc., and even deeper dive into the whole image for the movie. … in order not to be rushed, you would need one hour." P28: "It depends on what I want to do. If I wanted to sit … and have a meal, I'd love the option for, "Hey, we're going to go with this bus now, but if you want to stay for a while, you can go on another bus. I would like that … sitting down, having a meal … maybe spending an hour or two there."
	Time is enough	16/48	P43: "I think that it was about the right amount of time that we were able to spend." P17: "Enough time to relax, get a feel for things *[and]* have a drink, without feeling too rushed."

Table 5.17 outlines visitors' intentions to spending time in the servicescape classified by their experiences of presence. Based on the table, while the total ratio of visitors who experienced narrative presence and wished to have spent more time at the servicescape was slightly higher than those not lost in the story, on the other side, the total ratio of visitors who were not lost, and believed the timing was reasonable is also slightly higher than visitors who were lost. Accordingly, it sounds reasonable to suggest that, in total, visitors who experience presence would like to spend more time in the servicescape.

Table 5. 17. Consumers' intentions to spend time classified by narrative presence

Spend time	Narrative presence				
	Imagination of story events	Imagination of self in events	Imagination of events and self	Total of presence	Not present in the story
More time	7/10	2/3	9/15	18/28	12/20
Time is enough	2/10	1/3	6/15	9/28	7/20

In addition, visitors shared about their intentions to spend money on eating (14/48) and drinking (14/48). Some visitors (9/48) wished they could have bought souvenirs from the Inn, instead of the Shire's store at the rest area. Another visitor (1/48) shared about her intention to buying beer, from the Inn, to take back home. For the following reasons, however, neither of the foresaid visitors could actually execute their intentions.

First, a considerable number of visitors who intended to eat at the servicescape (7/13) said that there were not many food options for them to choose. A visitor shared:

> They don't have a lot of food options, it's all about the drinks, and the food options are pretty limited … *[they could add]* more food options. And, some cosy food, or something like a comfort food because you have walked a bit. And if you have something warm cooking there, probably you will go for it. (P21)

Time limit (5/13) was the second reason hindering people from ordering food.

> I wish I could have meals inside … lunch or snacks … we didn't have too much time to stay inside … we didn't have time to eat. (P22)

Also, a visitor mentioned that they did not know about the availability of food options in the servicescape, otherwise she would have bought some.

> I didn't know … There were menus there, but … I was confused as to whether we could eat, or whether that was just for show. (P27)

Regarding visitors' intention to drink at the servicescape, the most mentioned obstacle was time limit (6/13), and the number of options available (4/13). The next reason was the price of the second drink (and onward) which were not free (3/13). In other words, visitors were each, served with a free drink at the Inn, but had to pay if they wished to have more drinks. Also, a visitor shared that she could not have extra drink as she had to drive back home (1/13).

Visitors also shared their interests in, and intentions to buy souvenir items from the Inn, however, souvenir items were not sold in the servicescape, but at a different store at the Rest area where the visitors get on and off the buses that transport them to the movie set. In this regard, although narratives are demonstrated as providing more than a temporary diversion from the real life (Gerrig, 1993; Green, 2005), given their ability in enhancing one's product evaluation and increasing purchase intention (Mani & MacInnis, 2001; Escalas, 2004a; Petrova & Cialdini, 2008; Van Laer et al., 2014; Lee & Jeong, 2017) even when transported individuals are returned to the world of origin, the participants in this study believed that if souvenir items were sold within the servicescape, instead of the Shire's store, that is located near the parking area, they would have been more likely to purchase those items. Based on what the visitors in this study expressed, it seems that the level of immersion into the story is higher when people are inside the servicescape, compared to the time they return to the Shire's store. Therefore, management literature suggests to retailers that, to achieve higher margins, they integrate products and services (see Oliva & Kallenberg, 2003; Wise & Baumgartner, 1999; Gadiesh & Gilbert, 1998) in their servicescapes.

Relatedly, visitors shared that by the time they get out of the tour busses at the rest area, they are often rushed to return home and thus they either ignore or do not have time to explore the gift shop at the rest area. As such, selling products at The Green Dragon Inn could result in more profit.

> I can't recall if there is any souvenir shops around *[Green Dragon Inn]* … That will be better, I think, because we have a bit of time to relax. But we have nothing to do ... if we have something to look at, we might be more interested *[in buying them]* … I'm pretty sure because we still have the atmosphere, the memories, but when we went back to the carpark, we just want *[to]* go to home straight away. (P23)

Also, there was a visitor who wished she could have bought the beer offered at the Inn to take home, but it was not available for purchase to take away, although visitors could buy beer from the store at the rest area, but she preferred having bought it at the Inn.

> I wanted to buy the dark beer but it's not possible … I think they don't fill it up in bottles so, that's the reason … we were inside, and we had the chance to buy it, but we cannot. (P6)

Visitors' intentions to spend money in the servicescape is presented in Table 5.18 with sample quotes.

Table 5. 18. Consumers' intentions to spend money in the fantasy servicescape

Spend money	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Eating 14/48	Not many options	7/14	P29: "If you can find some loaves of bread freshly baked, that would've been interesting … I just remember one of the homes of the hobbits is a bakery … It would be nice if you have some smells that attract you to the meal … Especially freshly baked bread." P12: "Maybe some special snacks, like tapas, like you could imagine they are characters from the movie and give some funny names to each … we could imagine that we are eating the same thing like the main characters in the movie."
	Not enough time	6/14	P16: "I would've wanted … more time to have food." P30: "I think the main reason I didn't buy anything was because we didn't have much time there."
	Not informed about	1/14	P27: "I didn't know … There were menus there, but … I was confused as to whether we could eat, or whether that was just for show."
Drinking 14/48	Not enough time	7/14	P10: "It just didn't feel like you were allowed to hang out for very long there. It just seemed like, "drink your drink and then go." … If they want us to spend money, then they should make it a bit more like an environment where you go, "Let's stay here for a couple of drinks."" P11: "If we had the opportunity to stay longer, then you obviously would buy more food or drinks. But if you've got 20 minutes to try on the costumes, go to the bathroom, get the complimentary drink, finish that, maybe buy the pie or something else, and walk around, then 20 minutes is not too much. Then obviously you would not consider to spend more money because you don't have time to enjoy what you're actually going to buy."
	Not many options	4/14	P33: "Maybe more beer tastings … if you have more options to choose. There you can only choose between blonde beer and stout. It could be more option*[s]*." P23: "The thing is that my kids, I don't allow them to have soft drink, and also they can't drink ginger beer … *[there was]* nothing for kids."
	Had to pay for the second	3/14	P2: "A second free beer … to taste two types of beer." P9: "More free beer … More free beer's always good."
	Had to drive	1/14	P13: "I have to drive, so I can't have too many drinks … Like a lot of people … If we could *[drink]*, we would have hung out there all day."
Buying souvenirs	Not sold at the Inn	9/48	P43: "I would think you would be able to increase sales there *[i.e., at the Inn]* … just because they're kind of in the

			[story's] atmosphere … rather than being down and then having to then take the bus ride back … *[or]* you're kind of just ready to get into your car and go." P26: "*[Buying]* anything that's related to the movie … the souvenir that's related to the Green Dragon *[Inn]* itself … like the cups or mugs … if we could buy those, it would be great." P22: "I was a little disappointed ... I expected that I could find some, maybe products, or whatever I could buy … elements related to the movies, like even the cups or whatever."
Buying beer	Not sold at the Inn	1/48	P6: "I wanted to buy the dark beer but it's not possible … I think they don't fill it up in bottles so, that's the reason … we were inside, and we had the chance to buy it, but we cannot."

Table 5.19. outlines visitors' intentions toward spending money at the Inn classified by their experiences of presence. The total ratio for eating, drinking, and buying souvenirs is higher for visitors who were not lost in the story. The only intention higher amongst visitors who experienced presence is buying beer to take away. A possible reason for the intensity of this intention amongst transported visitors might be the congruity of the offered beer with the story as characters used to gather in the Inn to drink. Thus, I argue that the intensity of presence on consumers' intentions in fantasy servicescapes seems to depend on the congruity of the retailer's offer with the storyline.

Table 5. 19. Consumers' intentions to spend money classified by narrative presence

Spend money	**Narrative presence**				
	Imagination of story events	Imagination of self in events	Imagination of events and self	Total of presence	Not present in the story
Eating	3/10	2/3	3/15	8/28	6/20
Drinking	4/10	1/3	3/15	8/28	6/20
Buying souvenirs	1/10	1/3	2/15	5/28	4/20
Buying beer	1/10	0/3	0/15	1/28	0/20

The visitors were, further, asked about their intentions to returning to the servicescape. In this regard, 19 visitors said that they would like to certainly return, with some saying that indeed, the trip was not their first to the movie set. For 18 other visitors, however, returning to the movie set was dependent on a few conditions: these visitors shared that

they are likely to revisit if they are accompanied by family or friends (12/18), if they have enough finances (6/18), for other tours or the events held at the movie set (6/18), or in case the retailer adds engaging activities such as art and story related crafts inside the servicescape (2/18). By contrast, 8 visitors said they will not return to the movie set. These visitors believed that they have already seen the movie set (5/8), or that it is not reasonable for them to revisit the movie set from a financial perspective, as the tickets were perceived by them as expensive (4/8). The other 3 visitors did not share about their intentions to return. Table 5.20. presents visitors' return intentions with sample quotes.

Table 5. 20. Consumers' intentions to return to the fantasy servicescape

Return intention	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Yes	Definitely	19/48	P28: "Yep. This is actually my third time I've done it *[i.e., visited the movie set]*." P34: "Oh yes … Because for me, this is like, if I go inside, I live my dream."
Conditional 18/48	If accompanied by family or friends	12/18	P5: "If I were with a different group of people who had never been here, I would come again, but if I were to come again by myself or with the same group of people, probably not." P13: "Would come again but with another person visiting from overseas who shows interest." P21: "*[If I]* have to show to kids, then probably I'll take them … But I wouldn't go myself again." P46: "Yeah, probably. If we had other friends that wanted to go or something, I would do it again."
	If I have finances	6/18	P4: "I don't know if I would … just because I don't have the finances to do it *[i.e., visit the movie set]* regularly. But I'd love to." P23: "I will probably *[return]*, but I think the price is a little bit costly for the whole family. If I travel on my own or with my husband, that's fine, but we were six people, so it was pretty expensive." P24: "We may *[return]* … but the only thing is it's a bit pricey. Yeah, it's a bit expensive."
	If for an event or other tours	6/18	P38: "If someone were to have a function here and invite me, I'd come … Or if I can get myself the ticket to one of those banquet dinners, like a special event, then sure I'll come out here again … wouldn't come for the same experience."

			P40: “I saw it on the brochure, the night thing looks very good … That would be interesting … But not to do the same tour again.” P42: “Maybe next time with one of the *[other tour]* packages like having breakfast or lunch.”
	If they had extra experiences	2/18	P26: “There's not much to see. … if it was a more interactive place, then yeah, I would go *[again]*.” P45: “If there were other things *[to do]* like the arts and crafts … we'd probably come back and do that.”
No 8/48	One-time experience	5/8	P9: “No. It's one time, one-time do it” P12: “No, I don't need to *[return].* I saw it, and I got lots of pictures, so I don't need to.” P15: “No, I've done it. I'm good with it.”
	Financially unreasonable	4/8	P11: “No, but just because we are from Europe. You just don't fly from Europe to New Zealand to do the tour a second time. That's unreasonable from a financial perspective.” P33: “No, because … It's so expensive for what I was expecting.” P41: “It's really expensive. If it was cheaper, I will think of it, to go back … But it costs so much … so, I won't go again.”

To understand the potential effect of presence on visitors’ return intentions, here again, the researcher enumerated how many of the visitors within each of the foresaid groups experienced narrative presence in the servicescape (Table 5.21.).

Table 5. 21. Consumers’ intentions to return classified by narrative presence

Return intention	**Narrative presence**				
	Imagination of story events	Imagination of self in events	Imagination of events and self	Total of presence	Not present in the story
Yes	6/10	1/3	6/15	13/28	6/20
Conditional	1/10	2/3	7/15	10/28	8/20
No	2/10	0/3	0/15	2/28	6/20

Based on these findings, the total ratio of visitors who experienced presence and intend to definitely return to the servicescape is higher than the ratio of visitors who were not present in the story. Also, the total ratio of visitors who were not present in the story and

their return is conditional, or that they will not return to the servicescape is higher than the total ratio of visitors who experienced presence. Therefore, it might seem reasonable to suggest that, in total, visitors who become lost in the stories in a fantasy servicescape are more likely to return to that servicescape.

Regarding story mimicry, while designers mostly consider a moderate level of mimicry to increase consumers' return intention (Study 1), in line with their recommendation for servicescapes designed based on a famous fantasy story, the higher the visitors perceive story mimicry at the Inn, the more likely they seem to return. As shown in Table 5.22., the ratio of visitors who perceive high (7/9) and moderate (20/27) mimicry and intend to (definitely and conditionally) return to the Inn is higher than those who perceive the Inn as not mimicking the story (3/5), respectively.

Moreover, the lower the visitors perceive mimicry, the more likely they are to not return to the Inn, such that the ratio of visitors who perceive high (1/9) and moderate (5/27) story mimicry and intent not to return is lower than visitors who perceive the Inn as not mimicking the story (2/5), respectively.

Table 5. 22. Consumers' intentions to return classified by story mimicry

	Mimicry level		
Return intention	High mimicry	Moderate mimicry	Does not mimic
Yes	5/9	10/27	1/5
Conditional	2/9	10/27	2/5
Yes + Conditional	7/9	20/27	3/5
No	1/9	5/27	2/5

In addition, visitors shared about their intentions of recommending the servicescape to their family members and friends. In response to this question, 35 visitors said that they will definitely recommend the servicescape to others. However, 10 visitors shared that they recommend the servicescape only to those who are either fans of the stories (9/10) or travelling to New Zealand (2/10). The remaining 3 visitors did not share about their intentions to recommend (Table 5.23.).

Table 5. 23. Consumers' intentions to recommend the fantasy servicescape

Recommend	Factors (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Yes		35/48	P21: "If I have to advise someone, it's kind of fun … so, I would definitely ask people to do it *[i.e., visit]* … It's like when you haven't done *[i.e., seen]* Hobbiton, you have missed some crucial part that you should be doing … That's exactly what I would recommend to do." P23: "I will definitely recommend. It's a must-see."
Conditional 10/48	If a fan of the related stories	9/10	P19: "I'd say yeah … if they watched the movies, they should all go … If you haven't seen the movies, then I don't think you should go. A big part of touring experience is to tell you … how the *[related]* movie was shooting, and without knowledge of the movie, you would be so lost, I think." P26: "Maybe like 50/50. … I always say that if you're a big fan, then go. If you're not a fan, then don't go." P30: "I'd recommend it to anyone who is a fan of Lord of Rings … *[Otherwise]* they won't appreciate the set nearly as much."
	If travelling to New Zealand	2/10	P38: "Yeah … if they're traveling in this area." P11: "If they were traveling to New Zealand, then I would recommend it, but I would not recommend to come to New Zealand only to visit the tour … that's too much money to spend."

In line with previous studies (Seo et al., 2018) that find a positive relationship between transportation and one's intention to recommend a certain story to others, in this study, the ratio of visitors who experienced presence and definitely recommend the Inn was higher than visitors who were not lost in the story. In addition, the total ratio of visitors who did not get lost in the story and recommend the Inn only under certain conditions was higher than visitors who were lost in the story (Table 5.24.).

Table 5. 24. Consumers' intentions to recommend classified by narrative presence

	Narrative presence				
Recommend	Imagination of story events	Imagination of self in events	Imagination of events and self	Total of presence	Not present in the story
Yes	9/10	3/3	11/15	23/28	12/20
Conditional	1/10	0/3	2/15	3/28	7/20

In addition to intentions, visitors shared about several behavioural responses at the Inn. Enjoyment and fun (21/48), explore and browse (11/48) were the most cited behaviours (Table 5.25.). However, considering time limits, a very small fraction of visitors (7/48) managed to spend money on the available options to eat (6/7) or drink (5/7).

Table 5. 25. Consumers' behavioural responses in the fantasy servicescape

Behavioural responses	Number of participants	Example quotes
Enjoyment and fun	21/48	P22: "I enjoyed the time we stayed in *[the]* Green Dragon *[Inn]*." P28: "The Green Dragon *[Inn]*'s cool. I enjoyed that." P21: "I really enjoyed it … it's kind of fun." P48: "It was just fun being in there." P4: "It's quite fun."
Explore and browse	11/48	P4: "I just walked around and looked at all that stuff … little carvings and bits of paper and stuff." P18: "I was impressed with the detail. On walking around, they had a book, a sign in book. They had pictures, maps. I was very impressed with the detail. Yeah, that's what I'm going to remember … (I) got to walk around, look around."
Spend money for eating	6/7	P28: "I bought a pie. I bought a drink." P36: "We had a muffin, a beef, an ale pie, and I had an extra drink."
Spend money for drinking	5/7	P46: "We got a little pie … a scone and a couple beers … We bought the pastries."

Visitors' behavioural responses as classified by their experiences of narrative presence is outlined in Table 5.26.

Table 5. 26. Consumers' behavioural responses classified by narrative presence

	Narrative presence				
Behavioural responses	Imagination of story events	Imagination of self in events	Imagination of events and self	Total of presence	Not present in the story
Enjoyment and fun	2/10	1/3	10/15	13/28	8/20
Explore and browse	0/10	1/3	5/15	6/28	5/20
Spend money for eating	0/10	0/3	4/15	4/28	2/20
Spend money for drinking	0/10	0/3	4/15	4/28	1/20

Based on these findings, while the total ratio of visitors who were lost in the story and experienced enjoyment and fun and spent money for eating and drinking is higher than the ratio of visitors who were not lost, by contrast, the total ratio of visitors who were not lost in the story and browsed and explored the Inn was higher. Therefore, consumers who experience narrative presence are more likely to enjoy and have fun and spend money at the fantasy servicescape. Nevertheless, visitors lost in the story are less likely to explore the servicescape, possibly as they are more focused on the story, itself.

5.6 Consumers' brand responses

As earlier discussed in the literature, whether real or fictional, stories provide meaning to brands (Simmons, 2006; Gensler et al., 2013; Carnevale et al., 2018; Hudak, 2019) and thereby, influence consumers' brand experiences (Lundqvist et al., 2013; Ryu et al., 2019; Nikhashemi et al., 2019; Dessart, & Pitardi, 2019). Extant studies, however, often focus on brands that are marketed with an authentic story and therefore, empirical research on consumers' responses to fictive stories is limited (cf. Argo et al, 2008). To address RQ4, this study explored a) the personality characteristics the visitors associate to the brand of the fantasy designed servicescape, regardless of whether they felt lost in the story or not, and then b) compares visitors' perceptions of brand personality based on their experiences of presence in the story.

Table 5.27. illustrates the categorisation of the personality factors and the frequency of relevant traits together with sample quotes. To be consistent with Study 1, Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions were again used for the categorisation.

Sincerity (45/48) was the most referred personality dimension that visitors associated to the fantasy servicescape, relating it to traits of being friendly and welcoming (39/45), Small-town, country-style and old-fashioned, reminding of "Old English Pubs" (19/45), cheerful, jovial and fun (13/45), original and authentic (10/45), family-oriented (5/45), down-to-earth and humble (1/45), as well as honest (1/45).

Excitement (20/48) was the second most cited dimension. In this regard, the brand was described as being imaginative, fantastic, and mysterious (14/20), cool and chill (8/20), unique (4/20), as well as exciting (2/20).

Ruggedness (4/48) was another personality dimension related to the servicescape with a few visitors describing the Inn as outdoorsy and adventurous (4/4), tough and strong (1/4).

The least cited personality dimension was sophistication with a visitor describing the Inn as upper-class and high-end (1/48).

Table 5. 27. Consumers' brand responses in the fantasy servicescape

Brand Personality factors	Traits (if any)	Number of participants	Example quotes
Sincerity 45/48	Friendly and welcoming	39/45	P1: "It's definitely a friendly place. It has … a welcoming feeling … a positive feeling." P41: "Friendly … someone who invites people in, … like a Hobbit." P48: "Friendly and welcoming" P47: "Probably a really warm-hearted person that welcomes you with open arms."
	Small-town, country-style, and old-fashioned	19/45	P6: "Because of the architecture and the wood, it's like really rustic and country style." P13: "Quaint … It's what everyone imagines as the typical British countryside … in the brochure it was called bucolic, which is quite a good word." P35: "It was very reminiscent of the sort of an English country pub." P28: "It reminded me of an old English pub. It was very old-fashioned." P16: "A bit like an old English pub … Low roofs, old, dark, wooden furniture, nothing modern, nothing up to date. All fitted with the time of the *[related]* movie." P11: "Everything was … in an old-fashioned way, not contemporary furniture or anything … you imagine it is from the days the movie took place." P28: "Old-fashioned."
	Cheerful, jovial, and fun	13/45	P26: "Cheerful." P38: "Probably jovial." P28: "Someone you'd find in an Irish pub, who is slightly tipsy, and they're very jolly *[i.e., cheerful],* and they're like, "Hey, how's it going? …" That's how I'd describe the Green Dragon *[Inn].*" P20: "I would say it's a fun place … fun person." P4: "A fun person."
	Original and authentic	10/45	P42: "It was really detailed, and everything was quite original." P39: "Everything was original, it was authentic." P13: "It was so authentic."

			P29: “I think it looks authentic.” P48: “I think it looks very authentic.”
	Family-oriented	5/45	P7: “You think that you are in a family place.” P19: “It's like a family thing.”
	Down-to-earth and humble	1/45	P45: “Someone very well with being humble”
	Honest	1/45	P24: “Honest”
Excitement 20/48	Imaginative, fantasy and mysterious	14/20	P24: “It was like being in a fairy tale … it's very imaginative.” P23: The Green Dragon *[Inn]* is like a fairy tale.” P12: “The first thing that comes to my mind? Fairy tale, *[where]* our dreams come true.” P10: “It's fantasy, it's enchanting, I guess … Takes people back … It kind of, like, takes them into another world … leave your reality behind … when you go onto that farm and come back.” P17: “Takes you to the scenes of in “*The Hobbit*” and *“The Lord of the Rings” [movies]* and just puts you there. Because it did a really good job of doing that, from my perspective … I would relate it to a Disney World, I guess.” P18: “Being in a different time, place, world.” P19: “Mystical *[i.e., mysterious],* some of it is not on the plain sight to be recognised … it's more than what it looks, I guess.” P38: “Slightly mysterious … *[because]* it's a little dark in there.”
	Cool and chill	8/20	P8: “*[The Green Dragon Inn]* looked really cool.” P39: “It's very cool.” P42: “It was really cool.”
	Unique	4/20	P23: “It's very unique.” P39: “It's kind of unique.” P32: “I think it has a uniqueness. I couldn't, and I wouldn't want to actually put a brand next to it.”
	Exciting	2/20	P13: “It gets you excited.” P39: “I would say exciting.”
Ruggedness 4/48	Outdoorsy and adventurous	4/4	P9: “Trying to fit into New Zealand as a brand … having the scenic, the adventurous aspect of it.” P15: “Maybe, an adventurous one *[i.e., brand]*.” P29: “I think what sticks to me is the fact that it is an adventure. The story is about an adventure …

			Encourage you to wander and … we're here on an adventure as well."
	Tough and strong	1/4	P11: "The brand of Hobbiton is pretty strong."
Sophistication	Upper-class and high-end	1/48	P16: "I think it's very professional, very high-end as a brand."

As discussed in Chapter 2, transportation to stories impacts consumers' brand experiences (Escalas, 2004a; Ryu et al., 2019; Nikhashemi et al., 2019). As such, visitors' perceptions of brand personality were classified based on their experiences of presence to understand how presence affected their perceptions of brand personality (Table 5.28.). The total ratio of consumers who experienced presence and associated the dimensions of excitement and sophistication to the brand was higher than consumers who did not experience presence. By contrast, the total ratio of visitors who did not experience presence and described the Inn's brand as sincere and rugged was considerably higher than visitors who experienced narrative presence. In answer to RQ4, consumers who experience narrative presence are more likely to perceive the brand of fantasy servicescapes as exciting and sophisticated.

Table 5. 28. Consumers' brand experiences classified by narrative presence

	Narrative presence				
Brand personality	Imagination of story events	Imagination of self in events	Imagination of events and self	Total of presence	Not present in the story
Sincerity	9/10	2/3	15/15	26/28	19/20
Excitement	4/10	0/3	11/15	15/28	5/20
Ruggedness	1/10	0/3	0/15	1/28	3/20
Sophistication	1/10	0/3	0/15	1/28	0/20

5.7 Empathy with story characters

As earlier discussed, consumers empathise with characters and perceive the events from characters' points of view (Wallin et al., 2019; Kandaurova & Lee, 2019). As fantasy is a genre of contrasts with the characters having different stereotypes (Saricks, 2009) and considering the fact that consumers' responses to a story differs (Argo et al., 2008; Mar et al., 2009; Wallin et al., 2019; Kandaurova & Lee, 2019) depending on the character they empathise with, in answering the fifth question, this study aimed to examine how

consumers' empathy with positive (versus negative) fictional characters influence their subsequent responses to the fantasy servicescape.

When visitors were asked about characters they imagined about, out of the 28 visitors who experienced presence in the story, only 18 imagined of the characters, and all were positive characters of the related stories. Other transported visitors did not imagine any specific character but just had a holistic imagination of the movie events, or themselves as a hobbit in the stories or movies. The remaining visitors did not experience presence and neither recalled any characters.

When asked about the reasons why visitors did not imagine of negative story characters, they shared that visiting the movie set was like a "fairy tale experience" (P12), and that the place looked so nice, they only concentrated on positive characters of the stories.

> It was too nice, like a fairy tale experience. So, I was concentrating on the positive *[characters]*. (P12)

> I think it was just so idyllic, and it looked very quaint you didn't think about all the evil characters in the movie. It just looked like a really nice place to live. (P13)

As visitors of The Green Dragon Inn only imagined about the positive story characters, further study is needed to compare consumers' subsequent responses to the Inn based on their empathy with positive (versus negative) characters, to address RQ5. Besides, visitors who named the characters only imagined of those characters or imagined themselves as a hobbit, in general, without empathising with a certain character. As confronting negative story characters might be as attractive as confronting the positive characters and result in consumers' enjoyment of the experience (Study 1), this thesis surveyed a larger group of consumers in Study 3 to confirm a) consumers' experiences of narrative engagement in fantasy designed servicescapes, to examine consumers' b) affective, c) behavioural, and c) brand responses in such servicescapes, and compare d) consumers' responses based on their empathy with the positive (versus negative) character of the story.

5.8 Chapter summary

Following the identification of narrative presence as an encouraging facet for retailers to use storytelling in servicescape design in Study 1, Study 2 provided an understanding of consumers' engagement with *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* fantasy stories that the fantasy servicescape, The Green Dragon Inn, is designed upon.

Having interviewed visitors of the Inn, the study explored the antecedents and outcomes of consumers' engagement with stories and categorised them as themes and sub-themes comparable to the practitioners' perspectives obtained from Study 1.

Servicescape elements that are more effective in reminding consumers of the stories were identified. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, light and music were the two most cited ambient elements. In this regard, the dim lights highly transferred the vibe of the related movies. Regardless of visitors' opinions about the relevance of the music to the stories, a considerable number of visitors either expected or suggested to experience a live band playing to recreate the atmosphere of the movies at the Inn.

Regarding interior design, the furniture, colours, and wooden material of elements were cited as most reminding about the stories. As for *exterior design* elements, the Inn was described as having "unique, small windows", and a "nice view of the lake" in front of the entrance. Consumers also shared about the "size" of the building being larger than they expected, and its entrance, "the green door", reminding them of the storyline.

With regard to the social elements, what staff were wearing especially as waiters at the Inn was not what most visitors expected, as it did not fit the storyline. While visitors described the staff as informative, friendly, helpful, taking the job serious, humorous, and patient, the information provided by them was said to be more about other parts of the movie set, and less about the Inn, itself. Staff were also perceived as not interactive, neither communicating with, nor performing roles to get the visitors engaged.

Having explored the effective servicescape elements, the researcher further, asked about the level of story mimicry at the Inn. Based on their perceptions, the visitors were categorised into three groups; a small number believed that all elements were congruent with the storyline and met their expectations of what they would experience at the Inn. Among the reasons that led the majority of consumers to perceive mimicry as moderate, and reasons for why a few described the Inn as not mimicking the story, staff costumes was the most cited element that did not meet consumers' expectations.

In line with what designers shared about consumers' presence in stories as a reason that encourages them to use stories for designing servicescapes (Study 1), more than half of the visitors in Study 2 experienced presence in the story, at a higher or lower level.

The study found a positive relationship between the level of story mimicry and presence in the story, such that visitors who perceived higher level of mimicry were more likely to experience presence, and subsequently, get engaged with the presented stories.

Regardless of the retailers' considerable income, the budget spent on production of the related trilogies, as well as reputation of the stories, The Green Dragon Inn is designed in a way that for most of the visitors, its atmosphere moderately mimics the storyline, whereas, consistent with Study 1, visitors expect higher mimicry at this servicescape.

This study did not find a coherent relationship between consumers' age and presence in the story. However, in contribution to solving a debate in previous literature regarding the effect of gender on transportation, men were more likely to experience presence and also imagined about the characters more than women did.

Familiarity with the stories, the congruency of the servicescape atmospherics and drinks with the story, the information provided in form of video displays or via staff, as well as dressing up and role-plays by the visitors were reasons shared as helpful in focusing on and understanding the story and thus experiencing presence.

Experiencing virtual reality to see scenes of the related movie and the story characters at The Green Dragon Inn, dressing up and role-plays by visitors, story mimicry, as well as information provided as movie clips on a screen or via staff at the Inn were shared by some consumers as elements that, regardless of presence in the story, could have further helped focusing on and understanding the story. The level of familiarity with the stories, the limited time spent at the Inn, and the consumers' inability to identify with characters were other reasons hindering them from focusing on and understanding the story.

Based on what was found about consumers' presence in the story that was told to them through the Inn's atmospherics and having identified the elements that helped focus on and understand the story, and with regard to the fact that the visitors emotionally engage with the presented story at the Inn, in answer to RQ1, this study suggests that consumers experience narrative engagement in fantasy designed servicescapes.

In addressing RQ2, visitors who experience presence at the Inn are more likely to feel happiness and joy, relaxed, peaceful, and calm, warm-hearted, nostalgia and contentment. Visitors who do not become lost in the story are more likely to feel comfort and cosy, excitement, surprised and amazed, and lucky to be at the Inn. As ratios of the experienced positive emotions is mostly higher amongst visitors who were lost in the story, compared

to those who did not experience presence, the findings support extant literature suggesting that transportation or presence causes consumers to express more positive affective responses (Escalas, 2004a; Chang, 2009). The findings of this study, further, suggest that when consumers pay attention and imagine the events and themselves in a given story, their interest to stay engaged with that story for longer may lead to feeling rushed and worried, when there are time concerns. Another negative emotion was boredom that was reported by a visitor who did not experience presence. Moreover, in line with previous studies that suggest transportation or presence results in story-consistent affective responses (Van Laer et al., 2014; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Bilandzic et al., 2020), visitors who experienced no emotions at the Inn were amongst those who were not lost in the story.

In answer to RQ3, visitors shared about their intentions to spend time and money at the servicescape, mostly on eating, drinking, buying souvenirs and beer from the Inn, their intentions to return, and recommend the servicescape to others. Presence in the story encourages visitors to spend more time at the Inn. Visitors require at least 30 minutes to engage with the story. As such, while retailers prefer a fast flow of consumers dining at restaurants and cafes (Study 1), when designed based on a story, this study suggests retailers to allow at least 30 minutes to get consumers engaged. Visitors who experience narrative presence are, further, more likely to intend to spend money on buying services that relate to the presented story. Visitors not lost in the story are more likely to intend to spend money on eating, drinking, and buying souvenirs. Visitors shared that if souvenir were sold at the Inn, they were more likely to purchase those items, given the strong story vibe at the Inn. Visitors who experienced narrative presence are also more likely to return. Relatedly, the higher the visitors perceive story mimicry at the Inn, the more likely they seem to return. Visitors who experience presence are also more likely to recommend the servicescape to others.

As for actual behaviours, visitors who experience presence are more likely to enjoy and have fun and spend money at the servicescape. When lost in the story, however, visitors are less likely to explore the servicescape, possibly as they are more focused on the story, itself.

To answer RQ4, consumers who experience narrative presence are more likely to perceive the servicescape brand as exciting and sophisticated. By contrast, consumers who did not experience presence and describe the brand as sincere and rugged is considerably higher.

Given that confronting negative story characters might be as enjoyable for consumers as confronting the positive characters (Study 1), as visitors of The Green Dragon Inn only imagined about positive characters, this thesis surveyed a larger group of consumers in a third study (Study 3) to confirm a) consumers' experiences of narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes, examine b) affective, c) behavioural, and c) brand responses in the fantasy servicescape, and compare d) consumers' responses based on their empathy with the positive (versus negative) character of the story to address RQ5.

Chapter 6 Study 3

The Fairest Servicescape of Them All:

Consumers' experiences of servicescapes designed based on positive versus negative story characters

6.1 Introduction

The two previous exploratory studies provided an understanding of designers' (Study 1) and consumers' (Study 2) opinions on consumers' experiences of narrative engagement and their affective, behavioural, and brand responses in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories. While the use of negative story characters for designing servicescapes was perceived by designers in Study 1 as beneficial in attracting consumers' attentions and getting them engaged as the positive characters, the consumers in Study 2 only imagined the positive story characters, relating the reason to the positive vibe of the servicescape they visited.

Considering the benefits of positive and negative characters in designing servicescapes, the researcher conducted two online surveys in Study 3 to confirm a positive relationship between servicescape atmospherics and consumers' experiences of narrative engagement, as well as a positive relationships between narrative engagement and consumers' positive affective responses, their behavioural intentions, and perceptions of brand personality in two contradicting designs of a restaurant that presents the fantasy story, *Snow White*, with one design featuring Snow White as the positive character (Case 1) and the second design featuring the Evil Queen as the negative character (Case 2). In line with the transportation theory, this study expected to find a negative relationship between narrative engagement and consumers' negative affective responses. In addition to testing for the relationships between the servicescape atmospherics, narrative engagement, the positive and negative affective responses, behavioural intentions and brand personality, the findings from the current study contribute to extant research by identifying the differences in consumers' experiences of servicescapes designed based on positive versus negative story characters.

This chapter presents the findings from the data gathered through the two online surveys conducted in Study 3. In doing so, the chapter starts by providing the rationale for the conceptual framework of Study 3 followed by defining the hypotheses by reference to the extant literature and the findings from Studies 1 and 2. The chapter subsequently presents the method of data collection and describes the sample, the stimuli, and development of the survey. After examining the framework, the chapter presents the data screening and cleaning procedures, followed by the findings from the CFA and SEM analysis.

6.2 Proposed conceptual framework

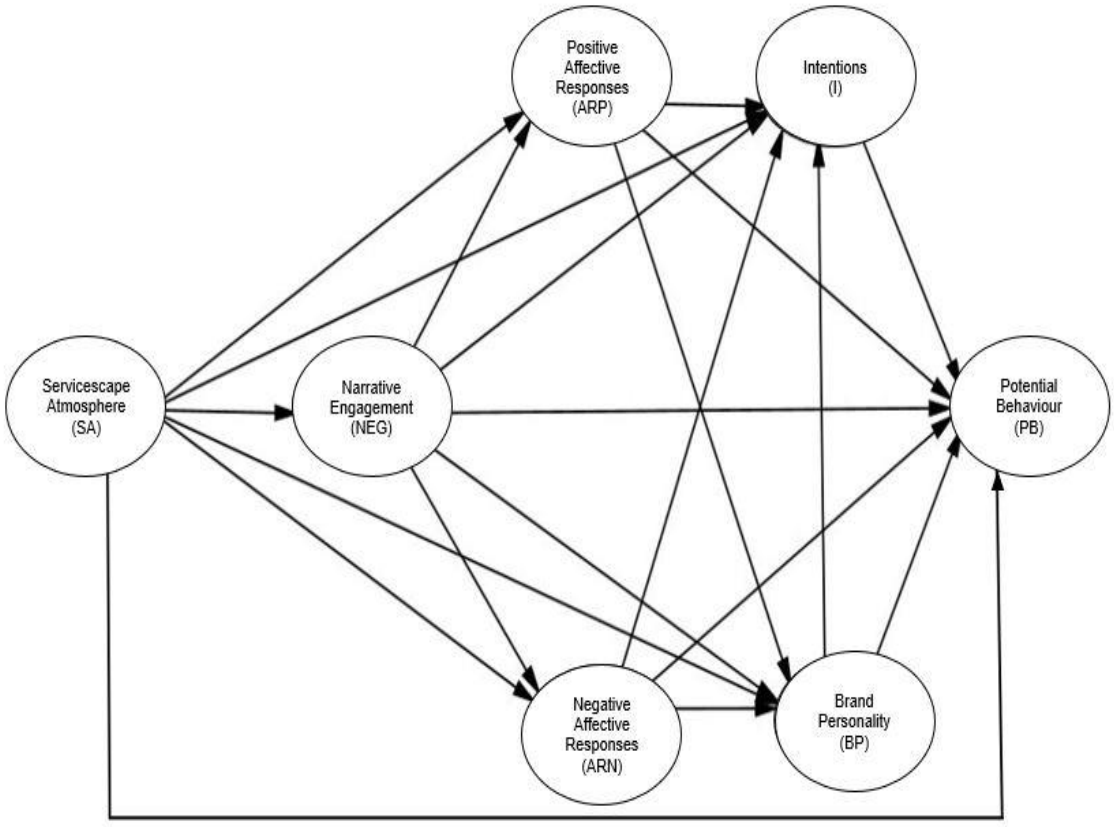
The purpose of this section is to provide the rationale for the conceptual framework that will be empirically examined in subsequent sections of this chapter. Constructs will be conceptually defined, and related hypotheses will be stated by reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, as well as the findings obtained from Studies 1 and 2.

Integration of theory and methodological enquiries from the environmental psychology (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009), and brand personality (Aaker, 1997) literatures characterises the conceptual framework and its empirical examination addresses the research questions. The conceptual framework is a modification of Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) environmental psychology model by including narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009) as an extra layer that explains the mechanism by which servicescape atmospherics that present a fantasy story influence consumers' affective, behavioural, and brand responses (Figure 6.1.).

The environmental psychology or Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model is one of the most prominent and robust models used by consumer researchers that provides the theoretical basis for understanding consumers' behaviour in servicescape environments (Bigne et al., 2020; Chopdar & Balakrishnan, 2020; Laato et al., 2020).

When the environmental psychology model (hereafter, the SOR model) is applied in the retail context, stimuli (S) refer to the atmospheric cues in the environment that influence consumers' internal states (Organism), which influence their behavioural responses (R).

Figure 6. 1. Proposed conceptual framework



Specifically, stimuli (S) refer to physical and non-physical elements of the environment which are in the retailer's control in order to enhance consumers' shopping experiences (e.g., Laato et al., 2020; Arora, Parida, & Sahney, 2020). In this study, a fantasy story is incorporated into the stimuli, including the music, light, and décor, with staff dressed as story characters interacting with consumers. While all servicescape atmospherics (SA) are, more or less, capable of representing a story, following Eroglu and Machleit (2008), stimuli are examined with a holistic approach in this study.

The stimuli in this study present a fantasy story. As stories get consumers lost in worlds they create, and engage them (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009), the conceptual framework proposes that a servicescape atmosphere (SA) that presents a fantasy story can result in narrative engagement (NEG). Consumers' engagement with the story, as discussed later in the chapter, in-turn, influences their subsequent responses in the servicescape.

Organism (O) in the SOR model refer to consumers' cognitive and affective evaluations that intervene between stimuli and consumers' behaviour (Chen & Yao, 2018; Laato et al., 2020; Arora et al., 2020). In line with most research on servicescape atmospherics

that examine only the affective component of internal evaluations (see Yoo et al., 1998; Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006), given the purpose of this thesis in examining consumers' emotions in servicescapes that are designed based on a fantasy story, and given that the consumers in Study 3 visit the servicescape online and therefore, are not able to make cognitive judgements about what the retailer offers, the focus is on positive (ARP) and negative (ARN) affective responses.

Response (R) in the SOR paradigm presents consumers' final decisions which are in the form of approach or avoidance behaviours (see Chen & Yao, 2018; Laato et al., 2020; Arora et al., 2020). Approach behaviours describe positive actions directed towards a servicescape in terms of consumers' intentions (I) and potential behaviour (PB) whereas avoidance behaviours reflect the opposite (Mehrabian & Russell 1974; Bitner, 1992).

As stories have power to change a specific brand's personality (Lundqvist et al., 2013), the framework in this study further examined consumers' perceptions of the personality of the servicescape brand (BP).

The proposed conceptual framework (Figure 6.1.) illustrates construct associations that are examined based on the existing literature, and appropriate and relevant propositions evidenced in the two qualitative studies (Studies 1 and 2). The framework proposes that servicescape atmospherics that present a fantasy story result in consumers' experiences of narrative engagement, and that engagement, in-turn, influences consumers' affective, behavioural, and brand responses. As proposed later, depending on the type of character (positive versus negative) that consumers empathise with, their subsequent responses in the servicescape could differ.

Based on what was so far discussed, the proposed framework involves the measurement of the modified constructs, servicescape atmosphere (SA), narrative engagement (NEG), positive and negative affective responses (ARP & ARN), intentions (I), behaviour (PB), as well as brand personality (BP) at a basic level, with measurement of empathy (EMP) as the moderator - to be later included in the framework - alongside examination of the hypothesised associations between these constructs. The study proposes how constructs, and the related associations are examined using items from multiple, diverse literatures. The researcher argues that any weaknesses in one literature is addressed by presentation of scales or items from other literatures.

6.3 An examination of the research questions and hypotheses

In this section, the various constructs, and associations in the conceptual framework and why they should be studied, is theoretically justified. This study examined direct effects, multi-group, and moderation effects between the constructs and develops hypothesis for these associations. While mediation effects are beyond the purpose of this study and thus no hypotheses were initially defined for them, as no direct relationship was found between the servicescape atmosphere (SA) and consumers' behavioural intentions (BI), the study also tested for the specific indirect effects that helped understand the indirect effect of the servicescape atmosphere (SA) on behavioural intentions (BI) through other constructs in the conceptual framework as outlined later in the chapter.

6.3.1 Servicescape atmosphere

As discussed earlier in the Literature Chapter, the servicescape atmosphere comprises ambient, design, and social cues (Wang & Mattila, 2015; Demoulin & Willems, 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020) and this thesis applied a holistic approach (Eroglu & Machleit, 2008) in examining the effect of the servicescape atmosphere on consumers' responses.

The following sections explain the relationships between the servicescape atmosphere at the holistic level, and consumers' experiences of narrative engagement, their affective and behavioural responses, and perceptions of brand personality in the servicescape.

6.3.1.1 Servicescape atmosphere and narrative engagement

Regardless of their real or fictional genre and the form they are presented, the power of stories to engage consumers is proven in the marketing literature by multiple scholars (e.g., Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Dessart, 2018; Campbell et al., 2020). Nevertheless, limited research have examined the power of stories in engaging consumers in physical retail environments (cf. Mossberg, 2008; Diamond et al., 2009). Moreover, these studies focus on real (versus fictive) stories and thus the question remains whether consumers' exposure to fantasy stories presented through servicescape atmospherics also results in engagement with those stories (see Stevens & Maclaran, 2005; Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2008, 2019; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Seregina, 2018).

The designers (Study 1) and consumers (Study 2) interviewed in the qualitative studies of this thesis provided evidence for consumers' engagement with stories in servicescapes.

To confirm findings from the two former qualitative studies and answer RQ1, this study proposes that fantasy servicescape atmosphere results in narrative engagement and that regardless of the type of character the design highlights, the level of engagement does not differ across servicescapes:

H1a: Fantasy servicescape atmosphere has a positive effect on narrative engagement

H1b: There is no significant difference in the positive effect of a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on narrative engagement

6.3.1.2 Servicescape atmosphere and affective responses

In addition to its potential in getting consumers engaged in stories, as numerous studies have long noted, servicescape atmospherics (Chang et al., 2011; Roggeveen et al., 2020) and stories (Escalas, 2004a; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019) evoke positive and negative affective responses in consumers. Study 1 and 2 explored the different types of affective responses that consumers are likely to feel in servicescapes designed based on a fantasy story. As consumers were reported as experiencing both positive and negative affective responses in fantasy servicescapes, to help answer RQ2, this study proposes:

H2a: Fantasy servicescape atmosphere has a positive effect on positive affective responses

H2b: Fantasy servicescape atmosphere has a positive effect on negative affective responses

Despite the differences in the design of the two cases, considering the holistic approach of this thesis in examining servicescape atmospherics, and in line with previous research that suggest atmospherics positively affect consumers' positive and negative emotions, this study does not anticipate a negative relationship between servicescape atmospherics and consumers' negative emotions in Case 1 that highlights the positive story character, or a negative effect on positive emotions in Case 2 that highlights the negative character. However, comparing the happy music and brighter lighting of Case 1 atmosphere to the somewhat fearful music and more dimmed lighting of Case 2, it is sensible to expect differences in the intensity of the positive and negative experienced emotions across the two cases. There is evidence in literature confirming that happy music affects consumers' mood to become more positive, as compared to sad music (Alpert & Alpert, 1990; Alpert, Alpert, & Maltz, 2005). Case 1 music was characterised by design experts who reviewed the content of the related stimuli video as being happy, as compared to the sense of fear perceived from the music of Case 2. The brighter lighting of Case 1 atmosphere was also

expected to result in increased positive emotions, compared to the more dimmed lighting of Case 2 (see Mehrabian, 1976; Summers & Hebert, 2001; Smolders & De Kort, 2014; Veenstra & Koole, 2018).

Although the servicescape atmospherics are holistically examined, light and music are considered by design experts (Study 1) and consumers (Study 2) as the most effective elements in presenting a story. Accordingly, in selecting the stimuli to be investigated in this study, special attention was paid to these elements, as well as to the entire décor.

Based on what was discussed, consumers are expected to experience more positive and less negative emotions in Case 1 that highlights the positive story character compared to Case 2 that highlights the negative character. As such, to further address RQ2, the current study anticipates:

H2c: Consumers experience more positive affective responses in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character

H2d: Consumers experience less negative affective responses in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character

6.3.1.3 Servicescape atmosphere and consumer behaviour

Different dimensions of a servicescape (Chang et al., 2011; Roggeveen et al., 2020) and stories (Van Laer et al., 2014; Lee & Jeong, 2017) can also affect consumers' intentions and behavioural responses. Study 1 and 2 explored the different types of intentions and behaviours that consumers are likely to express in fantasy servicescapes. Accordingly, this study proposes a positive association between the fantasy servicescape atmosphere with consumers' intentions and behaviour. As consumers in this study do not physically visit the servicescape but watch related videos that are embedded in the online survey, their behaviour is referred to as "potential behaviour" throughout this study. Accordingly, in addressing RQ3, the study anticipates:

H3a: Fantasy servicescape atmosphere has a positive effect on consumers' intentions

H3b: Fantasy servicescape atmosphere has a positive effect on consumers' potential behaviour

Previous research postulate contradicting effects of servicescape elements on behaviour. For example, in Zeeshan & Obaid's (2013) research, happy (versus sad) music was found as increasing purchase intention. Similarly, Gardner (1985) proposes that playing cheerful

music evokes positive moods in consumers that ultimately result in positive evaluations and behaviours. Yalch and Spangenberg (1993), further, found that consumers are likely to spend more money in stores that play happy music. By contrast, in Alpert and Alpert (1990)'s study, sad music results in higher purchase intention.

Similarly, in terms of the lighting level, despite the favourable effect of bright lights in increasing consumers' positive emotions (Veenstra & Koole, 2018), research indicates that dim lighting, particularly in restaurant atmospheres, encourages consumers to linger (Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990). In another study, dimly lit changing rooms were found to made consumer feel more attractive in items they tried on, making them more likely to purchase the clothes (Ballantine et al., 2015).

Moreover, as discussed later in detail when proposing the hypotheses related to empathy with story characters, consumers' intentions and behaviours in response to a given story might differ depending on the story character (positive versus negative) they experience (e.g., Argo et al., 2008; Mar et al., 2009).

Considering the contradicting effects of servicescape atmospherics and story characters on consumers' intentions and behaviour, given that Case 1 highlights the positive (versus negative) story character with happy (versus fearful) music and bright (versus dim) lights, to further address RQ3, this study proposes that the servicescape atmosphere of Case 1 (versus Case 2) might result in different intentions and behaviour in consumers. However, given the inconsistencies in the extant literature regarding the effect of music and light on consumers' intentions and behaviour, the study does not anticipate a certain direction for the differences across the cases.

H3c: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on consumers' intentions

H3d: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on consumers' potential behaviour

6.3.1.4 Servicescape atmosphere and brand personality

In addition to changing affective and behavioural responses, servicescape atmospherics (Möller & Herm, 2013; Mohtar et al., 2019) and stories (Lundqvist et al., 2013) impact consumers' brand perceptions. Study 1 and 2 explored different types of personalities that consumers associate to the brand of fantasy servicescapes. Accordingly, to answer RQ4,

this study proposes that the atmospherics of fantasy servicescapes have a positive effect on consumers' perceptions of brand personality:

H4a: Fantasy servicescape atmosphere has a positive effect on brand personality

Previous research find contradicting effects of servicescape atmospherics such as music (e.g., Magnini & Thelen, 2008) and lighting (e.g., Orth, Heinrich, & Malkewitz, 2012; Schielke, & Leudesdorff, 2015) on brand personality. In addition, previous research find differences in consumers' brand evaluations depending on the character that promotes a given brand. For example, Knoll et al. (2015) find that positive presented characters elicit more favourable brand attitudes compared to negative presented characters. By contrast, Campbell et al. (2020) find brands using negatively-valenced imagery and dark characters as resulting in higher brand recall. However, the latter researchers perceive this effect to occur only for established (versus unknown) brands.

Considering the differences in atmospheric elements of Case 1 and Case 2, including the happy (versus fearful) music and bright (versus dim) light of Case 1 compared to Case 2, in addressing RQ4, the study proposes a difference between consumers' perceptions of brand personality across the two cases. Given the inconsistencies in the literature about the effect of music and light on brand personality, the current study does not anticipate a certain direction for the difference across the cases.

H4b: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on brand personality

6.3.2 Narrative engagement

As earlier discussed, stories invite and get consumers lost in worlds they create, as they focus on, understand, and emotionally engage with the events and characters in the story (e.g., Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). Engagement with stories, then, influences consumers' affective responses (e.g., Dessart, 2018; Bilandzic et al., 2020), intentions and behaviour (e.g., Van Leeuwen et al., 2017) as well as their perceptions of brand personality (e.g., Lundqvist et al., 2013).

The following hypothesis examine the associations between narrative engagement and the consequences of this experience in fantasy designed servicescapes.

6.3.2.1 Narrative engagement and affective responses

Research indicates that when consumers are exposed to and lose themselves in a story, their emotions change to reflect that particular story (e.g., Gerrig, 1993; Escalas 2004a; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Bilandzic et al., 2020). Moreover, the higher the consumers get engaged with a given story, the more likely they are to perceive that story as realistic and thus express more story-consistent emotions (Escalas 2004a; Chang, 2009; LaMarre & Landreville, 2009; Vaughn, 2010).

While getting lost in a story is reported as having a positive effect on positive emotions, regardless of a story's context, when lost in a story consumers are expected to experience less negative emotions. In other words, becoming lost in a story elicits positive emotions and inhibits negative emotions in consumers (Escalas, 2007). Nevertheless, to date, limited studies have examined the effect of narrative engagement (versus transportation) on consumers' positive and/or negative affective responses (cf. Bilandzic et al., 2020).

In contrary to Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) who perceived the prediction of emotions evoked by a given story to be difficult, the qualitative studies conducted in this thesis provide a number of specific emotions that designers aim to evoke (Study 1), as well as emotions that consumers are likely to experience (Study 2) in fantasy servicescapes.

Considering the similarities between narrative engagement and narrative transportation as constructs that both examine consumers' experiences of detachment from reality and getting lost in stories, to address RQ2, this study proposes a significant positive effect of narrative engagement on positive emotions and a negative effect on negative emotions:

H5a: Narrative engagement has a positive effect on positive affective responses

H5b: Narrative engagement has a negative effect on negative affective responses

Moreover, as engagement with stories is expected to increase positive (versus negative) affective responses, given the differences in the atmospherics of the two studied cases that highlight the positive (versus negative) story character, in further addressing RQ2, the study proposes that consumers experience more positive and less negative emotions in Case 1 servicescape that highlights the positive character, as compared to Case 2:

H5c: The positive effect of narrative engagement on positive affective responses is stronger (versus weaker) in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character.

H5d: The negative effect of narrative engagement on negative affective responses is stronger (versus weaker) in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character.

6.3.2.2 Narrative engagement and consumer behaviour

In addition to emotions, engagement with stories influences consumers' intentions and behaviour (e.g., Green & Brock, 2000, 2002; Escalas, 2004a, 2007; Dal Cin et al., 2007; Green, 2008; Vaughn, 2010; Van Laer, 2011; Van Leeuwen et al., 2017). When lost in a given story, consumers are more likely to perform actions relevant to the story and thus engagement with the story affects their intentions (Escalas, 2004b; Dal Cin et al., 2007; Dunlop, Wakefield, & Kashima, 2008a; Escalas & Luce, 2004, Lee & Jeong, 2017).

Beyond story-consistent intentions, as consumers' engagement with the story increases, so does their story-consistent behaviour (Green et al., 2008; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Mazzocco et al., 2010; Van Laer et al., 2014).

To address RQ3 and have a better understanding of the effect of engagement with stories on consumers' intentions and behaviour in fantasy servicescapes, this study anticipates:

H6a: Narrative engagement has a positive effect on consumers' intentions

H6b: Narrative engagement has a positive effect on consumers' potential behaviour

Moreover, previous research on transportation find differences in consumers' intentions and behaviour, depending on the characters they empathise with (e.g., Argo et al., 2008; Mar et al., 2009). Specifically, as discussed subsequently in detail when proposing the hypotheses related to empathy with characters (Section 6.3.6.), empathy with positive (versus negative) story characters is perceived as resulting in positive (versus negative) intentions (e.g., Slater et al., 2003; Dal Cin et al., 2007). In contrast, more recent studies find advantages for brands that use negatively-valenced imagery and dark characters such as consumer attraction (Campbell et al., 2020) and enjoyment (Dessart, 2018). Similar to these latter findings, the designers interviewed in Study 1 perceived positive and negative story characters as able to attract consumers and result in fun and enjoyment.

Considering the differences in the atmospherics of Case 1 and Case 2 that, respectively, highlight the positive and negative character this study proposes a significant difference in the effect of narrative engagement on consumers' intentions and behaviour across the two cases. However, given the contradictions in extant findings regarding the outcomes

of empathy with different story characters, the study does not anticipate a certain direction for the differences in consumers' intentions and behaviour across the cases. To further address RQ3, the current study proposes:

H6c: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of narrative engagement in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on consumers' intentions

H6d: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of narrative engagement in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on potential behaviour

6.3.2.3 Narrative engagement and brand personality

Stories not only influence consumers' emotions and behaviour, but, as earlier discussed, they change consumers' perceptions of brand personality (e.g., Lundqvist et al., 2013). However, to date, limited studies have investigated the effect of narrative engagement on consumers' brand experiences (e.g., brand attitudes, Lee & Jeong, 2017). The lack of empirical research on the effect of narrative engagement on brand personality, therefore, suggests the need for further investigation. To further address RQ4, this study proposes:

H7a: Narrative engagement has a positive effect on brand personality

In addition, as consumers' brand experiences differ depending on the type of character that promotes the brand (Knoll et al., 2015, Campbell et al., 2020), given the differences in atmospherics of Case 1 and Case 2, this study further proposes a difference in the positive effect of narrative engagement on brand personality across the cases. However, given the contradictions in extant findings on the consequences of consumers' exposure to positive (versus negative) characters, the study does not anticipate a stronger positive (versus negative) effect on brand personality in Case 1 (versus Case 2). To address RQ4, the study proposes:

H7b: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of narrative engagement in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on brand personality

6.3.3 Affective responses

This section develops the hypotheses related to the associations between positive and negative affective responses, with consumers' intentions, behaviour, and perceptions of brand personality in fantasy servicescapes.

6.3.3.1 Affective responses and consumer behaviour

Previous research find significant relationships between consumers' affective states and their subsequent intentions, and behaviour, such as their intentions to make a purchase, the amount of time and money spent in a servicescape, and enjoyment (Chang et al., 2011, Tantanatewin & Inkarojrit, 2018; Vukadin et al., 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020). As such, to have a better understanding of consumers' intentions and potential behaviour in fantasy designed servicescapes and address RQ3 comprehensively, this study proposes:

H8a: Positive affective responses have a positive effect on consumers' intentions

H8b: Positive affective responses have a positive effect on consumers' potential behaviour

Similarly, the negative emotions experienced in fantasy servicescapes are expected by designers (Study 1) as well as previous studies to eventually result in positive outcomes such as enjoyment. Enjoyment of transportation, as Green et al. (2004, p. 315) contend, "does not necessarily lie in the valence of the emotions evoked by a narrative, but in the process of temporarily leaving one's reality behind and emerging from the experience somehow different from the person one was before entering the milieu of the narrative" (see also Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Nabi, Stitt, Halford, & Flinnerty, 2006). To further address RQ3, a positive association is proposed between negative affective responses and consumers' intentions and potential behaviour in fantasy servicescapes:

H9a: Negative affective responses have a positive effect on consumers' intentions

H9b: Negative affective responses have a positive effect on consumers' potential behaviour

The study, further, proposes a difference in the effect of positive and negative emotions on consumers' intentions and behaviour across the cases. However, as the influence of consumers' emotions on their intentions and behaviour in fantasy servicescapes has not been examined before, the strength of this effect is not specifically attributed to either of the studied cases. To further address RQ3, the study anticipates:

H8c: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of positive affective responses in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on consumers' intentions

H8d: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of positive affective responses in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on potential behaviour

H9c: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of negative affective responses in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on consumers' intentions

H9d: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of negative affective responses in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on potential behaviour

6.3.3.2 Affective responses and brand personality

Previous research often focus on the effect of brand personality on affective responses (Biel, 1993; Freling & Forbes, 2005; Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006; Kim & Lehto, 2013; Su & Tong, 2015) proving that brand personality increases emotion and affect levels in consumers (e.g., Biel, 1993). By contrast, a limited number of studies find evidence for the significant effect of positive emotions (Escalas, 2004a) consumers experience as a result of transportation in stories on their brand evaluations. Yet, no studies, to date, seem to have examined the relationships between positive and negative emotions that consumers experience, specifically, due to narrative engagement, and their brand perceptions. To have a more comprehensive understanding of consumers' brand perceptions in fantasy servicescapes and further address RQ4, this study proposes that the positive and negative emotions in fantasy servicescapes have a positive effect on brand personality:

H10a: Positive affective responses have a positive effect on brand personality

H11a: Negative affective responses have a positive effect on brand personality

Similar to what was earlier suggested about the difference in the effects of emotions on intentions and behaviour in the two cases, in further addressing RQ4, the study proposes a difference in the effects of positive and negative emotions on brand personality across the two cases.

H10b: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of positive affective responses in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on brand personality

H11b: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of negative affective responses in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on brand personality

6.3.4 Brand personality and consumer behaviour

A brand's personality is one of the most defining features that determines consumers' perceptions of the brand and thus influences their attitude or behaviour (Dodoo, 2018).

Through brand personality, consumers form relationships and connections with brands (Giroux & Grohmann, 2015) and by buying a brand similar to their actual personality, they communicate who they are (Aaker, 1999; Freling & Forbes, 2005; Dodoo, 2018).

Attaching a personality to brands can make them more desirable to consumers (Bouhlel, Mzoughi, Hadiji, & Ben Slimane, 2011), simplifying their purchase decisions (Phau & Lau, 2001), encouraging positive word-of-mouth, and increasing their willingness to pay (Bairrada et al., 2019), intentions of future behaviour (Su & Tong, 2015), and loyalty (Dodoo, 2018). Accordingly, to further address RQ3, this study proposes:

H12a: Brand personality has a positive effect on consumers' intentions

H12b: Brand personality has a positive effect on consumers' potential behaviour

Moreover, as consumers are likely to perceive the personality of the two cases different, the difference in brand personalities might, in-turn, have different effects on consumers' intentions and behaviour across the cases. However, as no studies to date have examined the effect of brand personality on consumers' intentions and behaviour in servicescapes that are designed based on stories, the current study does not anticipate a direction for the differences across the two cases. In further addressing RQ3, the study proposes:

H12c: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of brand personality in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on consumers' intentions

H12d: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of brand personality in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on potential behaviour

6.3.5 Consumer behaviour

As intentions do not always result in behaviours (Chandon, Morwitz, & Reinartz, 2005; Ajzen, 2020), in addressing RQ3 the study proposes:

H13a: Consumers' intentions have a positive effect on potential behaviour.

As consumers might have different intentions in the studied cases, it is reasonable to also assume a difference in the effect of intentions on subsequent behaviour. To address RQ3, the study further suggests:

H13b: There is a significant difference in the positive effect of consumes' intentions in a servicescape highlighting a positive (versus negative) story character on potential behaviour

6.3.6 Empathy with story characters

When consumers engage with stories, they adopt a certain character's perspectives and, therefore, relive the character's emotions (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). This concept is defined by Oatley (1995, 1999) as empathy. Specifically, empathy refers to consumers' attempts in putting themselves in shoes of characters in a story and to feel the world in the same way (Escalas & Stern, 2003; Wallin et al., 2019). Empathy occurs when we share a specific emotion with a story character; to have the emotion we do because the story character has it (Van Laer et al., 2014; Wallin et al., 2019).

Depending on the type of story character the consumers empathise with, their responses to a given story may differ (Argo et al., 2008; Mar et al., 2009). Previous studies find that empathy with positive characters may result in positive (versus negative) intentions as compared to negative characters (Slater et al., 2003; Dal Cin et al., 2007). In contrast, more recent studies find several advantages for brands that use dark characters, such as consumer attraction (Campbell et al., 2020) and enjoyment (Dessart, 2018). Similarly, the negative and positive characters were both shared by the designers in Study 1 as able to attract the consumers and result in enjoyment. Moreover, consumers' brand experiences might differ depending on the type of character that promotes a brand (Knoll et al., 2015, Campbell et al., 2020).

Considering that fantasy is a genre of contrasts (Saricks, 2009) in which the characters have opposite archetypes, to answer RQ5, this study examined how the level of empathy with positive and negative story characters impacts consumers' affective, behavioural and brand responses in fantasy designed servicescapes. Accordingly, the study proposes that consumers' empathy with story characters moderates the impact of narrative engagement on positive and negative affective responses, intentions, behaviour, and brand personality:

H14: Empathy with the character (positive or negative) moderates the relationships between narrative engagement and (a) positive affective responses, (b) negative affective responses, (c) intentions, (d) potential behaviour, and (e) brand personality.

Table 6.1. illustrates the five research questions together with the related hypotheses and structural paths in the conceptual framework.

Table 6. 1. Research questions with hypotheses and structural paths

Research questions	Related hypotheses		Related path in the conceptual framework		
	Direct effects	Multigroup effects			
RQ1	H1a	H1b	SA	→	NEG
RQ2	H2a	H2c	SA	→	ARP
	H2b	H2d	SA	→	ARN
	H5a	H5c	NEG	→	ARP
	H5b	H5d	NEG	→	ARN
RQ3	H3a	H3c	SA	→	I
	H3b	H3d	SA	→	PB
	H6a	H6c	NEG	→	I
	H6b	H6d	NEG	→	PB
	H8a	H8c	ARP	→	I
	H8b	H8d	ARP	→	PB
	H9a	H9c	ARN	→	I
	H9b	H9d	ARN	→	PB
	H12a	H12c	BP	→	I
	H12b	H12d	BP	→	PB
	H13a	H13b	I	→	PB
RQ4	H4a	H4b	SA	→	BP
	H7a	H7b	NEG	→	BP
	H10a	H10b	ARP	→	BP
	H11a	H11b	ARN	→	BP
Moderation effects				(EMP) ↓	
RQ5	H14a		NEG	→	ARP
	H14b		NEG	→	ARN
	H14c		NEG	→	I
	H14d		NEG	→	PB
	H14e		NEG	→	BP

6.4 Method

This section reviews the data collection procedure and sample, the stimuli, and outlines the scales included in the survey.

6.4.1 Data collection procedure and sample

As discussed in detail in the Method Chapter, data was collected using an online survey. In January 2020, 210 (for Case 1) and 219 (for Case 2) respondents were drawn from a Qualtrics™ opt-in survey panel of individuals who were over the age of 16 and resided in New Zealand. The pros and cons of collecting data using Qualtrics was described in the Method Chapter (Chapter 3, Section 3.6.3).

Cleaning the data resulted in 202 (Case 1) and 214 (Case 2) final responses.

6.4.2 Stimuli

Stimuli included two videos of the Story Book Dining at Artist Point with Snow White, a restaurant in Disneyland themed around the story, *Snow White*. The pros and cons of using video stimuli in surveys, the content, and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of each video was described in detail in the Method Chapter (Chapter 3, Section 3.6.4).

It is worthy to note that although consumers in Study 2 visited the servicescape in person, the story in both studies is presented to consumers through the same ambient and design elements of the servicescape such as the light, music, and décor. The main difference in story presentation between Study 2 and Study 3 relates to the presence of story characters in Study 3 stimuli where the characters are interacting with consumers in the servicescape. In this regard, previous research on narrative transportation find that the modality of the medium through which a story is presented to consumers does not affect the intensity of transportation to a story (Van Laer, 2011). Although presence of characters in Study 3 stimuli provide a richer modality compared to Study 2 servicescape, the intensity of the story presentation does not impact consumers' experiences of engagement with the story.

6.4.3 Scales

Study 3 examined the influence of fantasy servicescape atmosphere (SA) on consumers' experiences of narrative engagement (NEG), their positive (ARP) and negative (ARN) affective responses, intentions (I), potential behaviour (PB), as well as their perceptions of brand personality (BP). Empathy with story characters is also tested as a variable that has the potential to moderate the effect of narrative engagement on subsequent consumer responses. As such, the framework initially included eight constructs. Later, as will be

discussed in Section 6.6, the CFA analyses results suggest merging the intention (I) and potential behaviour (PB) constructs, leaving seven constructs in the final framework.

To avoid order effects (see McFarland, 1981) the dependent variables of the model were measured first. I based the items used for measurement scales on empirically validated scales from previous studies. According to Harrington (2009), using existing measures not only saves a researcher's time and budget, but also helps to make research findings comparable across studies. However, when using an existing measure, it is important to make sure whether the measure is appropriate for the population included in the study. In these circumstances, CFA can be used to examine whether the original structure of the measure works well in the new population (Harrington, 2009).

The survey was, further, reviewed for readability and content validity by 6 PhD students to assess the clarity of words and phrases and to correct any possible misunderstanding. The PhD students, who were all from marketing and other business related disciplines, were asked to evaluate the items, according to their expertise, as to whether each item measures what it is intended to measure. Slight wording changes were made in the case of a few items, but no changes were made to the item pool. The operationalised scales with improvements made in the survey are available in Appendix D.

Unless mentioned, the following measures are scored on 7-point Likert scales anchored (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Reverse-coded items are indicated by a (_r).

6.4.3.1 Introduction and instructions

The survey began with an introduction to explain the purpose and ethical considerations of the study. To avoid non-response bias, respondents were assured of confidentiality, and briefed about the importance of the study. Thereafter, screening questions about age and country of residence were asked, and respondents who were eligible to answer the survey questions were then, provided with the instructions and video stimuli that were embedded in the online survey.

The restaurant was allocated fictitious names, The Snow White Restaurant in Case 1, and The Evil Queen Restaurant in Case 2. In consumer research, projective techniques involve the use of relatively ambiguous stimuli to allow the respondents to interpret the stimuli in terms of their own perceptions. However, the nature of the stimuli must offer enough directions to evoke some association with the studied concept (Churchill, 1991; Gordon

& Langmaid, 1988). Projective techniques uncover the innermost thoughts and feelings of respondents (Kline, 1983).

To understand consumers' perceptions of the restaurant itself and not the recorded video of the restaurant, respondents were asked to *imagine* as if they, themselves, are visiting the restaurant while watching the video.

6.4.3.2 Affective responses

Following the instructions and having watched the video, the respondents were asked to report their positive and negative affective responses. The classification and measurement of emotions in marketing research is influenced by psychology literature with marketing scholars borrowing psychology-based self-report emotion measures to analyse consumers' affective responses (Hosany et al., 2015). Self-reports are the most popular method to capture emotions (Diener, 2000) by which, the consumers rate their emotional reactions to stimuli.

Four commonly used scales for emotions are Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) Pleasure, Arousal, and Dominance scale (PAD), Izard's (1977) Differential Emotion Scale (DES), Plutchik's (1980) 8 primary emotions, as well as Watson, Clark, and Tellegen's (1988) Positive Affect and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS).

Despite their widespread use, however, more recent studies (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005; Schoefer & Diamantopoulos, 2008) question the applicability, reliability, and validity of psychological emotion scales in consumer research. Given that consumers' experiences are situation-specific, emotion taxonomies from psychology per se are not conceived to measure emotions in a consumption context (see Richins, 1997). For example, while the PAD typology has the benefits of parsimony, and ease of use, it has been criticised for being too narrow in scope and not encompassing the wider range of possible variations in emotional reactions (e.g., Richins, 1997; Machleit & Eroglu, 2000). PAD's 18-items semantic differential scale makes it difficult for the researcher to draw inferences about existence of specific emotions. Therefore, emotion scales from psychology often fail in content validity (Haynes, Richard, & Kubany 1995), and result in erroneous conclusions (Hosany et al., 2015). Eroglu et al. (2001) recommend that researchers consider some of the emotion typologies which include a more comprehensive set of emotional responses

such as Richins' (1997) Consumption Emotions Set (CES) and either use the entire set of emotions or select the ones relevant in their specific research context.

Richins' (1997) emotions set (CES) with 16 descriptors covers most emotional reactions in consumption environments, and its items achieve satisfactory reliability (Lee, 2015). The CES can be used to test specific categories of consumers' emotions hypothesised as antecedents, consequences, or moderator variables in a framework. The CES can also be used to operationalise emotions in more empirically oriented studies, but whether the measures of each dimension achieve discriminant validity is problematic (see Bagozzi et al., 1999). In addition, most studies incorporating multiple instances of positive and negative emotions find that the items load on two factors corresponding to positive and negative emotions (Oliver, 1994; Bagozzi, Baumgartner, & Pieters, 1998; Baumgartner, Pieters, & Bagozzi, 2008; Bagozzi, Belanche, Casaló, & Flavián, 2016; Chiu, Kim, & Won, 2018; Escadas, Jalali, & Farhangmehr, 2019; Ahn & Kwon, 2020), as was also the case in this study that will be discussed later in the EFA analysis.

The presence of distinct emotions in the narrative engagement experience suggests that the complex discrete emotions approach would be more useful in this context than the three-dimensional PAD scheme. Simply characterising an experience as being pleasant or unpleasant, arousing, or un-arousing, and dominating or dominated does not capture the richness in the range of the discrete emotions it can evoke (Holak & Havlena, 1998; Nabi, 2010, Lee, 2015), as was also evidenced earlier in Studies 1 and 2.

Based on what I discussed, the respondents reported to positive and negative emotions with six positive (happiness, contentment, excitement, love, comfort, and nostalgia) and four negative items (sadness, fear, anger, and shame) adopted from Richin's (1997) set of consumption emotions.

The negative items were reverse-coded, and while they were asked together with items for positive emotions, in line with what earlier studies (e.g., Ahn & Kwon, 2020) find, the CFA results (Section 6.6.) suggest that the items measuring the positive and negative affective responses load on two factors and thus positive and negative affective responses were measured as two separate constructs.

6.4.3.3 Empathy with story characters

Following affective responses, the level of empathy with story characters was assessed using Van Laer's (2011) adaptation of Davis's (1983) fantasy scale that measures one's tendency to transpose themselves to the feelings and actions of fictional story characters (Davis, 1983). The 7 empathic ability items were modified to make them appropriate to the context of this study (see Appendix D).

6.4.3.4 Intentions and potential behaviour

For measuring intentions, two items were borrowed from Jang & Namkung (2009) for recommending the restaurant, and positive word-of-mouth, and two others adapted from Hightower, Brady, and Baker (2002) to measure the consumers' intention to visit, and willingness to pay a price premium.

To measure potential behaviour, five items were adapted from Mattila & Wirtz (2001) to measure enjoyment, liking the environment, spending time to browse the restaurant, avoid looking around (_r), and spending more money than expected. Mattila and Wirtz (2001), in-turn, borrowed the behaviour items from Donovan and Rossiter (1982) who introduced eight approach-avoidance measures such as enjoyment of shopping in the store, liking of the store, willingness to spend time in the store, and likelihood of spending more money than intended.

The items for intentions and potential behaviour were asked in two different sections of the survey. However, as I later discuss, EFA and CFA results suggest merging them to a monolith construct for better results.

6.4.3.5 Brand personality

The survey asked respondents of their perceptions towards the brand of the servicescape with two set of items that were identified from Studies 1 and 2, while also testing items suggested by interior designers to be included in the questionnaire. Despite asking the two set of items in distant blocks, EFA and CFA results indicated that the items load on a single factor. The items altogether, further, had higher reliability.

Items were adopted from Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale and include: Cheerful, Honest, Cool, Unique, Upper-class, and Outdoorsy for the set of items suggested from the previous studies in this thesis (Brand Personality Studies 1&2: BPS), followed by

items Family-oriented, Sentimental, Sincere, Friendly, Imaginative, Reliable, Confident, Feminine, and Charming that were suggested by designers as appropriate for this study, considering the context of the two videos of the restaurant. Six interior designers were asked to collaborate in selection of items that best capture consumers' perceptions of the brand personality (BPD) in this study. The designers watched both videos and selected those items from Aaker's (1997) scale which they perceived as best communicating the brand of that servicescape. Items that were rated by all designers as "Somewhat agree", "Agree" and "Strongly agree" for either of the videos were included in the question.

6.4.3.6 Narrative engagement

Although narrative engagement, transportation, and presence, more or less, describe the same phenomenon (De Graaf, 2010), as I discussed earlier, narrative engagement seems to be more appropriate for studying consumers' experiences of stories in servicescapes.

This study adapted Busselle and Bilandzic's (2009) narrative engagement scale that has twelve items, each three measuring one of the four dimensions of narrative engagement: narrative understanding, attentional focus, presence, and emotional engagement.

6.4.3.7 Servicescape atmosphere

To ensure the design of the restaurant reminded respondents of the story of *Snow White*, Spangenberg, Grohmann, and Sprott's (2005) scale is adapted. This scale measures the extent to which a given scent reminds consumers of Christmas. In line with the purpose of Study 3, however, items were modified to measure the extent to which atmospherics of the servicescape, at the holistic level, are perceived by consumers as reminding them, causing them to think about, and capturing the spirit of the story, *Snow White*.

6.4.3.8 Demographics

Included at the end of the survey were the demographics questions about respondents' gender, age, education, occupation, and ethnicity (Table 6.2.). The sampling profile was almost evenly distributed with regard to gender (52% males and 47% females in Case 1, 50% male and 48% female in Case 2). A stratified sampling process was used to ensure equality in gender split (Shao, Grace, & Ross, 2019; Williams, Buoye, Keiningham, & Aksoy, 2020). The use of probability-sampling techniques enhances the likelihood that a representative sample is obtained (Lohr, 1999). From a statistical perspective, as such,

sampling methods such as stratified sampling are preferable since they are more likely to "enable estimates of the sample's accuracy" (De Vaus, 2013, p. 68).

Table 6. 2. Sampling profile of respondents

		Case 1	Case 2	Case 1	Case 2	Case 1	Case 2
		Frequency		(%)		Cumulative %	
Gender	Male	106	107	52.5	50.0	52.5	50.0
	Female	95	103	47.0	48.1	99.5	98.1
	Prefer not to say	1	4	0.5	1.9	100.0	100.0
Age	16-19	18	32	8.9	15.0	8.9	15.0
	20-29	29	44	14.4	20.6	23.3	35.5
	30-39	48	54	23.8	25.2	47.0	60.7
	40-49	36	37	17.8	17.3	64.9	78.0
	50-59	23	20	11.4	9.3	76.2	87.4
	60 years or older	48	27	23.8	12.6	100.0	100.0
Education	None formally completed	14	22	6.9	10.3	6.9	10.3
	High School/College	60	69	29.7	32.2	36.6	42.5
	Polytechnic/ Institute of Technology (or equivalent)	60	48	29.7	22.4	66.3	65.0
	Bachelor's Degree	52	48	25.7	22.4	92.1	87.4
	Master's Degree	15	25	7.4	11.7	99.5	99.1
	PhD Degree	1	2	0.5	0.9	100	100.0
Occupation	Student	23	37	11.4	17.3	11.4	17.3
	Employed	100	100	49.5	46.7	60.9	64.0
	Unemployed	55	53	27.2	24.8	88.1	88.8
	Own business/self employed	24	24	11.9	11.2	100.0	100.0
Ethnicity	European	129	131	63.9	61.2	63.9	61.2
	Maori	25	36	12.4	16.8	76.2	78.0
	Pacifica	4	5	2	2.3	78.2	80.4
	African	4	3	2	1.4	80.2	81.8
	Asian	28	31	13.9	14.5	94.1	96.3
	Middle Eastern	2	3	1	1.4	95	97.7
	Other	10	5	5	2.3	100	100.0
Total number of respondents		202	214				

6.5 Data screening and cleaning

A preliminary data screening was performed to check missing data and assessments of normality and outliers in order to examine the initial status of the gathered data for the following Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Assumptions of data normality are necessary for these analyses and were observed to be present in the gathered survey responses. This section explains how the data is prepared and screened for the EFA and CFA.

6.5.1 Dealing with missing data

Upon gathering the responses, data were checked for inconsistencies, completeness, and engagement, suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). As the forced response option was applied to all items, to ensure that every item is answered, there is no missing data in this study. Force response is considered as an important property in Qualtrics because if it is left unchecked, respondents can skip questions without answering them.

6.5.2 Assessments of normality and outliers

To ensure the data were entered correctly and normally distributed, this study conducted data screening to identify the level of unengaged responses, and the outliers.

To ensure respondent engagement, the data were checked for repeated answers with the formula for equal standard deviation (=STDEV.P) in Microsoft Excel. A zero variance on a row means that the respondent has chosen the same exact value in answering to all of the items in the survey. Based on the results, the researcher did not find any cases as an indicate of un-engagement. Therefore, no responses were discarded at this stage.

The presence of outliers involved identification of specific cases with the Mahalanobis distance test. This test measures the influence of a case by examining its distance from the mean(s) of the predictor items. The Chi-Square ($\chi 2$) critical values table was used in line with the suggestions of Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) and Pallant (2010) to detect potential Mahalanobis multivariate outliers with P-values less than $p = 0.001$ and $df = 8$ (Brand Personality was initially considered as two constructs). As a result, 8 responses were deleted from Case 1 and 5 from the Case 2 dataset (for the CFA-SEM analyses) to remove the effects of potential outliers. The effect of these precautionary deletions is the removal of multivariate outliers that thus enabled the examination of other assumptions

(Pallant, 2010). There were no underlying traits or characteristics and deleted outliers appeared random. 202 responses for Case 1 and 214 responses in Case 2 were usable for analyses in the dataset.

After removing the outliers, data was subjected to examinations of normality. When the absolute value of Skewness or Kurtosis is higher than 3, Skewness or Kurtosis obtains (Hair et al., 2010). The Skewness and Kurtosis test results demonstrated that the items had no issues of normality as Skewness or Kurtosis is not observed in measurement of the constructs. As such, no data transformation is required (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Based on the assessment of normality, data are continuous, and removal of the outliers, further, suggests that the data is normally distributed (Byrne, 2001).

After the initial preparation of the data, the conceptual framework was examined using the data gathered from the two cases. Section 6.6 concerns the measurement of constructs in the conceptual model and presents the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results. The hypothesised associations between the constructs are subsequently examined in the Structural Equations Modelling (SEM) presented in section 6.7. As earlier discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.6.5), to have an idea of grouping variables that are intercorrelated and to identify items that are potential candidates for removal in the construct level CFA, the researcher also conducted the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). However, as EFA is normally conducted on a different dataset (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011), no items were removed based on EFA (The theoretical rationale, method, and results of conducting the EFA is presented in Appendix E). The following section presents the results of CFA.

This study proposes measurement models for each of the constructs that are demonstrated to be reliable, valid, as well as generalisable with unidimensional properties suggested by Churchill (1979), Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), Hair et al. (2010), and Bagozzi and Yi (2012). The constructs, the researcher argues, are usable in different design contexts and enable comparison of those different designs in the structural model that is central to the investigation of the research questions (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

6.6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is an indispensable tool for construct validation (Brown & Moore, 2012). The results from the CFA provide evidence of the convergent and discriminant validity of theoretical constructs and help determine whether constructs

are uni or multi-dimensional (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Harrington, 2009). This assistance in establishing measurement model adequacy before testing the structural associations in the SEM is widely considered as best practice (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Bollen, 1989; Bowen & Guo, 2012). This approach, therefore, adds to the environmental psychology, narrative engagement, and branding literatures in proposing constructs that improve our understanding of consumers' responses in fantasy designed servicescapes. The theoretical rationale for the CFA analysis is further outlined in Appendix F. This sections presents the results of the CFA.

6.6.1 Measurement development

This research employed the two-step procedure for examining CFA measurement models and SEM, following Andersen and Gerbing's (1988) advice. Measurement models first explain the associations between the observed items and latent (unobserved) constructs before structural models examine associations between the latent constructs. The CFA measurement models reported in this study are assessed based on their Goodness-of-Fit, Unidimensionality, construct reliability and validity.

The Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices that are employed in this study are summarised in Table 6.3. with the review of the indices presented in Appendix F.

The Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for assessment of Unidimensionality are later presented in summative comparisons in Table 6.6.

Unidimensionality is also considered with individual parameter estimates such as B and R^2 for each construct for each measurement model. Ideally, Kline (2010) suggests R^2 should be a minimum value of 0.50, but lower values are acceptable. This study retains items with minimum R^2 values of 0.40. Standardised regression B-values of 0.50 are also observed as minimum threshold values in this study based on the recommendation of Hair et al. (2010) and Churchill (1979).

Table 6. 3. Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) criteria used in Study 3

Fit indices	Abbreviation	Type	Acceptance Level in this Research
Composite Reliability	CR	Reliability	0.7
Average Variance Extracted	AVE	Validity	0.5
Standardised Regression Weight	*B*	Uni-dimensionality	*B*>0.5
Squared Multiple Correlations	R^2	Uni-dimensionality	None Specified by Hair et al. (2010)
Chi-Square (χ^2)	χ^2	Model Fit	Significant p-values even with good fit[a]
Normalised Fit Index	NFI	Incremental Fit (comparison of proposed model to independent baseline model)	Generally, values above 0.80 and close to 0.90 indicate acceptable fit; 0.95 or better[a]
Non-Normalised Fit Index (Tucker Lewis Index)	NNFI (TLI)		
Comparative Fit Index	CFI		
Root Mean Square Residual and Standardised RMR	RMR and SRMR	Absolute Fit	No RMR specified by Hair et al. (2010); SRMR 0.09 or less (with CFI of 0.92 or higher)[a]
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	RMSEA		Values <0.08 with CFI of 0.92 or higher

Source: a. Hair et al. (2010) suggests when number of items is between 12 and 30 and number of respondents is less than 250. When the number of items is more than 30 and the number of respondents is less than 250 the SRMR is less than 0.09 with CFI above 0.92. RMSEA values less than 0.08 with CFI above 0.92. It will be explained in the sections that follow in this chapter that 44 items are used in the initial overall model and 28 items in the final overall model.

In CFA, unlike in structural models, the modification indices propose which error terms could covary to minimise the differences between the proposed and estimated models.

Modification indices inform the search for converged, effective model solutions and are achieved in an iterative manner. However, care must be taken, as parameter and model fit statistics change (e.g., in removal of BPS3 upon suggestion of modification indices at the construct level CFA) as a consequence of these measurement modifications.

Based on these requirements for development of a good construct measurement, in the next section, I propose production of simple, refined CFA measurement models suitable for structural model analysis (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). Goodness-of-Fit indices and Unidimensionality tests in this section, I propose, inform the selections in item deletions and in developing constructs to promote better model fit.

6.6.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of each construct

The results of the initial and improved CFA measurement of the constructs is presented in detail in Appendix F and a summary is provided subsequently.

The factor loadings of construct items are important in supporting the rationale of SEM (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). An examination of standardised factor loadings of each of the constructs (Appendix F) confirms that the minimum values of 0.50 are present with the exception of PB4_r, BPS6, and EMP3_r in both cases and EMP4_r only in Case 2. This indicates the existence of strong associations between the majority of the items and their constructs. For R^2, AR6, PB4_r, PB5, EMP3_r, EMP4_r, BPS6 and BPD8 in both of the cases, NEG12 in Case 1, and BPS4, BPS5, BPD5 in Case 2 possess values below the 0.40 threshold in the initial models, as is required by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). Accordingly, except for PB5 that was retained with theoretical justification, other items were deleted from cases. Critical ratio or t-values are above 1.96 for PB5 demonstrating that its factor loading is significant and assists in measuring the construct (Byrne, 2001; Hair et al., 2010).

As for model fit estimates, considering that CFA was done for servicescape atmosphere with three items, despite unsatisfactory fit indices, no items were deleted. The construct did not cause any issues, however, in the full model CFA.

Running the CFA for all twelve items of narrative engagement as a monolith construct resulted in poor model fit, suggesting deletion of the items NEG7-12 for having negative or low standard loadings and R^2 values. However, as EFA results suggested, sub-dividing the construct helps keep all items with good standard loadings and model fit estimates,

albeit as two constructs. The ability of narrative engagement's scale to be "divided into subscales that distinguish among different aspects of engagement" is earlier supported by Busselle and Bilandzic (2009, pp. 342-343).

Based on the CFA results for all the twelve items of narrative engagement, the construct was divided into two separate constructs, with six of the items (that were reverse-coded) grouped as narrative engagement part 1 (NEGP1), and six grouped as part 2 (NEGP2). NEGP1 items reflect the respondents' level of narrative understanding (NEG1,2,3) and attentional focus (NEG4,5,6), whereas NEGP2 examined narrative presence (NEG7,8,9) and emotional engagement (NEG10,11,12).

The CFA for NEGP1 results in satisfactory factor loadings and R^2 values for both cases. The final fit indices are, also, excellent, except Cmin/df (0.884) in Case 1. I argue that, although the value is marginally outside the acceptable threshold (i.e., between 1 and 3), the model is overall, still indicative of good fit.

Grouping items NEG7-12 together as NEGP2 also resulted in acceptable factor loadings and R^2 values, except for NEG12 that had a R^2 value of 0.25 in Case 1 and thus deleted. NEG12 presented no measurement issues for Case 2, but as it is preferable to develop a measurement construct that measures this dimension of narrative engagement reliably, and with validity, in different contexts, it is necessary to delete the item in both cases. The final model in Case 1 has excellent fit. Although the Cmin/df (0.579) in Case 2 is outside the acceptable threshold, the overall model is indicative of good fit.

Similar to the narrative engagement construct, the affective responses construct was first examined as a monolith construct including both positive and negative emotions to test whether the items correspond to positive and negative emotions as separate constructs. In line with previous studies (e.g., Ahn & Kwon, 2020), and as the EFA results suggest, the CFA for affective responses resulted in poor model fit, suggesting deletion of the four items AR7_r to AR10_r, that measure negative emotions, for having negative or low standard loadings and R^2 values. Sub-dividing the construct helps keep all the items with good standardised loadings and model fit estimates, albeit as two constructs.

The CFA for positive affective responses (items AR 1-6) suggested deletion of AR6 for both cases due to its low R^2 values. Case 2 has excellent final model fit. While the final

Cmin/df value of Case 1 (0.100) is outside the acceptable threshold, the overall model is indicative of good fit.

The CFA for negative affective responses (the four items AR7_r to AR10_r) results in acceptable loadings and R^2 values for both cases, and covarying a number of items as suggested by modification indices helps in improving the model fit. The final fit indices in Case 1 are excellent. In Case 2, although the final Cmin/df (0.302) value is below the minimum acceptable threshold, the overall model is indicative of good fit.

While CFA was done for intentions (I) and Potential Behaviour (PB) as two constructs, following Zeithaml et al. (1996) and Hightower et al. (2002), and in line with what was evidenced in EFA where the two constructs loaded on a single factor, running the CFA for the constructs, together, resulted in higher reliability for the new construct and thus the two were merged together as Behavioural Intentions (BI) for the full model CFA.

PB4_r was deleted in both cases, because of its low standardised loading and R^2 values. While R^2 values for PB5 were also below 0.4 in both cases, this item was not deleted given its acceptable factor loading and that its absence deteriorates the model fit. I argue that while the Cmin/df of 0.895 in Case 1 is below the minimum acceptable threshold, the model is still indicative of good fit in both cases.

The CFA for brand personality with items extracted from Study 1 and 2 findings (BPS) and the items suggested by designers (BPD), as a single construct (BP), suggest deletion of two items (BPS6, BPD8) for having low factor loadings and R^2 values in both cases. The modification indices of both cases also indicate that model fit could be improved by deleting the items BPS3, BPS5, and BPD7. In addition to items that were deleted based on Case 1 results, BPS4 and BPD5 had low R^2 in Case 2 and therefore, it was decided to delete these items in both cases. The final parameter values for standard loadings and R^2 are good, and the model has excellent fit in both cases.

The CFA for empathy suggested deleting EMP3_r and EMP4_r in both cases due to low factor loadings and/or R^2 values. While the final Cmin/df of Case 1 (0.987) is below the minimum acceptable threshold, the researcher argues that the overall model is indicative of good fit in both cases.

6.6.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of all constructs

The modification indices for the full model CFA suggested deletion of 16 further items to improve the Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices of the model for both cases. These items include AR3, AR10_r, PB2, BPS1, BPD1, BPD2, BPD6, and BPD9. The items NEG1_r up to NEG6_r, NEG10, and NEG11 were also deleted. The final CFA of the framework with 28 items achieve satisfactory standardised factor loadings and t-values (Table 6.4.). The revised Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) at the overall measurement level with 28 items is also satisfactory (Table 6.7. in section 6.6.6.).

Table 6. 4. Conceptual framework CFA final factor loadings and t-values

		Case 1		Case 2	
Item Label	**Item Wording**	**Final Standardised Loadings**	**Final C.R. (t- value)**	**Final Standardised Loadings**	**Final C.R. (t- value)**
SA1	This restaurant reminds me of the story, "*Snow White* ".	0.915	16.43	0.915	17.169
SA2	When I see this restaurant, I think about the story, "*Snow White*".	0.889	15.702	0.941	17.996
SA3	This restaurant captures the spirit of the story, "*Snow White*".	0.814	13.704	0.861	15.548
NEG7	During the story presentation, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story.	0.672	9.972	0.66	9.791
NEG8	The story presentation created a new world, and then that world suddenly disappeared when the story presentation ended.	0.745	11.372	0.668	9.957
NEG9	At times during the story presentation, the story world was closer to me than the real world.	0.928	15.08	0.838	13.246
AR1	Happiness	0.814	13.58	0.812	12.707
AR2	Contentment	0.87	14.86	0.774	11.329

AR4	Love	0.83	13.919	0.748	11.241
AR5	Comfort	0.895	15.512	0.828	12.806
AR7_r	Sadness	0.776	12.661	0.736	11.708
AR8_r	Fear	0.894	15.506	0.87	14.599
AR9_r	Anger	0.891	14.432	0.787	12.761
BI1	I would recommend this restaurant to my friends or others.	0.895	16.151	0.892	16.43
BI2	I would say positive things about this restaurant to others.	0.912	16.73	0.9	16.663
BI3	I would like to visit a restaurant like this over the next year.	0.912	16.704	0.849	15.214
BI4	I would pay a higher price to go to a restaurant like this than I would pay to go to other restaurants	0.799	13.509	0.731	12.175
PB1	I think I would enjoy dining in this restaurant.	0.911	16.669	0.893	16.444
PB3	I think I would like to spend time browsing in this restaurant.	0.908	16.595	0.859	15.467
PB5	This is a sort of place where I would end up spending more money than I originally set out to spend.	0.605	9.291	0.642	10.244
BPS2	Honest	0.837	13.608	0.694	10.191
BPD3	Sincere	0.847	13.863	0.806	12.642

BPD4	Friendly	0.755	12.093	0.771	12.166
EMP1	I could daydream and fantasise about the things that were described by Snow White.	0.704	10.507	0.827	13.228
EMP2	I really got involved with the feelings of Snow White.	0.871	12.952	0.856	12.439
EMP5	After watching the story presentation, I felt as though I were Snow White.	0.757	11.641	0.667	8.476
EMP6	While I was watching the story presentation, I could very easily put myself in the place of Snow White.	0.792	11.926	0.656	8.794
EMP7	While I was watching the story presentation, I imagined how I would feel if the events described in the story presentation were happening to me.	0.815	13.162	0.783	12.39

With regard to the high importance of narrative engagement in this thesis, as a concept that explains the mechanism by which the consumers respond to fantasy environments, it is worthwhile to mention that after deleting items with low standardised loadings and R^2 values in the construct level and full model CFA, this construct was left with only 3 of the 12 items that Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) suggest for measuring the construct. These 3 items are related to the *presence* dimension of engagement and as supported by Busselle and Bilandzic (2009), are able to measure narrative engagement independently even in absence of the other dimensions. This is an important finding corresponding to Busselle and Bilandzic's (2009) call for future research to investigate whether different dimensions of engagement relate more or less closely to different effects. In this study, the CFA results indicate that in servicescapes that are designed based on fantasy stories, the narrative presence dimension of narrative engagement is appropriate for measuring consumers' sense of detachment from reality.

6.6.4 Examination for Common Method Bias (CMB)

Following the CFA analysis, common method variance, or bias, which is a concern with self-reported surveys (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) was examined, to account for the likelihood of how the research approach affected the obtained results. The presence of common method bias proposes a problem by generating a false internal consistency and apparent correlation amongst items generated by their common source. Common method bias, if present, introduces systematic measurement errors that inflate or deflate the observed associations between constructs, generating Type I and II errors (Chang, Van Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2020). Podsakoff et al. (2003) recommend testing for common method bias unless a credible basis exists to not demand this examination. To detect and control common method bias, both, procedural and statistical approaches were used in this study (Podsakoff et al., 2003; MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012).

MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012) provide guidance to researchers about what kinds of procedural controls should be implemented in a given study to control for method bias and suggest several procedural techniques to avoid or minimise the detrimental effects of method bias. Table 6.5. presents a list of factors that may cause common method bias by undermining the ability of respondents to answer accurately, decreasing respondents' motivation to respond accurately, and by making it easier to satisfice. The psychological mechanisms through which these factors produce their biasing effects are also explained in Table 6.5. and the procedural remedies that were implemented in this study to offset each of these specific effects are proposed (see MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012).

Table 6. 5. Conditions, mechanism, and remedies for Common Method Bias

Conditions that cause common method bias	Mechanism	Remedies implemented in Study 3 as advised by MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012)
Factors that increase method bias by decreasing the respondents' ability to respond accurately		
Lack of verbal ability, education, or cognitive sophistication (Krosnick, 1999; Krosnick & Alwin, 1987)	May increase the difficulty of the task of comprehending the meaning of the questions, retrieving information, and making judgments (Krosnick, 1991).	The questions were pretested to ensure they are written at a level the respondents can comprehend.
Complex or abstract questions (Doty & Glick, 1998; Krosnick, 1991)	May increase the difficulty of comprehending the meaning of the questions, retrieving relevant information, and making judgments.	Reference to any vague concepts were avoided, and in cases when a question seemed difficult (e.g., brand personality), it was simplified by providing explanation about the concept. Overall, simple language and vocabulary were used to match the reading capabilities of the respondents.
Item ambiguity (Krosnick, 1991; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000)	May increase the difficulty of comprehending the questions, retrieving relevant information, and making judgments. Can also increase the sensitivity of answers to context effects.	Clear and concise language was used; complicated syntax were avoided; ambiguous terms were defined; and response options were all labelled rather than just the end points.
Double-barrelled questions (Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004; Krosnick, 1991; Sudman & Bradburn, 1982)	Make the retrieval task more demanding (Krosnick, 1991) and introduce ambiguities into the response selection task by making it unclear whether respondents should: (a) answer only one part of the question, or (b) average their responses to both parts of the question.	Double-barrelled questions were avoided.
Questions that rely on retrospective recall (Krosnick, 1991)	May increase the difficulty of the retrieval process and the likelihood of satisficing because questions that require retrospective recall are more difficult to	The questions were asked right after the respondents saw the stimuli to make it easier to recall the information necessary to answer the question accurately.

	answer due to the relative remoteness of the relevant information in memory.	
Auditory only presentation of item (telephone) versus written presentation of item (print or web) (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012)	Increases the memory load because respondents must keep the meaning of the question and all response options in short-term memory before responding.	Questions were presented in written online format.
Factors that increase method bias by decreasing the respondents' motivation to respond accurately		
Lengthy scales (Krosnick, 1999)	May decrease motivation to maintain the cognitive effort required to provide optimal answers, and result in poorer comprehension, less thorough retrieval, less careful judgment, and mapping of judgments onto response categories, and/or stylistic responding.	The survey was kept short and each question was asked on a different page that required the respondent to go to next page so that not many items were asked on a single page. The longest question had 12 items.
Forced participation (Brehm, 1966).	May increase psychological reactance and consequently decrease the motivation to exert cognitive effort to generate accurate answers or to faithfully report those answers.	The respondents were communicated in a respectful manner and their participation was valued and outlined as voluntary in the introduction section of the survey.
Presence of an interviewer (Bowling, 2005).	May motivate respondents to edit their answers to make them more socially desirable to avoid any social consequences of expressing their true judgments.	The survey was conducted online. Also, the respondents were assured that the data will be used for research purposes, and their information will not be revealed to anyone else.
Source of the survey is disliked (Krosnick, 1999).	May decrease: the desire to cooperate; willingness to exert the cognitive effort required to generate optimal answers; or motivation to faithfully report those answers.	The respondents were communicated in a respectful manner and their participation was valued.
Contexts that arouse suspicions (Baumgartner &	When respondents are suspicious about how the data will be used, they may be motivated to conceal their true opinions by	Respondents' suspicions was mitigated by explaining that the information is being requested for research purpose and will be kept confidential.

Steenkamp, 2001; Schmitt, 1994).	editing their responses. They might do this by using the middle scale category regardless of their true feelings, or perhaps by responding to items carelessly, randomly, or non-purposefully.	
Factors that increase method bias by decreasing the difficulty of satisficing		
Grouping items measuring the same or similar constructs together on a questionnaire	May heighten the perceived similarity and redundancy of items; and encourage respondents to be less thorough in item comprehension, memory retrieval, and judgment. This also makes it easier to edit answers for consistency which decreases difficulty of satisficing; and makes it easier to use previously recalled information and prior answers to respond to the current question.	Constructs with somewhat similar items were dispersed and asked separately by placing other questions between them. This involved dispersing questions for narrative engagement and empathy, as well as the questions about brand personality (see Weijters, Schillewaert, & Geuens 2008). Moreover, questions for narrative engagement, its antecedent (servicescape atmosphere), and its immediate consequences (affective responses) were dispersed in the survey, with other questions asked in between (Van Laer et al., 2014, see also Podsakoff et al. 2003).
The availability of answers to previous questions (physically or in memory)	This may make it easier to: (a) use previously recalled information and answers to respond to the current question (i.e., judgment referral); and (b) provide answers that are consistent with each other or with an implicit theory… More generally, whenever the predictor and criterion variables are measured at the same point in time by means a single questionnaire, the likelihood that the answers to previous questions will be available is greater.	Memory availability was diminished by introducing a temporal separation between and replacing the order of predictor and criterion variables; and diagnosticity of previous answers was diminished by introducing a psychological separation and also preventing respondents from going back to previous questions in the survey.
Source: MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012)		

In addition to the procedural controls, Harman' (1976) single factor test was performed to assess potential issues related to common method bias. Harman's single factor test is an unrotated exploratory factor analysis by using one factor and including all variables. The result of the test indicated that common method bias was not a concern in Study 3. The factor that emerged from this test accounted for 45.86% of the variance in Case 1 and 38.78% of the variance in Case 2. Although 45.86 is a high amount of variance to be explained by a single factor, the value is still less than the recommended threshold of 50% (Malhotra, Kim, & Patil, 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2003) in both of the studied cases. Common method bias was thus not a problem and it was deemed unnecessary to complete any additional tests for common method bias.

This Study examined two different designs of the same restaurant and particular controls were introduced to decrease the prospect of situational variables influencing the results. Situational variable issues are addressed by gathering data about the same servicescape, although with slight differences in design across the two cases such as the lighting and background music as the two most prominent atmospherics identified in Studies 1 and 2 to support a story, and characters. In addition, similar groups of consumers were sent the survey. This promotes the prospects of ensuring construct validity when researchers collect the measures for different constructs from different sources (Chang et al., 2020; Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Collecting data from the two surveys and subjecting the data to an invariance analysis in the structural model further confirmed that common method bias was not present.

6.6.5 Measurement models Reliability and Validity

Given the absence of common method bias, the study reviews the reliability and validity of measurement models developed in previous sections (Churchill, 1979). The rationale for reliability and validity measures is presented in Appendix F. This section reviews the empirical reliability and validity of the CFA and SEM data.

The specification of measurement models require sufficient content validity to ascertain the extent that a specific set of items reflect their content domain (see DeVellis, 2003). Content validity is a qualitative type of validity where, often, expert judges help confirm the items that define the intended construct (Bollen, 1989). This operation was done by 6 PhD students in Massey Business School screening questionnaire items, in advance of the administration of the survey.

Assessments of discriminant validity require that the correlations between the constructs be lower than the standardised composite reliabilities. An examination of the composite reliability values confirms that the values exceed the minimum required threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010; Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). The minimum composite reliability value is 0.768 for narrative engagement (NEGP2) in Case 2 (Table 6.6.).

Table 6. 6. Measures of Construct Reliability and Validity (from CFA)

	Case 1: Snow White			Case 2: Evil Queen		
	CR	**AVE**	**MSV**	**CR**	**AVE**	**MSV**
SA	0.906	0.763	0.528	0.932	0.821	0.474
NEGP2	0.829	0.623	0.407	0.768	0.528	0.481
ARP	0.914	0.727	0.662	0.87	0.626	0.387
ARN	0.891	0.732	0.119	0.841	0.639	0.216
BI	0.95	0.732	0.662	0.938	0.687	0.543
BP	0.855	0.663	0.647	0.802	0.576	0.543
EMP	0.892	0.624	0.571	0.873	0.581	0.481
CR (Composite Reliability); AVE (Average Variance Extracted); MSV (Maximum Shared Variance)						

In a review of the extant literature between the years 2005-2009, of the three accepted procedures for assessing discriminant validity, Shiu, Pervan, Bove, and Beatty (2011) find Fornell and Larcker's (1981) approach as popular to measure discriminant validity. The findings from the Fornell and Larcker's (1981) test are presented in Table 6.6.

The average variance extracted (AVE) in both cases are greater than 0.5 and larger than the corresponding construct correlations thus suggestive of discriminant validity and the ability of the measurement scale to discriminate between the proposed measures (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The CFA results, further, provide evidence for the convergent validity of the constructs. The constructs are therefore, considered to possess measurement validity.

6.6.6 Overall measurement model fit

This chapter has so far developed the individual measurement models for each construct and assessed these models for reliability and validity. The constructs, overall, produced adequate Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) and increase the prospect of obtaining reliable results in SEM (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). This section further examines these constructs at the overall measurement model level, with all constructs simultaneously interpreted.

The individual construct measurement models presented in previous sections revealed a total of 12 items that, if excluded from the overall measurement models of both cases, will improve Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices. When comparisons are made in Table 6.7. between Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices of the initial and final measurement models, there is a marked improvement in Goodness-of-Fit (GOF).

Table 6. 7. Overall CFA Measurement Model Goodness-of-Fit (GOF)

	Case 1: SW			Case 2: EQ			
	Initial (56 items)	Final (44 items)	Final (28 items)	Initial (56 items)	Final (44 items)	Final (28 items)	
Fit Indices	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Threshold**
CMIN	3083.677	1807.714	505.85	3577.696	3577.696	512.782	--
CMIN/DF	2.118	2.068	1.637	2.457	2.232	1.665	Between 1 and 3
CFI	0.835	0.883	0.96	0.773	0.855	0.954	>0.95
SRMR	0.083	0.074	0.06	0.093	0.074	0.062	<0.09
RMSEA	0.075	0.073	0.056	0.083	0.076	0.056	<0.08
PClose	0	0	0.12	0	0	0.128	>0.05
TLI	0.826	0.874	0.951	0.76	0.843	0.943	>0.95
NFI	0.73	0.798	0.904	0.671	0.767	0.893	>0.95

Item deletions greatly reduce the χ^2 values of both of the cases from 3083.677 to 505.85 ($p>0.001$) in Case 1 and from 3577.696 to 512.782 ($p>0.001$) in Case 2. The improvement is consistent and similar across both cases.

The initial estimates (Table 6.7.) relate to CFA of all 56 items before deleting any items. The second column relates to CFA estimates of the model after deleting 12 items that were identified in the individual construct CFA stage, leaving 44 items in the model. Once further items were deleted from the measurement model, the very last framework has 28 items that together indicate a good model fit.

The final, revised Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices at the overall measurement level with 28 items is satisfactory in a number of respects, with desired Cmin/df and RMSEA for both cases. The Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices for CFI in both cases, and TLI of Case 1

meet the stringent 0.95 value threshold identified by Hair et al. (2010), when less than 250 respondents and between 12 and 30 items are employed. As for Case 2 TLI (0.943), although the value is marginally below the expected 0.95 threshold, it is still above 0.9 and acceptable. The researcher also argues that although the NFI (0.904 and 0.893 for Cases 1 and 2) are marginally outside this 0.95 threshold value, the overall model is still indicative of the presence of good data.

This study theoretically contributes to environmental psychology, storytelling, narrative engagement, empathy, and branding literatures by confirming measurement of constructs that have not been frequently measured together in the past.

Besides item deletions, as advised by Gaskin (2011) and Kenny (2011), several items were covaried on the basis of large modification indices, proposing expected changes in model fit identified with error covariances. As presented in Table 6.8 covaried items were identical across the cases except for EMP5 with EMP7 that are covaried only in Case 2. Once error terms for the below items were covaried, by deleting largest indices one at a time, and the model was re-run after each deletion, a significant improvement was made in the measurement model's Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices (Gaskin, 2011).

Based on the above discussions, the main aim of CFA is to validate the measurement model of the latent constructs. Fitness indexes reflect construct validity which reflects how fit is the model to the data. If the model is not fit, the researcher needs to remove items with low factor loading and R^2 values and re-specify the model. However, if the remaining items have good factor loading but the model is still not fit, then there are certain items in the model which is redundant of each other. The Modification Indices will identify these particular pairs of redundant items. Doing co-variation between the measurement errors of redundant items will constrain the redundancy effects and thus increase the model fitness (see Gaskin, 2011). This ad-hoc examination of the effect of larger error covariances reaffirmed that items converge on their single factors and that each construct discriminates in the overall model.

Table 6. 8. Covaried items for Case 1 and Case 2 models

Covaried Items			Cases
NEG7	<-->	NEG8	Case 1 & 2
AR1	<-->	AR2	Case 1 & 2
AR2	<-->	AR5	Case 1 & 2

AR4	<-->	AR5	Case 1 & 2
I1	<-->	I2	Case 1 & 2
I1	<-->	I3	Case 1 & 2
I2	<-->	PB1	Case 1 & 2
I3	<-->	I4	Case 1 & 2
I4	<-->	PB5 [3]	Case 1 & 2
PB1	<-->	PB3	Case 1 & 2
PB1	<-->	PB5	Case 1 & 2
BPS2	<-->	BPD3	Case 1 & 2
EMP1	<-->	EMP2	Case 1 & 2
EMP1	<-->	EMP5	Case 1 & 2
EMP1	<-->	EMP6	Case 1 & 2
EMP2	<-->	EMP5	Case 1 & 2
EMP2	<-->	EMP6	Case 1 & 2
EMP2	<-->	EMP7	Case 1 & 2
EMP5	<-->	EMP6	Case 1 & 2
EMP5	<-->	EMP7	Case 2
EMP6	<-->	EMP7	Case 1 & 2

6.6.7 Overall measurement model invariance

Although the measurement models of both cases evidence the constructs at the reduced 28 items with improved Goodness-of-Fit (GOF), it is advised by Hair et al. (2010) to also examine these models for measurement invariance. The objective of measurement invariance, according to Hair et al. (2010), is to ensure that the measurement models, produced under different conditions (such as comparing two designs of the restaurant), yield equivalent representations of the same construct. In this regard, Hair et al. (2010) propose a framework for evaluating measurement invariance with progressively more rigorous comparisons of models with increasingly restrictive constraints.

The comparison of the measurement models of the two cases began by developing good fitting models in separate runs for each group. In doing so, the model for each case was also run with the data for the other case, to determine if the measurement instruments that are almost identical for both cases - except for Case 2 having an additional covary between two items – are functioning equivalently across different groups of consumers.

[3] Intentions (I) and potential behaviour (PB) were merged into one construct as behavioural intentions (BI), allowing the related items to be covaried.

As presented in Table 6.9., regardless of the case number, running either of the models with the data for a certain case results in same estimates, except for a minor difference in Cmin/df values. In other words, running Case 1 model with Case 1 data resulted in almost identical model fit as when running Case 2 model with Case 1 data. Similarly, the same applies for Case 2 data.

The models were then tested in one run with none of the parameters across the models constrained to being equal (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In this stage, first, both datasets were run together, once on Case 1 model, and then on Case 2 model. The fit estimates were again identical for both models with a minor difference in the Cmin/df values. Thus, the configural invariance holds and the measurement instrument appears to fit similarly across the cases.

The unconstrained multiple group models serve as the baseline against which to judge the more restricted models. Constraints are applied to parameters one at a time to present equal coefficients across the cases. Chi-Square (χ^2) tests can then reveal the differences between the cases. Models with constraints should have higher Chi-Square (χ^2) values that are indicative of less fit (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Alternatively, allowing the parameters to vary across the cases indicates that case membership moderates the associations represented by those parameters, which is another approach that can also be employed in group-level SEM. This moderation hypothesis is rejected only when the null hypothesis that suggests the models being compared are identical is accepted at every step (Bowen & Guo, 2012).

Constraining the item parameters was decided on the basis of the standard errors where the item with highest standard error in each construct was constrained to be equal to 1 in each of the two models. While three constructs had identical items (NEG7, AR4, BPD3) constrained to 1 across both models, for the other four constructs, different items (SA3, AR7_r, PB5, EMP1 for Case 1 and SA1, AR9_r, I4, EMP5 for Case 2) had higher standard errors in each case and thus were constrained to 1. In this respect, changes in χ^2 (denoted $\Delta\chi^2$) propose comparisons between the unconstrained models and models with varying levels of constraint. If significant increases in χ^2 (that indicates worse fit) do not materialise upon the introduction of constraints, the constraints can be accepted as evidence that constructs are invariant, as was the case in the current study. With additional constraints imposed in successive models, stronger forms of invariance were achieved. The models, therefore, progress from the least to most constrained models. In this study,

constraining the items did not make changes in χ^2 values or other fit estimates of the cases, indicating that the model fit did not get worse.

It might be expected that the cases observe variances and covariances that are different as the consumers are presented with different designs, but as the measurement invariance examination results of the cases (Table 6.9.) present, configural and metric invariance both hold across cases. Of the six potential invariance or equivalence tests, configural and metric invariance are considered as most important (Williams et al., 2009).

Table 6. 9. Overall final measurement model invariance examination of both cases

			Model Fit Measures			Model Differences	
	Model Tested		χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	RMSEA	CFI	$\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df$	*P*
	Measurement Model Case 1	Case 1 data	1.637	0.056	0.96		0.000
		Case 2 data	1.660	0.056	0.954		0.000
	Measurement Model Case 2	Case 1 data	1.640	0.056	0.96		0.000
		Case 2 data	1.665	0.056	0.954		0.000
Configural Invariance	Measurement Model Case 1		1.648	0.04	0.957		0.000
	Measurement Model Case 2		1.653	0.04	0.957		0.000
Metric Invariance	Measurement Model Case 1		1.628	0.039	0.956	32.29/28	0.263
	Measurement Model Case 2		1.632	0.039	0.956	33.1/28	0.232

The results from the configural invariance model in Table 6.9. confirm the extent that the same basic construct structure exists in both case designs. The configural (otherwise known as the baseline) model, being without constraints, allows all free parameters to be estimated separately and to be free to take on the values of each group. The same configuration is thus desired across the two cases in this study. If the configural model proves non-invariant, then it is not possible to compare across the cases at all.

The configural model in Table 6.9. reports satisfactory Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) with χ^2/df 1.648 (Case 1) and 1.653 (Case 2), p=0.000, RMSEA 0.04, and CFI of 0.957 for both

cases, and the models are invariant. The configural model is considered invariant where the examined constructs reflect the same traits or perceptive processes amongst the consumers, as they interpret the two types of design.

When constraints are imposed and the data subjected to metric invariance examination, the data is again, found to be invariant. Metric invariance examines the equivalence of factor loadings. It establishes the basic meaning of the construct as the factor loadings denote the association between the items and the construct. Hair et al. (2010) consider the metric invariance test as a critical test, as it determines cross-group validity beyond the basic construct structure.

The metric invariance tests (the constrained model) confirm that when comparisons are made to the unconstrained configural model, the cases are invariant. The $\Delta\chi^2$ of 32.29 (for Case 1 Model) and 33.1 (for Case 2 Model) and df of 28 for both models when the configural and metric models are compared, are suggestive of both cases employing the same unit of measurement.

The invariance test results thus confirm that regardless of the existing difference in the design elements of the two cases, both models are invariant across situations and thus the same associations exist between consumers' perceptions of the design in the two cases.

6.7 Structural Equations Modelling (SEM)

Previous sections of this chapter proposed modified measurement models that specify the servicescape atmosphere, narrative engagement, the positive affective responses and negative affective responses, behavioural intentions, brand personality, and empathy by establishing the dimensionality of constructs. In contrast, the focus of following sections is on modelling the structural associations between constructs.

SEM concerns the directional and non-directional nature of how the latent constructs are related to one another (Brown, 2006; Bowen & Guo, 2012; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Intrinsic to SEM is its hypotheses-driven nature where the CFA is further examined in the SEM. A detailed theoretical rationale of the SEM approach in this study is presented in Appendix G.

The following sections examine the hypotheses proposed in the conceptual framework, and thereby, the effect of fantasy servicescape atmosphere on consumers' experiences of narrative engagement, affective responses, behavioural intentions, and perceptions of

brand personality. The hypotheses also examine how consumers' empathy with positive (versus negative) characters influence their subsequent responses in the servicescape.

6.7.1 The proposed structural model

SEM essentially restates the research questions and hypotheses in the conceptual model. With regard to the fact that the Intention (I) and Potential Behaviour (PB) items load on a single factor in EFA, and the new construct (BI) evidenced higher reliability in CFA, the hypotheses related to Intention and Potential Behaviour were merged. This involved merging hypotheses H3a and H3b to H3a, H3c and H3d to H3b, H6a and H6b to H6a, H6c and H6d to H6b, H8a and H8b to H8a, H8c and H8d to H8b, H9a and H9b to H9a, H9c and H9d to H9b, H12a and H12b to H12a, H12c and H12d to H12b, and finally, H14c and H14d to H14c. Relatedly, the hypothesis examining the effect of intentions on behaviour (H13a and H13b) was deleted.

The SEM findings are reported as follows: 1) the direct effects for Case 1 and Case 2 and 2) multiple-group comparisons of Case 1 and Case 2 for the proposed model, as well as the 3) mediation and 4) moderation tests. These SEM examinations are illustrated in the path diagrams in Figures 6.2. and 6.3. for the direct, multi-group, and mediation effects. Figure 6.4 in Section 6.7.7. illustrates the moderation effects in the structural model.

A direct effect, the effect of one variable on another, is presented in a structural model by a single path (Hoyle & Kenny, 1999; Holbert & Stephenson, 2003). Path diagrams are fundamental to SEM as they allow us to diagram and hypothesise the examined sets of associations (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The latent (or unobserved) constructs and examined associations are shown in circles and arrows (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011). A measurement arrow, such as H1 that is between servicescape atmosphere (SA) and narrative engagement (NEGP2), presents the unique variation for a particular observed association beyond the variation due to that association (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). The benefit to the visualisation of the latent variable associations is that it becomes clear which associations are examined, or not examined, in research of the thesis questions and hypotheses. The SEM results presented in this chapter are based on AMOS output.

Figure 6. 2. Proposed Structural Model

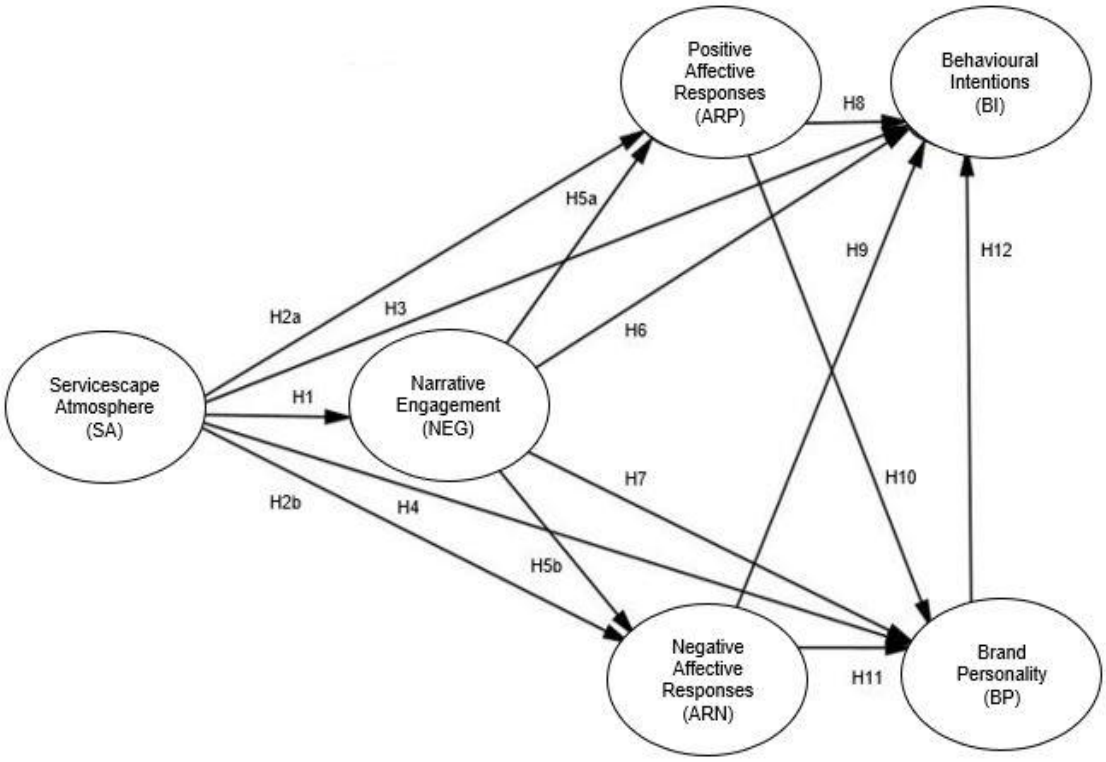
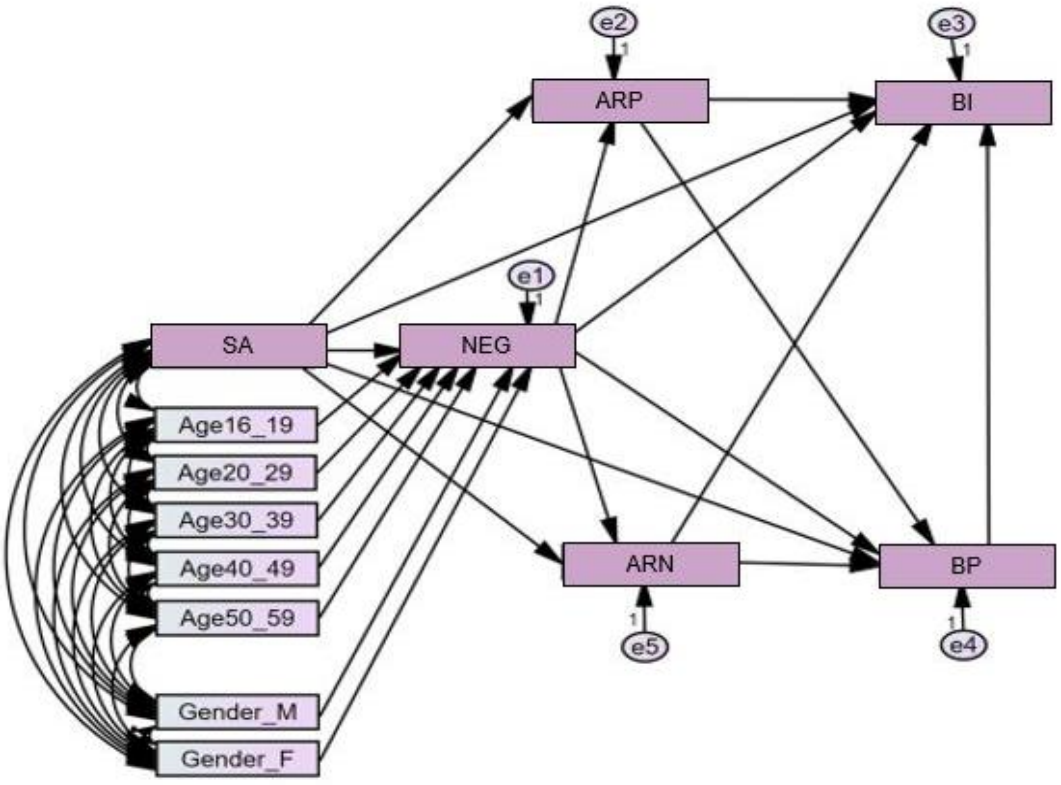


Figure 6. 3. Proposed structural model - AMOS Output



6.7.2 Global fit

Testing the global fit of the baseline model with the control variables[4] revealed that all of the fit indices meet the minimum recommended thresholds (see Table 6.10.). Therefore, the empirical data fit the proposed structural model to a satisfactory degree (Hu & Bentler, 1998, 1999; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Table 6. 10. Global fit

	Case 1: SW	Case 2: EQ	
Fit Indices	**Estimate**	**Estimate**	**Threshold**
CMIN	40.471	37.323	--
DF	29	29	--
CMIN/DF	1.396	1.287	Between 1 and 3
CFI	0.994	0.995	>0.95
SRMR	0.048	0.037	<0.09
RMSEA	0.044	0.037	<0.08
PClose	0.585	0.728	>0.05
TLI	0.984	0.987	>0.95
NFI	0.98	0.979	>0.95

6.7.3 Direct effects

The hypotheses for the proposed model employ the measured constructs developed in the CFA (Tables 6.11 and 6.12). Examinations of standardised regression path coefficients, critical ratios (t-values) and probabilities uphold the majority of the hypotheses testing the direct effects.

Table 6. 11. Case 1 hypotheses testing (Proposed Structural Model)

				Case 1 Direct Effects				
H	**Standardised Regression Paths**			**Estimate [a]**	**S.E. b**	**C.R. c**	**P d**	**H Tested**
H1a	SA	→	NEGP2	0.448	0.05	7.294	***	Supported
H2a	SA	→	ARP	0.497	0.059	8.53	***	Supported
H2b	SA	→	ARN	0.338	0.059	4.655	***	Supported
H3a	SA	→	BI	0.023	0.044	0.444	0.657	Not supported

[4] The model fit estimates are reported for the baseline model before adding the moderator variable to the structural model.

H4a	SA	→	BP	0.406	0.029	12.312	***	Supported
H5a	NEGP2	→	ARP	0.28	0.072	4.798	***	Supported
H5b	NEGP2	→	ARN	-0.377	0.072	-5.19	***	Supported
H6a	NEGP2	→	BI	0.323	0.038	8.845	***	Supported
H7a	NEGP2	→	BP	-0.054	0.033	-1.782	0.075 *	Supported
H8a	ARP	→	BI	0.384	0.054	5.899	***	Supported
H9a	ARN	→	BI	0.108	0.036	3.061	0.002 ***	Supported
H10a	ARP	→	BP	0.618	0.029	18.776	***	Supported
H11a	ARN	→	BP	0.188	0.029	7.119	***	Supported
H12a	BP	→	BI	0.328	0.079	3.904	***	Supported
Age	Age16_19	→	NEGP2	0.136	0.245	2.009	0.045 **	Supported
	Age20_29	→	NEGP2	0.106	0.211	1.473	0.141	Not supported
	Age30_39	→	NEGP2	0.183	0.183	2.418	0.016 **	Supported
	Age40_49	→	NEGP2	0.052	0.195	0.714	0.475	Not supported
	Age50_59	→	NEGP2	-0.055	0.224	-0.791	0.429	Not supported
Gender	Gender_M	→	NEGP2	0.074	0.888	0.171	0.864	Not supported
	Gender_F	→	NEGP2	-0.153	0.888	-0.355	0.723	Not supported

a. Standardised Regression Weight Estimate Value; b. Standard Error; c. Critical Ratio;

d. ***p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

SA: Servicescape Atmosphere; NEGP2: Narrative Engagement Part 2

ARP: Positive Affective Responses; ARN: Negative Affective Responses

BI: Behavioural Intentions; BP: Brand Personality

Table 6. 12. Case 2 hypotheses testing (Proposed Structural Model)

				Case 2 Direct Effects				
H	**Standardised Regression Paths**			**Estimate [a]**	**S.E. b**	**C.R. c**	**P d**	**H Tested**
H1a	SA	→	NEGP2	0.396	0.057	6.573	***	Supported
H2a	SA	→	ARP	0.234	0.06	3.771	***	Supported
H2b	SA	→	ARN	0.3	0.057	5.011	***	Supported
H3a	SA	→	BI	0.329	0.037	9.002	***	Supported
H4a	SA	→	BP	0.279	0.039	6.757	***	Supported
H5a	NEGP2	→	ARP	0.41	0.064	6.6	***	Supported
H5b	NEGP2	→	ARN	-0.637	0.061	-10.659	***	Supported
H6a	NEGP2	→	BI	0.395	0.05	8.406	***	Supported
H7a	NEGP2	→	BP	0.441	0.05	8.83	***	Supported
H8a	ARP	→	BI	0.259	0.042	6.374	***	Supported
H9a	ARN	→	BI	0.289	0.038	7.952	***	Supported
H10a	ARP	→	BP	0.416	0.041	9.961	***	Supported
H11a	ARN	→	BP	0.183	0.043	4.219	***	Supported
H12a	BP	→	BI	0.199	0.059	3.61	***	Supported

Age	Age16_19	→	NEGP2	0.338	0.207	4.186	***	Supported
	Age20_29	→	NEGP2	0.386	0.194	4.484	***	Supported
	Age30_39	→	NEGP2	0.272	0.19	3.022	0.003 ***	Supported
	Age40_49	→	NEGP2	0.265	0.201	3.188	0.001 ***	Supported
	Age50_59	→	NEGP2	0.086	0.234	1.153	0.249	Not supported
Gender	Gender_M	→	NEGP2	0.106	0.408	0.474	0.635	Not supported
	Gender_F	→	NEGP2	0.004	0.409	0.019	0.985	Not supported

a. Standardised Regression Weight Estimate Value; b. Standard Error; c. Critical Ratio;

d. ***p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

SA: Servicescape Atmosphere; NEGP2: Narrative Engagement Part 2
ARP: Positive Affective Responses; ARN: Negative Affective Responses
BI: Behavioural Intentions; BP: Brand Personality

The servicescape atmosphere was positively associated with consumers' experiences of narrative engagement in both cases, signifying that, regardless of whether a positive or negative story character dominates design, consumers experience narrative engagement in servicescapes that are designed based on fantasy stories. The hypotheses that examine the association between the servicescape atmosphere and narrative engagement (H1a) are thus confirmed in both cases, addressing the first research question[5]. This finding is the primary contribution of Study 3, as well as the current thesis, to the extant literature. In line with what the designers in Study 1 shared and in support to what the consumers in Study 2 experienced, regardless of the type of character the atmosphere highlights, incorporating fantasy stories in servicescapes makes consumers feel present in the story and thus experience narrative engagement.

Suhr (2008) states that standardised path coefficients with a value less than 10 percent indicate a low impact, values around 30 percent indicate medium, and values more than 50 percent indicate a high impact of an independent variable on the dependent variable. Accordingly, a moderate, positive association exists between servicescape atmosphere and narrative engagement in both cases (Case 1, 0.448, and Case 2, 0.396).

In line with what the extant literature suggests, servicescape atmosphere has a moderate, positive association with both positive (0.497) and negative (0.338) affective responses in Case 1, and a moderate, positive association with positive (0.234) and negative (0.3) affective responses in Case 2, confirming H2a and H2b in both cases.

[5] The multi-group hypotheses test results are presented in Section 6.7.5.

The positive effect of the servicescape atmosphere on consumers' affective responses in both cases helps partly address the second research question. In line with Study 1 and 2 findings, consumers experience positive and negative emotions in fantasy servicescapes. To better understand how fantasy servicescapes impact consumers' affective responses, the relationships between narrative engagement with the positive and negative emotions is examined in H5a and H5b, as discussed subsequently.

Despite the significance of the servicescape atmosphere on behavioural intentions in Case 2, with a moderate, positive regression weight (0.329), the atmosphere of Case 1 does not directly impact behavioural intentions. Thus, H3a is supported only for Case 2. To help address the third research question, H3a suggests that servicescape atmosphere directly, and positively influence consumers' behaviour only when a negative character dominates design. Explanation for this effect might be laid in evolutionary psychology that negative stimuli automatically capture attention (James, 1890), and quick detection of negative stimuli can be crucial for survival (c.f. Öhman & Mineka, 2001). As earlier discussed, research in marketing find brands that use dark characters as better attracting consumers' attention (Campbell et al., 2020) and increasing enjoyment (e.g., Dessart, 2018). The direct effect of the servicescape atmosphere on behaviour in Case 2 can be thus relatable to the fact that consumers by instinct pay more attention to negative stimuli and are more likely to take actions accordingly.

However, this is not to conclude that Case 1 atmosphere does not affect behaviour at all. As later evidenced by the mediation tests, the atmosphere of Case 1 indirectly affects consumers' behaviour through the other constructs in the framework. To further address question three, the effect of narrative engagement on behavioural intentions is examined in H6a and H6b, as narrative engagement, in-turn, provides explanation for consumers' behavioural intentions in the fantasy servicescape.

The servicescape atmosphere has a moderate, positive effect on consumers' perceptions of brand personality in Case 1 (0.406) and Case 2 (0.279), confirming H4a in both of the cases. This finding helps address the fourth research question. Fantasy servicescapes have the power to influence perceptions of brand personality, regardless of the character the atmosphere highlights. The question is further discussed when reporting results for the relationship between narrative engagement and brand personality in H7a and H7b.

Consistent with the transportation theory, the study found a significant positive effect of narrative engagement on consumers' positive emotions, and a significant negative effect on the negative emotions (see Escalas, 2007). Thus, it appears engagement with a story evokes positive and inhibits negative emotions in consumers, regardless of the character the consumers are exposed to. However, while there is a moderate association between narrative engagement with positive and negative emotions in Case 1 (0.28, -0.377), and a moderate association between engagement and the positive emotions in Case 2 (0.41), the effect of narrative engagement on the negative emotions in Case 2 is strong (-0.637). Regardless, H5a and H5b are confirmed in both cases. This finding, further, answers the second research question.

Narrative engagement has a moderate, positive association with behavioural intentions in Case 1 (0.323), and Case 2 (0.395), therefore, confirming H6a. This finding supports previous studies suggesting a positive effect of transportation on behavioural intentions (e.g., Green & Clark, 2012; Van Laer et al., 2014; Lee & Jeong, 2017; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019), and provides extra explanation for the third research question. When consumers feel present and engage with a story that is told through servicescape atmospherics, their engagement with the story increases their behavioural intentions in that servicescape.

Another important finding and contribution to the extant literature is evident in the fact that while there is a positive, moderate association between narrative engagement and brand personality in Case 2 (0.441), by contrast, the effect of narrative engagement on brand personality is negative, and considerably low (-0.054), in Case 1 highlighting the positive story character. This finding, in-turn, supports Phillips and McQuarrie's (2010) and Campbell et al.'s (2020) studies that suggest brands that use dark stories featuring negatively-valenced imagery might result in stronger brand experiences. Pickett (2012) and Dias et al. (2017), relatedly, assert that consumers bond with unpleasant characters and might even find those characters more attractive.

A possible explanation for why consumers respond positively to servicescape brands that feature negative fictional characters comes from the affective disposition theory (ADT) (Raney, 2011) that suggests consumers enjoy their emotional connections with fictional characters as they expand the cast of people with whom they interact to include the types of people they may never meet or chose to spend time within real life (Raney, 2011, see also Mar & Oatley, 2008). According to the affective disposition theory (ADT), because

these negative characters are fictional, the need to be entertained outweighs the need to morally scrutinise the character, as we would in real life (Raney, 2011).

The negative effect of narrative engagement on brand personality in Case 1 might also be attributable to the type of business that uses a positive (versus negative) story character in designing its atmosphere. Different product categories are proven to better relate with positive (versus negative) characters (see Dias et al., 2017). In the case of this study that investigated a restaurant's design, while the servicescape atmosphere positively affected brand personality in both cases, engagement with the story in Case 1 that highlights the positive character has a negative effect on brand personality, although the absolute value is low (-0.054, which is less than 0.10). This finding suggests retailers should cautiously decide about the type of story character they highlight in designing their servicescapes. Although this study finds that consumers' engagement with negative characters positively affects the brand's personality, this effect might only apply to restaurant businesses and not necessarily to other types of business.

To further address question four, consumers' engagement with fantasy stories positively affects brand personality only when the design highlights the negative character. Thus, H7a is supported only for Case 2.

The moderate, positive associations between positive affective responses and behaviour in Case 1 (0.384) and Case 2 (0.259) indicates that H8a can be confirmed in both cases. Similarly, the moderate, positive associations between the negative affective responses and behaviour in Case 1 (0.108) and Case 2 (0.289) support H9a. This finding supports extant research asserting a positive relationship between consumers' emotions and their behavioural responses (e.g., Vukadin et al., 2019; Roggeveen et al., 2020).

Positive affective responses has a positive influence on brand personality in both cases, supporting H10a. This effect is, however, as later discussed in the multi-group effects, stronger in Case 1 (0.618), while moderate in Case 2 (0.416). The positive emotions in servicescapes highlighting positive characters has a stronger effect on brand personality. This finding supports Escalas' (2004a) study that asserts a positive relationship between positive affective responses and consumers' brand evaluations.

The moderate, positive influence of negative affective responses on brand personality in Case 1 (0.188) and Case 2 (0.183) support H11a. The negative emotions the consumers

experience in fantasy servicescapes positively affect brand personality, regardless of the story character the servicescape highlights.

A moderate, positive association between brand personality and behavioural intentions exists in both cases (0.328, 0.199), and therefore, H12a is upheld. This finding supports previous research that assert brand personality positively affects behavioural intentions (e.g., Su & Tong, 2015; Bairrada et al., 2019).

Based on the presented analysis, the researcher argues that the study model contributes to the extant understanding about the influence of fantasy servicescape atmospherics on consumers' affective and behavioural responses and perceptions of brand personality through the experience of narrative engagement in such story-based environments.

6.7.4 Control variables

In line with recent studies on transportation (e.g., Van Laer et al., 2014), the findings of Studies 1 and 2 suggested that consumers' age does not imply a consistent difference in their engagement with a story. In terms of gender, however, in contrast to extant studies that either suggest women become more transported (Green & Brock, 2000) and studies that do not find a consistent gender difference in transportation (Green, 2005), Study 2 found men as feeling more present in the story. As such, no general consensus exists on how gender affects consumers' engagement with stories.

As a large body of research exists on how age and gender affect consumers' responses (Goldsmith, 2016), and considering the inconsistencies in extant findings on how age or gender affect transportation or engagement with stories, to account for other meaningful variables in the analysis, age and gender were included as control variables in this study (Goldsmith, 2016; Gao & Waechter, 2017; Talwar, Dhir, Singh, Virk, & Salo, 2020). Control variables increase the robustness of study results (Gao & Waechter, 2017).

As age and gender had more than two categories, as recommended by Gaskin (2013), they were converted into 9 variables (6 covering age, 3 covering gender), and separately included in the structural model. However, to avoid the dummy trap, one variable from each control (Age60+, and Prefer not to say for gender) were excluded from the model as the analysis did not operate with them (see Hirschberg & Lye, 2001; Gaskin, 2013). Thus, there were seven controls left in the analysis (Figure 6.3.).

Comparisons of the effect sizes of structural paths in models, including and excluding the control variables, find that not all regression values were insignificant at the 0.05 level. The associations between four age groups, 16-19 up to 40-49, and narrative engagement was significant in Case 2. It could be interpreted that consumers' age has an impact on narrative engagement when consumers are a) in ages of 16 to 49 and b) in servicescapes featuring negative characters. The associations between age and narrative engagement in Case 1 was significant only for the two age groups of 16-19 and 30-39.

Nevertheless, even though the relationships between consumers' age and engagement is significant for a number of age groups across the two cases, there does not seem to be a coherent direction in the influence of age on narrative engagement. While this influence, for example, in Case 2, is higher for consumers in ages of 20-29 than those in 16-19s, the estimate value of the relationship is lower for consumers in ages of 30-39 than those in 20-29, and the value further decreases for consumers in age of 40-49. In other words, while the relationship between age and engagement is significant for these age groups, the significance does not help make a conclusion about how age influences consumers' engagement with the story. However, the estimate value for consumers in ages of 20-29 in Case 2 is higher than other age groups. Similarly, Study 2 consumers were mostly in ages of 20-29, although those in ages 16-19 were most engaged with the presented story. These findings, together, suggest that consumers in their 20-29s are more likely to be fans of fantasy stories (Study 2) and feel present in servicescapes that are designed based on, specifically, the negative character of fantasy stories (Study 3).

6.7.5 Multi-Group effects

After the hypotheses for Case 1 and 2 are examined in separate SEMs for the proposed structural model in the previous section to determine whether associations exist between the constructs, the reporting of findings proceeds to multiple-group invariance testing of the same hypothesised associations to examine if any differences exist (or do not exist) between the two types of design across the cases.

As discussed in Section 6.6.7, examinations of the configural and constrained models in the CFA reveal that the measured constructs in this study and related items are equivalent or invariant across the cases. A group comparison test indicates that the cases are different at the model level, such that the consumers perceive the design different across the cases.

The structural paths between latent constructs that account for differences in consumers' perceptions of the two cases are identified subsequently.

The multi-group comparison is completed by comparing the critical ratio for differences and the standardised regression coefficient parameter values for each association for the servicescapes highlighting the positive (Case 1), and the negative character (Case 2) of the story.

Multi-group invariance analysis is a specific form of moderation that examines whether the associations vary across the two cases, depending on the values of the moderator (Williams et al., 2009). As evidenced earlier in the CFA, the P-value of the chi-square difference test at the Model level or Global test is significant (P-value = 0) suggesting that the model differs across cases (see Table 6.13.).

The following analyses confirm the source of the differences by case and by association. Identification of the source of difference across the cases helps to confirm the effect of fantasy atmospheres on consumers' subsequent experiences. Thus, the hypotheses tested should reflect differing levels of consumers' discrimination of the two types of design. As two surveys were conducted and the comparison was done between the two datasets, no specific variables were chosen as the grouping variable. Instead, the comparison was done based on all variables. The findings for multiple-group comparisons of the cases are presented in Tables 6.13. up to Table 6.17.

Table 6. 13. Multi-group effects Global test

	X^2	DF
Unconstrained	77.795	58
Constrained	260.001	79
Difference	182.206	21
P-Value	0	

Table 6. 14. Multi-group effects Z-score values

				Case 1		Case 2		
H	**Regression Paths**			**Estimate** [a]	**P**	**Estimate**	**P**	**z-score**
H1b	SA	→	NEGP2	0.366	0.000	0.373	0.000	0.098
H2c	SA	→	ARP	0.501	0.000	0.226	0.000	-3.267***
H2d	SA	→	ARN	0.275	0.000	0.287	0.000	0.144

H3b	SA	→	BI	0.019	0.657	0.331	0.000	5.459***
H4b	SA	→	BP	0.361	0.000	0.264	0.000	-1.993**
H5c	NEGP2	→	ARP	0.345	0.000	0.421	0.000	0.788
H5d	NEGP2	→	ARN	-0.376	0.000	-0.648	0.000	-2.881***
H6b	NEGP2	→	BI	0.332	0.000	0.422	0.000	1.435
H7b	NEGP2	→	BP	-0.059	0.075	0.444	0.000	8.353***
H8b	ARP	→	BI	0.320	0.000	0.270	0.000	-0.724
H9b	ARN	→	BI	0.111	0.002	0.304	0.000	3.653***
H10b	ARP	→	BP	0.546	0.000	0.408	0.000	-2.748***
H11b	ARN	→	BP	0.206	0.000	0.181	0.000	-0.472
H12b	BP	→	BI	0.309	0.000	0.211	0.000	-0.996
Age	Age16_19	→	NEGP2	0.493	0.044	0.866	0.000	1.164
	Age20_29	→	NEGP2	0.310	0.141	0.872	0.000	1.961**
	Age30_39	→	NEGP2	0.442	0.016	0.573	0.003	0.499
	Age40_49	→	NEGP2	0.139	0.475	0.641	0.001	1.792*
	Age50_59	→	NEGP2	-0.177	0.429	0.270	0.249	1.381
Gender	Gender_M	→	NEGP2	0.152	0.864	0.193	0.635	0.042
	Gender_F	→	NEGP2	-0.315	0.723	0.008	0.985	0.330

SA: Servicescape Atmosphere; NEGP2: Narrative Engagement Part 2

ARP: Positive Affective Responses; ARN: Negative Affective Responses

BI: Behavioural Intentions; BP: Brand Personality

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

[a.] Unstandardised estimates.

Table 6. 15. Multi-group effects standardised estimates

H	Regression Paths			Case 1 Beta	Case 2 Beta	Difference in Betas	P-Value for Difference
H1b	SA	→	NEGP2	0.448***	0.396***	0.052	0.92
H2c	SA	→	ARP	0.497***	0.234***	0.263	0.001
H2d	SA	→	ARN	0.338***	0.300***	0.038	0.885
H3b	SA	→	BI	0.023	0.329***	-0.306	0
H4b	SA	→	BP	0.406***	0.279***	0.127	0.045
H5c	NEGP2	→	ARP	0.280***	0.410***	-0.131	0.43
H5d	NEGP2	→	ARN	-0.377***	-0.637***	0.261	0.004
H6b	NEGP2	→	BI	0.323***	0.395***	-0.072	0.155
H7b	NEGP2	→	BP	-0.054†	0.441***	-0.496	0
H8b	ARP	→	BI	0.384***	0.259***	0.125	0.472
H9b	ARN	→	BI	0.108**	0.289***	-0.181	0

H10b	ARP	→	BP	0.618***	0.416***	0.202	0.007
H11b	ARN	→	BP	0.188***	0.183***	0.005	0.64
H12b	BP	→	BI	0.328***	0.199***	0.129	0.32
Age	Age16_19	→	NEGP2	0.136*	0.338***	-0.201	0.245
	Age20_29	→	NEGP2	0.106	0.386***	-0.28	0.05
	Age30_39	→	NEGP2	0.183*	0.272**	-0.09	0.618
	Age40_49	→	NEGP2	0.052	0.265**	-0.213	0.074
	Age50_59	→	NEGP2	-0.055	0.086	-0.141	0.168
Gender	Gender_M	→	NEGP2	0.074	0.106	-0.032	0.964
	Gender_F	→	NEGP2	-0.153	0.004	-0.157	0.741

SA: Servicescape Atmosphere; NEGP2: Narrative Engagement Part 2
ARP: Positive Affective Responses; ARN: Negative Affective Responses
BI: Behavioural Intentions; BP: Brand Personality
Significance Indicators: † p < 0.100, * p < 0.050, ** p < 0.010, *** p < 0.001

As one of the most important contributions of this study, the multi-group analysis find no difference for the influence of the servicescape atmosphere on narrative engagement across the cases, suggesting that consumers equally engage with fantasy stories that are told through servicescape atmospherics that highlight a positive or negative character. Accordingly, H1b is upheld. This finding further answers the first research question.

The positive effect of servicescape atmosphere on positive emotions is stronger for the design featuring Snow White as the positive character (Case 1), as the related z-score and P-values indicate (-3.267 z-score, $p<0.01$) in Table 6.14. The stronger influence of the servicescape atmosphere on positive emotions in Case 1 is further evidenced by the standardised regression weights and P-values of the Path-level chi-square difference test as presented in Table 6.15. Accordingly, H2c is confirmed. Servicescape atmospherics have stronger effect on consumers' positive emotions when positive story characters are highlighted in the servicescape. This helps further answer the second research question.

While a stronger relationship between servicescape atmosphere and negative emotions was expected in Case 2, the z-score of the relationship is not significant, indicating that there is no difference across the cases for this relationship (0.144 z-score). The B values of the two cases in Table 6.15, further, support this invariance as the related values are not much different. H2d is thus not supported. This finding contributes to the literature by suggesting that consumers experience as much negative emotions in servicescapes that feature a positive character as in servicescapes that highlight a negative character. Stereotyping a character as negative, alone, does not result in higher negative emotions

for consumers confronting them in fantasy designed servicescapes. This finding, further, answers the second research question.

The positive relationship between servicescape atmosphere and behavioural intentions is stronger for the design highlighting the negative character, the Evil Queen (Case 2), with z-score of 5.459 and $p<0.01$. As was earlier discussed, this relationship was not significant in Case 1. As a difference was postulated for this relationship, and the effect is found to be stronger in Case 2, H3b is upheld. This finding, further, helps answer the third research question.

The positive relationship between the servicescape atmosphere and brand personality is stronger in Case 1 (z-score -1.993, $p<0.05$). As such, designing servicescapes around a positive character affects brand personality more positively compared to when the same servicescape highlights a negative story character. This explains why managers, often, prefer brands to appear in positive storylines with positive characters associated to them (e.g., Knoll et al., 2015). As the effect of servicescape atmosphere on brand personality is stronger in Case 1, H4b is supported. This finding further answers question four.

There is no significant difference for the effect of narrative engagement on consumers' positive emotions across the two cases. Regardless of the type of character highlighted in a servicescape, when consumers engage with the story, they experience equal levels of positive emotions. In further addressing the second research question, as consumers experience equal levels of positive emotions in servicescapes that highlight a positive or negative story character as a result of engagement with the story, H5c is not supported.

The negative effect of narrative engagement on negative emotions is stronger for Case 2 (-2.881 z-score, and $p<0.01$). Thus, H5d that suggests a stronger effect of this association for Case 1 cannot be supported. This finding is important in the sense that highlighting a negative character in servicescape design, in contrast to what might be initially expected as evoking more negative emotions, results in less negative feelings than a servicescape designed around a positive story character, but this is conditional to consumers getting engaged with the story. The stronger negative association of narrative engagement with negative emotions in Case 2 might be, also, related to the character's interactions with the consumers. Despite being stereotyped as Evil, the Evil Queen has a sense of humour in her dialogues and actions. Although subtle, humour could be a reason for experiencing less negative feelings when engaged in the story presentation in Case 2. Research exists

in this area supporting the fact that good-natured, positive humour could be effective at down-regulating consumers' negative emotions and up-regulating the positive emotions (Samson & Gross, 2012). To address RQ2, this finding suggests that the more consumers engage with a fantasy story in a servicescape designed based on a negative story character, the less they experience negative emotions in response to the story.

The results of the multi-group analysis, further, reveal no significant difference for the effect of narrative engagement on behavioural intentions. Thus, H6b is not confirmed. Consumers' engagement with, or more specifically in this study, presence in stories told through atmospherics highlighting a positive or negative character equally affects their behavioural intentions. This finding further answers the third research question.

Although the effect of narrative engagement on brand personality is negative in Case 1, the effect is positive in Case 2 (8.353 z-score, $p<0.01$). Consumers' engagement with fantasy stories in servicescapes that highlight a negative character could positively affect brand personality. In contrast, a positive character such as Snow White could negatively affect brand personality as a result of consumers' engagement with the story. To further answer RQ4, H7b that expected a difference in the effect of narrative engagement on brand personality across the cases is upheld.

As for the relationship between positive affective responses and behavioural intentions, there was no significant different across the two cases and therefore H8b is not confirmed. The positive emotions consumers experience in a servicescape highlighting a positive or a negative character, equally affect their behavioural intentions.

However, a significant difference exists for the positive effect of negative emotions on consumers' behavioural intentions across the cases, with stronger association in Case 2. An increase in the negative emotions experienced in the servicescape that highlights the negative character thus increases consumers' behavioural intentions much more than in the servicescape highlighting the positive character. As a result, H9b (z-score of 3.653, $p<0.01$) is confirmed.

The results of the multi-group analysis find a stronger effect of the positive emotions on brand personality in Case 1. Positive emotions experienced in a servicescape designed based on a positive character have a stronger effect on brand personality compared to a servicescape highlighting a negative character. The significance of z-score (-2.748) with $p<0.01$ supports H10b.

The positive effect of negative affective responses on brand personality is not different across the cases and, therefore, H11b is not confirmed. Consumers' negative emotions affect brand personality at an equal level in servicescapes designed based on positive or negative story characters.

There is no significant difference across the cases for the effect of brand personality on consumers' behavioural intentions, suggesting that perceptions of brand personality in a servicescape designed based on a positive story character affect behavioural intentions to the same extent as in a servicescape that highlights a negative character. As H12b expected a difference across the cases for this association, it is not confirmed.

In a more detailed examination of the differences between the cases at the item level both Case 1 and Case 2 models proposed AR8_r, I3, I4, PB1 and PB3 as items that statistically account for the most perceptual differences at the construct level (Tables 6.16. and 6.17.). This statistically verifies the items that account for the difference in consumers' emotions (AR8_r: Fear), and behavioural intentions (I3: intention to visit, I4: willingness to pay a price premium, PB1: enjoyment, PB3: spending time) across the two cases.

Table 6. 16. Multiple Group differences at item level with Case 1 Model

			Snow White		Evil Queen		
Regression Paths			**Estimate[a]**	**P**	**Estimate**	**P**	**z-score**
ARN	→	**AR8_r**	1.179	0.000	1.473	0.000	2.328**
BI	→	**I3**	1.757	0.000	1.374	0.000	-2.764***
BI	→	**I4**	1.512	0.000	1.241	0.000	-1.791*
BI	→	**PB1**	1.738	0.000	1.491	0.000	-1.784*
BI	→	**PB3**	1.711	0.000	1.433	0.000	-2.008**

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

ARN: Negative Affective Responses; BI: Behavioural Intentions

AR8_r: Fear

I3: I would like to visit a restaurant like this over the next year.

I4: I would pay a higher price to go to a restaurant like this than I would pay to go to other restaurants.

PB1: I think I would enjoy dining in this restaurant.

PB3: I think I would like to spend time browsing in this restaurant.

[a] Unstandardised estimates

Table 6. 17. Multiple Group differences at item level with Case 2 Model

			Snow White		Evil Queen		
Regression Paths			**Estimate[a]**	**P**	**Estimate**	**P**	**z-score**
ARN	→	**AR8_r**	1.180	0.000	1.473	0.000	2.325**
BI	→	**I3**	1.757	0.000	1.374	0.000	-2.764***
BI	→	**I4**	1.512	0.000	1.241	0.000	-1.793*
BI	→	**PB1**	1.737	0.000	1.491	0.000	-1.783*
BI	→	**PB3**	1.711	0.000	1.433	0.000	-2.006**

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

ARN: Negative Affective Responses; BI: Behavioural Intentions

AR8_r: Fear

I3: I would like to visit a restaurant like this over the next year.

I4: I would pay a higher price to go to a restaurant like this than I would pay to go to other restaurants.

PB1: I think I would enjoy dining in this restaurant.

PB3: I think I would like to spend time browsing in this restaurant.

[a] Unstandardised estimates

Consumers perceive only a few item differences across the two cases. This confirms the ability of the conceptual framework in this thesis to reflect consumers' perceptions of the two design types that are investigated.

The results of the multi-group analysis at the item level found difference for the level of the item (AR8_r) measuring fear across the two cases. Regardless of the model used for comparing item differences, the level of fear in Case 2 is higher (Tables 6.16 and 6.17) suggesting that consumers experience more fear when the servicescape design highlights the negative story character. This is reasonable given the negative character's personality and atmospherics of the servicescape.

The item level comparisons also find differences in a number of behavioural intentions across the cases. Consumers' intentions to visit (I3) is significantly different in the cases with estimates of 1.757 (Case 1) and 1.374 (Case 2), suggesting that Case 1 respondents are more interested to visit such a servicescape over the next year. Willingness to pay a price premium (I4) is higher in Case 1 (1.512) compared to Case 2 (1.241) suggesting that consumers are willing to pay more to visit a servicescape designed based on a positive

(versus negative) story character. Moreover, consumers reported they would enjoy (PB1) dining at a restaurant designed based on a positive character more than if it was designed based on the negative character (1.738 for Case 1 and 1.491 for Case 2). The consumers are also more likely to spend time (PB3) in the restaurant highlighting the positive (1.711) story character compared to the negative character (1.433).

While item-level comparisons for behavioural intentions together imply stronger effects for Case 1, at the more holistic, construct level analysis, servicescape atmosphere does not have a significant direct effect on behavioural intentions in Case 1, and the effect of narrative engagement on behavioural intentions is also not different across these cases. Thus, it does not seem reasonable to conclude that consumers are more likely to visit, pay a premium, enjoy, or spend time in a servicescape highlighting a positive character.

6.7.6 Specific indirect effects

The most important type of effect for assessing mediation in structural equation models is specific indirect effect (Brown, 1997). Specific indirect effects represent the portion of the total indirect effect that works through a single intervening variable (Fox, 1980). Preacher and Hayes's (2008) bootstrapping technique was used to test for the specific indirect effect of the various mediators. The theoretical rationale and method used for testing the indirect effects is provided in Appendix G, and the results are presented in this section.

Tables 6.18. and 6.19. present the bootstrap estimates of the specific indirect effects based on 2000 bootstrap resamples for Case 1 and Case 2. The Bootstrap SEs and 95% confidence bounds for the population values of the specific indirect effects are included in these tables.

Table 6. 18. Bootstrap estimates of the specific indirect effects in Case 1

Indirect Path	Unstandardised Estimate	95% Confidence Interval		P-Value	Standardised Estimate
		Lower	Upper		
SA --> NEGP2 --> ARN	-0.137	-0.207	-0.077	0.001	-0.169**
SA --> NEGP2 --> ARP	0.126	0.069	0.201	0.001	0.125***
SA --> NEGP2 --> BP	-0.022	-0.049	0.003	0.151	-0.024
SA --> NEGP2 --> BI	0.121	0.088	0.165	0.001	0.145***

SA --> ARN --> BP	0.057	0.035	0.083	0.001	0.064**
SA --> ARN --> BI	0.031	0.016	0.051	0.001	0.037***
SA --> ARP --> BP	0.273	0.207	0.344	0.001	0.307***
SA --> ARP --> BI	0.16	0.108	0.223	0.001	0.191***
SA --> BP --> BI	0.112	0.071	0.163	0	0.133***
NEGP2 --> ARN --> BP	-0.077	-0.111	-0.044	0.001	-0.071**
NEGP2 --> ARN --> BI	-0.042	-0.072	-0.019	0.001	-0.041***
NEGP2 --> ARP --> BP	0.188	0.118	0.269	0.001	0.173***
NEGP2 --> ARP --> BI	0.11	0.063	0.17	0.001	0.108***
NEGP2 --> BP --> BI	-0.018	-0.044	0	0.108	-0.018
ARN --> BP --> BI	0.064	0.034	0.098	0.001	0.062***
ARP --> BP --> BI	0.169	0.104	0.244	0.001	0.203***

SA: Servicescape Atmosphere; NEGP2: Narrative Engagement Part 2
ARP: Positive Affective Responses; ARN: Negative Affective Responses
BI: Behavioural Intentions; BP: Brand Personality

Significance Indicators: † p < 0.100, * p < 0.050, ** p < 0.010, *** p < 0.001

Table 6. 19. Bootstrap estimates of the specific indirect effects in Case 2

Indirect Path	Unstandardised Estimate	95% Confidence Interval		P-Value	Standardised Estimate
		Lower	Upper		
SA --> NEGP2 --> ARN	-0.242	-0.34	-0.151	0.001	-0.253***
SA --> NEGP2 --> ARP	0.157	0.097	0.234	0.001	0.163***
SA --> NEGP2 --> BP	0.166	0.112	0.234	0.001	0.175***
SA --> NEGP2 --> BI	0.157	0.104	0.224	0.001	0.157***
SA --> ARN --> BP	0.052	0.027	0.087	0.001	0.055***
SA --> ARN --> BI	0.087	0.055	0.13	0.001	0.087***
SA --> ARP --> BP	0.092	0.042	0.142	0.002	0.098**
SA --> ARP --> BI	0.061	0.028	0.106	0.001	0.061***
SA --> BP --> BI	0.056	0.027	0.097	0.002	0.055**
NEGP2 --> ARN --> BP	-0.117	-0.176	-0.069	0.001	-0.117***
NEGP2 --> ARN --> BI	-0.197	-0.264	-0.142	0.001	-0.184***
NEGP2 --> ARP --> BP	0.172	0.121	0.232	0.001	0.171***
NEGP2 --> ARP --> BI	0.114	0.075	0.165	0.001	0.106***
NEGP2 --> BP --> BI	0.094	0.044	0.152	0.003	0.088**

ARN --> BP --> BI	0.038	0.016	0.072	0.002	0.036**
ARP --> BP --> BI	0.086	0.041	0.141	0.003	0.083**

SA: Servicescape Atmosphere; NEGP2: Narrative Engagement Part 2
ARP: Positive Affective Responses; ARN: Negative Affective Responses
BI: Behavioural Intentions; BP: Brand Personality
Significance Indicators: † p < 0.100, * p < 0.050, ** p < 0.010, *** p < 0.001

While the servicescape atmosphere has a direct, positive effect on negative emotions in both cases, the indirect effect of servicescape atmosphere on negative emotions, through narrative engagement, was negative (Case 1: -0.169, $p<0.010$, Case 2: -0.253, $p<0.001$). As the direct effect of servicescape atmosphere on negative emotions was significant, this mediation effect is partial.

Servicescape atmosphere has a significant indirect effect on positive emotions through narrative engagement and this mediation effect is positive in Case 1 (0.125, $p<0.001$), and Case 2 (0.163, $p<0.001$). As servicescape atmosphere has a significant direct effect on positive emotions, this mediation effect is partial.

Narrative engagement partially mediates the influence of servicescape atmosphere on brand personality in Case 2 (0.175, $p<0.001$), but this mediation effect is insignificant in Case 1. Although the direct effect of servicescape atmosphere on narrative engagement and brand personality, as well as the direct effect of engagement on brand personality are significant in Case 1, the P-value for the indirect effect (0.151) is not significant. Thus, narrative engagement does not mediate the effect of servicescape atmosphere on brand personality in Case 1.

While the servicescape atmosphere does not directly influence behavioural intentions in Case 1, there is a positive mediated effect for this construct on behavioural intentions through narrative engagement (Case 1: 0.145, Case 2: 0.157, $p<0.001$). This mediation is partial in Case 2, but a full mediation exists in Case 1, given the insignificance of the relationship between the servicescape atmosphere and behavioural intentions in Case 1. Thus, the researcher argues that while a servicescape highlighting the positive character does not have a direct influence on behavioural intentions, but consumers' behaviour is indirectly affected by the atmosphere of the servicescape upon consumers' engagement with the presented story.

Behavioural intentions are also indirectly affected by servicescape atmosphere through consumers' positive emotions in both cases (Case 1: 0.191, Case 2: 0.061, $p<0.001$). Thus, positive emotions mediate the effect of atmospherics on behavioural intentions. This interaction effect is, again, full mediation in Case 1 but partial mediation in Case 2.

There is an indirect effect from the servicescape atmosphere on behavioural intentions through the negative emotions in Case 1 (0.037, $p<0.001$) and Case 2 (0.087, $p<0.001$). Negative emotions fully mediate the effect of servicescape on behavioural intentions in Case 1. By contrast, this mediation effect is partial in Case 2.

The servicescape indirectly affects behavioural intentions through brand personality in both cases (Case 1: 0.133, $p<0.001$, Case 2: 0.055, $p<0.010$) with a full mediation effect in Case 1, and a partial mediation effect in Case 2.

The indirect effects of servicescape atmosphere on behavioural intentions through the other four constructs, together, suggest that consumers' behaviour is eventually affected by the atmosphere of fantasy servicescapes designed based on a positive character.

Consumers' positive emotions partially mediate the effect of servicescape atmosphere on brand personality in both cases (Case 1: 0.307, $p<0.001$, Case 2: 0.098, $p<0.010$).

Servicescape atmosphere also has a partial indirect effect on brand personality through the negative emotions in both cases (Case 1: 0.064, $p<0.010$, Case 2: 0.055, $p<0.001$).

An examination of specific indirect effects also revealed that both positive and negative affective responses mediate the influence of narrative engagement on brand personality. The standardised estimates for these partial mediation effects through positive emotions are 0.173 (Case 1, $p<0.001$) and 0.171 (Case 2, $p<0.001$). For negative emotions as the mediator between narrative engagement and brand personality, standardised estimates are -0.071 (Case 1, $p<0.010$) and -0.117 (Case 2, $p<0.001$). The mediation effect was partial in both cases.

Positive affective responses also partially mediate the effect of narrative engagement on behavioural intentions in Case 1 (0.108, $p<0.001$) and Case 2 (0.106, $p<0.001$).

Narrative engagement had a significant, partial, indirect effect on behavioural intentions through negative emotions in Case 1 (-0.041, $p<0.001$) and Case 2 (-0.184, $p<0.001$).

While the indirect influence of narrative engagement on behavioural intentions through brand personality is not supported in Case 1 ($p=0.108$), brand personality significantly

and partially mediates the effect of narrative engagement on behavioural intentions in Case 2 (0.088, p<0.010).

The examination of the specific indirect effects, further, revealed that brand personality partially mediates the influence of positive emotions on behavioural intentions in Case 1 (0.203, p<0.001) and Case 2 (0.083, p<0.010).

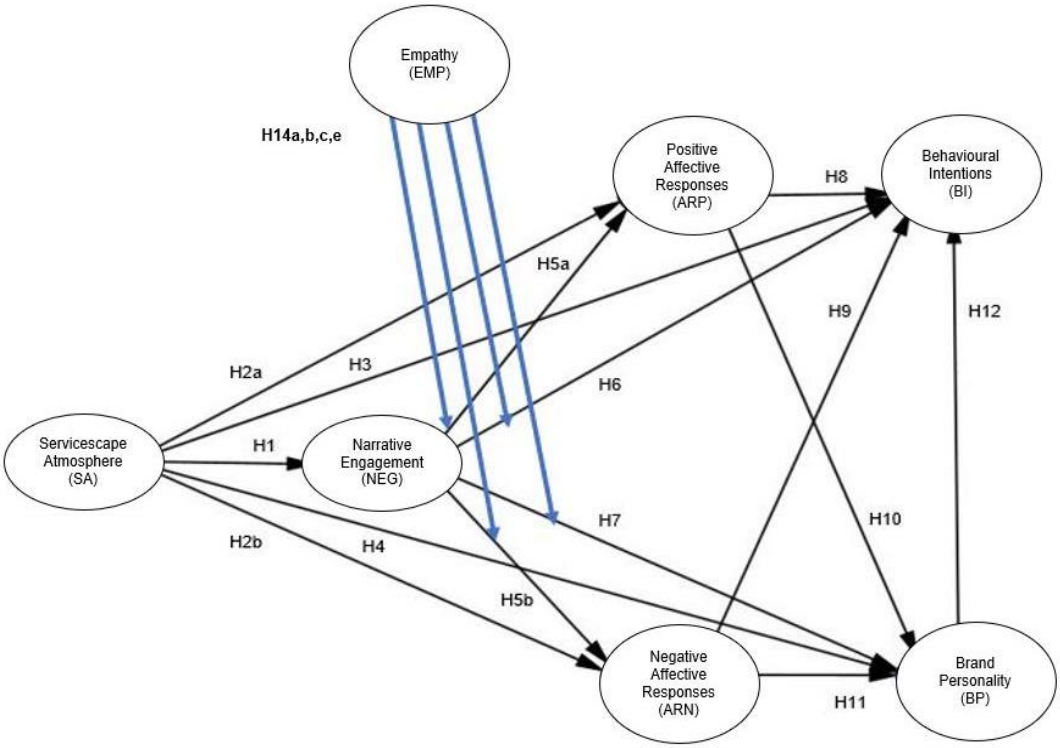
Brand personality was found to significantly mediate the effect of negative emotions on behavioural intentions in both cases (Case 1: 0.062, p<0.001, Case 2: 0.036, p<0.010).

6.7.7 Moderation tests

In addition to the effect of the contrasting atmospheric elements of the two design cases on consumers' experiences of narrative engagement and its outcomes, previous studies find that differences in empathy impact consumers' affective and behavioural responses to the same story (e.g., Argo et al., 2008; Mar et al., 2009; Van Laer, 2011; Zak, 2014; Van Laer et al., 2014; Kandaurova & Lee, 2019). In addition to the multi-group analysis that compared consumers' responses to the two contrasting designs of the servicescape, this study specifically examined whether higher levels of empathy for the story characters increase or decrease the influence of narrative engagement on consumers' affective and behavioural responses and brand personality perceptions in the same servicescape.

In this section, the moderating role of empathy with (positive or negative) characters in the relationships between narrative engagement and positive affective responses (H14a), negative affective responses (H14b), behavioural intentions (H14c), and perceptions of brand personality (H14e) is investigated. The moderator variable (EMP) is included in the structural model (Figure 6.4), and the results of the moderation tests are provided in Tables 6.20 and 6.21 that show the impact of empathy in the model.

Figure 6. 4. Proposed structural model with moderation effects



In Case 1 where consumers are exposed to the positive character, empathy moderated the effect of narrative engagement on consumers' behavioural intentions as the direct effect of narrative engagement and empathy on the behavioural intentions is significant and so is the p-value of the interaction effect ($p<0.01$) (Table 6.20). As shown in Figure 6.5., higher levels of empathy with the positive story character dampen the effect of narrative engagement on behavioural intentions. Thus, H14c is confirmed in Case 1. This finding provides evidence for why designers in Study 1 suggest retailers to use fantasy elements at moderate level in servicescapes, as high levels of fantasy distract consumers' attention from the retailers' offers. In this study, the presence of story characters interacting with the consumers gets them engaged in the story to the extent their attention is switched from the service to the character thus decreasing behavioural intentions in the servicescape.

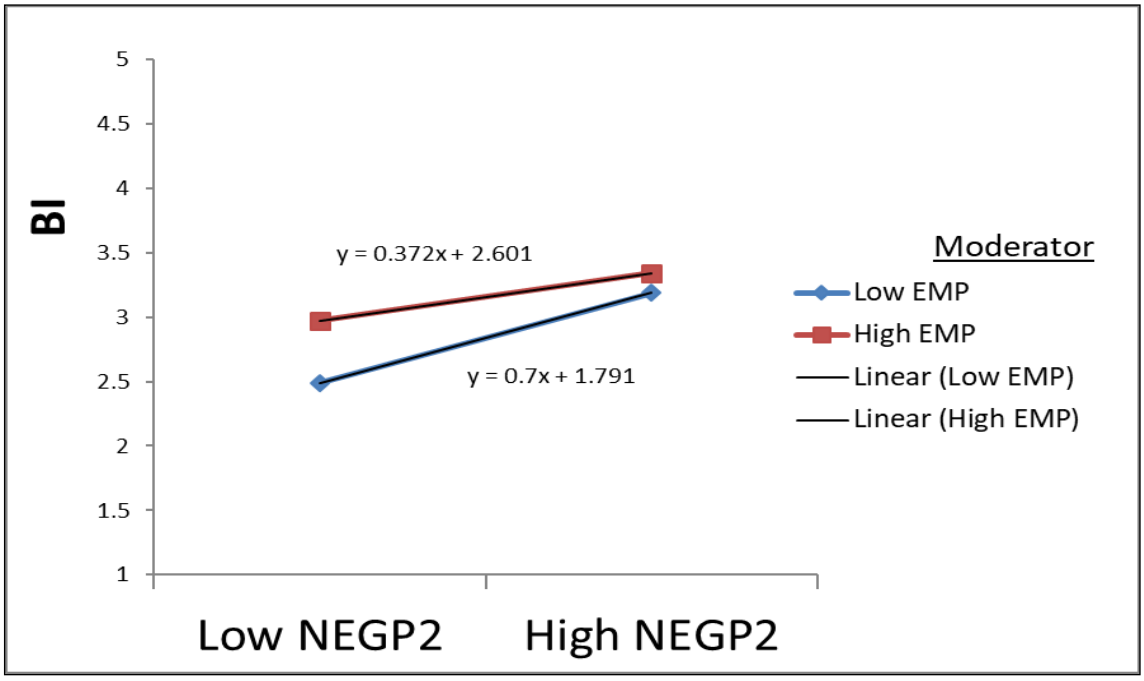
The direct, positive effect of empathy with the story character on narrative engagement suggested by modification indices, further, support the concept that empathy increases narrative engagement. Consumers vicariously experience the emotions of the character, empathise with her, and become transported to the story (see Slater & Rouner, 2002; Oatley, 2002; Green, 2004; Konijn et al., 2009; Van Laer, 2011).

The P-values for the direct effects and interaction effects of other moderation tests were not significant and thus H14a, H14b and H14e are not confirmed in Case 1.

Table 6. 20. Results for structural equation model with moderator effects for Case 1

Case 1 (Positive character: Snow White)						
Hypothesis	**Regression Paths**			**Estimates**	**P**	**Result**
H14a	NEGP2	→	ARP	-0.121	0.081*	Not supported
	EMP	→	ARP	0.756	***	
	NEGP2_x_EMP	→	ARP	0.002	0.962	
H14b	NEGP2	→	ARN	-0.394	***	Not supported
	EMP	→	ARN	0.029	0.737	
	NEGP2_x_EMP	→	ARN	-0.037	0.509	
H14c	NEGP2	→	BI	0.268	***	Supported
	EMP	→	BI	0.159	0.001***	
	NEGP2_x_EMP	→	BI	-0.082	***	
H14e	NEGP2	→	BP	-0.041	0.282	Not supported
	EMP	→	BP	-0.04	0.373	
	NEGP2_x_EMP	→	BP	0.036	0.114	
H14d was merged into H14c as the two constructs I and PB were merged to BI.						
NEGP2: Narrative Engagement Part 2; BI: Behavioural Intentions; BP: Brand Personality						
ARP: Positive Affective Responses; ARN: Negative Affective Responses						
d. ***p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10						

Figure 6. 5. The moderation effect of Empathy on Behavioural Intentions – Case 1



Similar to Case 1, consumers' empathy with the negative character in Case 2 dampens the positive relationship between narrative engagement and behavioural intentions and therefore, H14c is supported (see Table 6.21 and Figure 6.6.).

Empathy with the negative character also moderates the effect of narrative engagement on brand personality. As shown in Figure 6.7., empathy strengthens the positive effect of narrative engagement on brand personality in Case 2, such that the more consumers empathise with the character, the more positively they perceive the brand's personality. This finding further supports Campbell et al.'s (2020) study that suggest dark stories positively affect consumers' brand experiences. With regard to the moderation role of empathy in the relation between engagement and brand personality, H14e is supported in Case 2.

The P-values for the direct effects and interaction effects of other moderation tests were not significant and therefore, H14a and H14b are not confirmed.

Table 6. 21. Results for structural equation model with moderator effects for Case 2

Case 2 (Negative character: The Evil Queen)						
Hypothesis	**Regression Paths**			**Estimates**	**P**	**Result**
H14a	NEGP2	→	ARP	0.134	0.13	Not supported
	EMP	→	ARP	0.401	***	
	NEGP2_x_EMP	→	ARP	-0.029	0.48	
H14b	NEGP2	→	ARN	-0.641	***	Not supported
	EMP	→	ARN	-0.016	0.863	
	NEGP2_x_EMP	→	ARN	-0.045	0.265	
H14c	NEGP2	→	BI	0.244	***	Supported
	EMP	→	BI	0.241	***	
	NEGP2_x_EMP	→	BI	-0.041	0.049**	
H14e	NEGP2	→	BP	0.525	***	Supported
	EMP	→	BP	-0.121	0.037**	
	NEGP2_x_EMP	→	BP	0.05	0.044**	
H14d was merged into H14c as the two constructs I and PB were merged to BI.						
NEGP2: Narrative Engagement Part 2; BI: Behavioural Intentions; BP: Brand Personality						
ARP: Positive Affective Responses; ARN: Negative Affective Responses						
d. ***p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10						

Figure 6. 6. The moderation effect of Empathy on Behavioural Intentions - Case 2

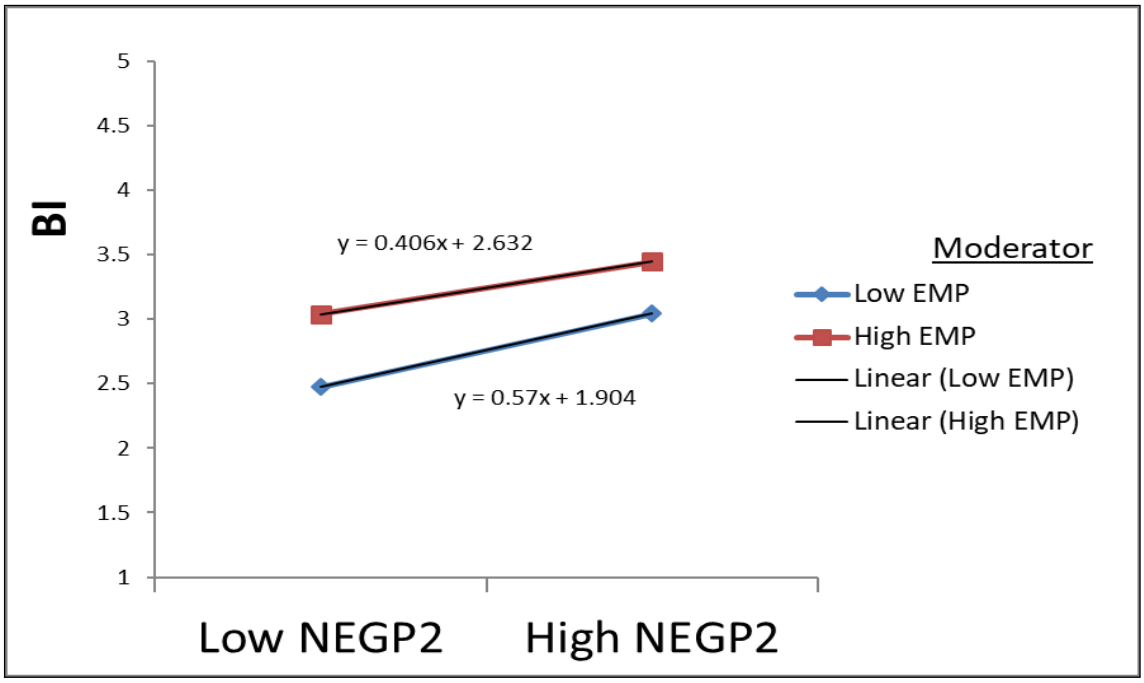
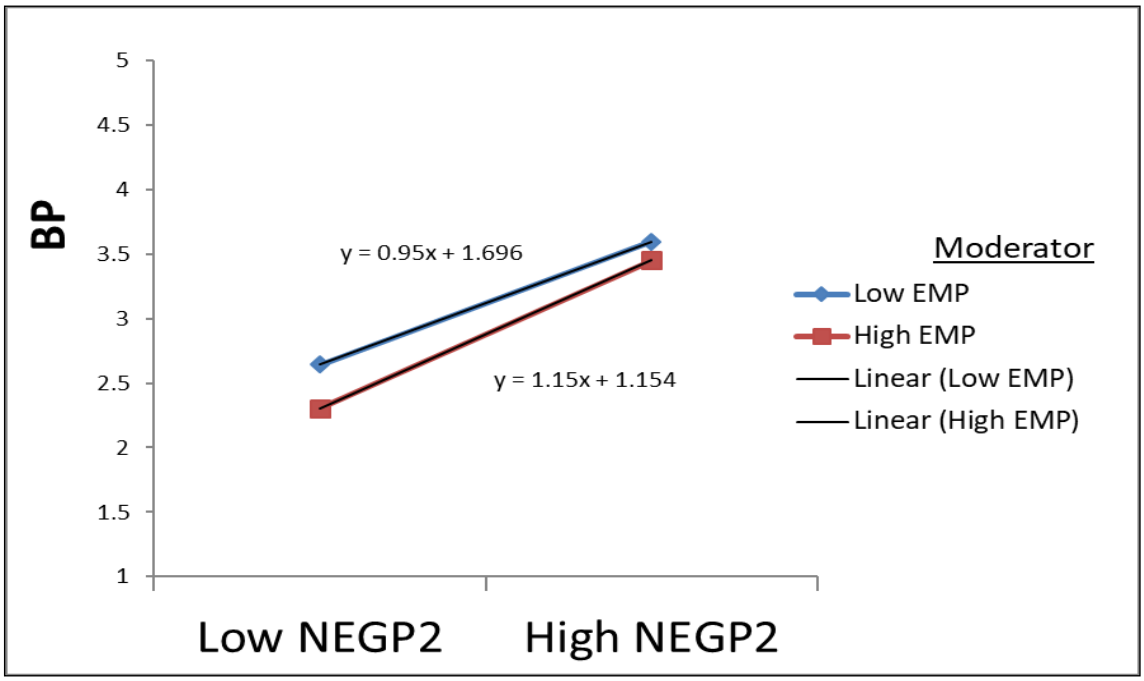


Figure 6. 7. The moderation effect of Empathy on Brand Personality - Case 2



6.8 Chapter summary

Following designers' (Study 1) and consumers' (Study 2) opinions about the experience of narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes, and its outcomes, an online survey is conducted in Study 3 to confirm whether fantasy stories presented through servicescape

atmospherics result in narrative engagement, and to examine affective, behavioural, and brand responses in fantasy servicescapes. This study, moreover, compares consumers' experiences in fantasy servicescapes depending on the positive (versus negative) character they empathise with.

For this purpose, the conceptual framework synthesises the environmental psychology (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009), and brand personality (Aaker, 1997) literatures in proposing that a servicescape atmosphere that tells a fantasy story results in consumers' experience of narrative engagement in that servicescape, and that engagement, subsequently, impacts consumers' affective and behavioural responses, and their perceptions of brand personality. The researcher further proposes that depending on the type of character (Case 1: Positive, Case 2: Negative) the consumers empathise with, their experiences of the servicescape differs.

The theory in the final framework is operationalised using seven modified constructs, two of which - narrative engagement and empathy – are borrowed from the storytelling literature and incorporated into the servicescape environment research for the first time. The framework proposed in this study thus presents how diverse literatures are used to reflect construct measurement, and limitations of the relevant literatures is addressed in the conceptual model.

To understand consumers' experiences depending on the character they empathise with, Case 1 respondents were exposed to the servicescape highlighting the positive character (Snow White) and Case 2 respondents the servicescape featuring the negative character (Evil Queen) of the same story. This study obtained 202 clean responses for Case 1, and 214 for Case 2.

EFA in this study was conducted merely to have a rough idea of grouping variables that are intercorrelated, and to identify items that are potential candidates for removal later in the individual factor level CFA. As such, no items were removed based on the EFA.

Results from the CFA of individual construct measurement models revealed 12 items that if excluded from the measurement model of both cases due to low factor loadings or R^2 values, will improve Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) estimates. The modification indices for the full model CFA suggested deletion of 16 further items to improve model fit for both cases.

The composite reliability, average variance extracted, and the maximum shared variance measures of reliability and validity were, also, found to be reliable and possess validity.

The revised Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) at the overall measurement level with 28 items is satisfactory in a number of respects, with desired Cmin/df and RMSEA for both cases. The Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices for CFI of both cases, and TLI of Case 1 meet the stringent 0.95 value threshold, when less than 250 respondents, and between 12 and 30 items are employed. As for Case 2 TLI (0.943), the researcher argues that although the value is below the expected 0.95 threshold, but it is still above 0.9 and acceptable. Thus, the overall model is indicative of the presence of good data.

The structural model analyses in SEM reveal good model fit and the analysis suggests a number of specific, important findings. To answer the first research question, regardless of the type of story character the atmosphere highlights, incorporating fantasy stories in servicescapes makes consumers feel present in the story, and consumers equally engage with fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics that highlight a positive or negative character.

In contrary to Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) who perceived the prediction of emotions evoked by a given story to be difficult, the qualitative studies conducted in this thesis find the specific emotions that designers evoke (Study 1), and the consumers experience (Study 2) in fantasy servicescapes. To answer question two, servicescape atmospherics have a positive effect on positive and negative affective responses in both servicescapes. Consistent with the narrative transportation theory, this study found a positive effect of narrative engagement on consumers' positive emotions as well as a negative effect on their negative emotions (Escalas, 2007). Thus, engagement with a story evokes positive and inhibits negative emotions in consumers, regardless of the character the consumers are exposed to. The servicescape atmosphere has a stronger effect on positive emotions when positive story characters are highlighted, however, consumers experience as much negative emotions in servicescapes that feature a positive character as in servicescapes that highlight a negative character. Stereotyping a character as negative, alone, does not result in higher negative emotions for consumers confronting them in the servicescape. Consumers experience equal levels of positive emotions in servicescapes that highlight positive or negative characters, as a result of engagement with the story. This is while, highlighting a negative story character in the atmosphere evokes less negative feelings compared to a servicescape highlighting a positive character, conditional to consumers' engagement with the story. The stronger negative influence of narrative engagement on

consumers' negative affective responses in Case 2 might be due to the sense of humour the Evil Queen has, thus down-regulating negative emotions (Samson & Gross, 2011).

In answer to question three, servicescape atmosphere directly and positively influences consumers' behavioural intentions only when the negative character dominates design. The direct effect of the servicescape atmosphere on behaviour in Case 2 was related to the fact that consumers by instinct pay more attention to negative stimuli and are more likely to act accordingly (James, 1890, Campbell et al., 2020). When consumers engage with a story told through the servicescape atmospherics, their engagement with the story increases their behavioural intentions in the servicescape (e.g., Van Laer et al., 2014; Lee & Jeong, 2017; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019). Engagement with the story equally impacts the behavioural intentions in servicescapes that highlight a positive or a negative character. Relatedly, although the servicescape atmosphere in Case 1 does not directly influence behavioural intentions, the mediation test results revealed that this construct *indirectly* influences behaviour through narrative engagement, the positive and negative affective responses, as well as through brand personality.

This study helps address question four by suggesting that regardless of the character the atmospherics highlight, fantasy servicescapes positively influence a brand's personality. The positive relationship between the servicescape atmosphere and brand personality is, however, stronger in Case 1. Designing the servicescape based on a positive character affects brand personality more positively as to when the same servicescape highlights a negative story character. Consumers' engagement with fantasy stories positively affects brand personality only when the design highlights the negative character. By contrast, characters such as Snow White, despite a positive stereotype, might negatively affect consumers' brand perceptions. This negative influence might be related to the type of business using the character in its environmental design. Different product categories, for example, better relate with positive (versus negative) characters (Dias et al., 2017). This finding suggests the retailers to cautiously decide about the type of character they highlight in designing their servicescapes. Although this study finds that engagement with negative characters positively affects brand personality, this might only apply to restaurant businesses and not necessarily to other types of business.

This study, further, answers the fifth research question about how consumers' empathy with positive (versus negative) characters affects their experiences of the servicescape. In the servicescape designed based on the positive character, higher levels of empathy with

the character dampen the effect of narrative engagement on behavioural intentions. This finding provides evidence for why designers in Study 1 recommend retailers to use fantasy elements at a moderate level, so that consumers' attention is not distracted from the retailers' offers. Similar to Case 1, consumers' empathy with the negative character dampens the positive effect of narrative engagement on behavioural intentions. Further, empathy with the negative character strengthens the effect of narrative engagement on brand personality in Case 2, such that the more consumers empathise with the character, the more positively they perceive the brand's personality. This finding further supports Campbell et al.'s (2020) study that suggest dark stories positively influence consumers' brand experiences.

As empathy with character did not moderate the relations between narrative engagement with the positive and negative affective responses in neither case, and the relationships between narrative engagement and brand personality in Case 1, the related hypotheses were not supported.

Based on the presented analysis, the researcher argues that the study model contributes to the extant understanding about the influence of fantasy servicescape atmospherics on consumers' affective and behavioural responses and perceptions of brand personality through the experience of narrative engagement and depending on the type of character consumers empathise with in story-based environments.

Chapter 7 Conclusions

"The Return Journey": The contributions, implications, and future research avenues for consumers' experiences of fantasy servicescapes

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of the current thesis was to examine whether consumers experience narrative engagement in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories and how engagement with the stories influences consumers' affective responses, behaviour, and brand personality. As consumers' responses to a story differ depending on the character they empathise with, this thesis further examined how empathy with positive (versus negative) story characters affects consumers' subsequent responses in fantasy designed servicescapes.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 presented the findings of the three studies conducted in this thesis related to the interviews with design experts (Study 1), the consumers (Study 2), and the online consumer surveys (Study 3). This chapter presents the conclusions of this thesis by addressing the five research questions. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how the research findings contribute to knowledge, to examine implications of this thesis for interested groups, and to suggest possible directions for future research.

The chapter begins with an examination of the significance of this thesis by discussing how each of the three studies contributed to addressing the five research questions and, thereafter, discusses theoretical contributions and managerial implications of the thesis. The chapter follows by reviewing the research limitations and concludes by suggesting avenues for future research.

7.2 The theoretical significance of this thesis

Despite the benefit of stories in engaging consumers (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008, 2009; Bilandzic et al., 2020) and influencing their emotions, behaviour, and brand perceptions (Van Laer et al., 2014, Dessart & Pitardi, 2019; Lundqvist et al., 2013), and considering the power of fantasy in creating extraordinary servicescapes to escape (Seregina, 2019),

research on consumers' responses to servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories is almost overlooked (Hollenbeck et al., 2008; Mossberg, 2008; Mossberg & Eide, 2017; Seregina, 2019).

The literature review presented a number of gaps in extant research that motivated the formulation of five main questions that this thesis was led by. The purpose of this thesis was to examine whether consumers engage with fantasy stories that are told through the servicescape atmospherics (RQ1) and to explore consumers' affective responses (RQ2), behaviour (RQ3), and perceptions of brand personality (RQ4) in fantasy servicescapes. This thesis also examined how empathy with positive (versus negative) characters affect consumers' responses in fantasy servicescape (RQ5). The following sections discuss how the findings from the three studies help address the research questions.

7.2.1 Research question 1

Do consumers experience narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes?

Consumers' engagement, or more precisely, presence in stories, was a reason shared by the design experts in Study 1 as encouraging them to use story themes for servicescapes. According to designers, telling stories through the servicescape atmospherics can evoke consumers' imagination of themselves in the presented story as well as the story events, aspects that are reflective of narrative presence. As consumers feel present in stories told through servicescape atmospherics, they are, as such, likely to get engaged with the story, as presence results in narrative engagement (see Bilandzic et al., 2020).

In addition, as consumers are expected to feel a range of positive and negative emotions in servicescapes designed based on a fantasy story, they emotionally engage with the story and are highly likely to experience narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009) in fantasy servicescapes.

Moreover, more than half of the consumers in Study 2 imagined the story events and/or themselves in the story and, as such, experienced narrative presence in the servicescape. The consumers referred to prior familiarity with the story, the level of story mimicry, congruent drinks, information provided about relevance of the servicescape to the story, dressing up as the story characters and role-plays by consumers as elements that helped them focus on and/or understand the story, as a result, increasing the likelihood of their presence in the story. In addition, the majority of consumers experienced positive and/or

negative emotions in the servicescape and, as such, emotionally engaged with the story. Emotional engagement, in-turn, increases the likelihood of consumers' presence in the presented story. Study 2 findings suggest that consumers feel present and engage with fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics.

Consumers' engagement with fantasy stories in servicescapes was further confirmed in Study 3. A positive association was evidenced between the servicescape atmosphere and narrative engagement for both designs of the servicescape. Regardless of the character (positive versus negative) the design highlighted, consumers equally engaged with the fantasy story in the servicescape.

To summarise, in line with previous studies demonstrating consumers' detachment from the real world when they are confronted by a story (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008, 2009; Van Laer et al., 2014; Van Leeuwen et al., 2017; Bilandzic & Sukalla, 2019), findings from the three studies conducted in this thesis were consistent in supporting the fact that consumers experience presence and, as a result, engage with fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics, and that the level of engagement with a story does not differ depending on the type of character that the design highlights.

Although development of a scale to measure narrative engagement in servicescapes was beyond the scope of the current thesis and the researcher adapted the items from literature and Study 1 and 2 findings, it might provide an idea for future research to share that after CFA analysis, the items measuring narrative engagement in the final framework include "During the story presentation, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story", "The story presentation created a new world, and then that world suddenly disappeared when the story presentation ended", and "At times during the story presentation, the story world was closer to me than the real world". These items relate to the narrative presence dimension of narrative engagement. This finding, in-turn, supports Study 1 and 2 regarding the significance of narrative presence for measuring narrative engagement in fantasy designed servicescapes and contributes to extant research by suggesting narrative presence as the one subdimension of narrative engagement that can measure engagement with stories told through servicescape atmospherics.

7.2.2 Research question 2

What affective responses are experienced in fantasy servicescapes?

The design experts in Study 1 referred to happiness, excitement, wonder, encouraged, patience and forgiveness with the level of service as positive emotions, besides fear and scared, as well as tense as negative emotions that consumers are likely to experience in fantasy servicescapes. Negative emotions, such as the fear of confronting evil characters was perceived by the designers as resulting in fun and enjoyment of the experience (Arnould & Price, 1993; Dessart, 2018).

In addition to happiness and excitement, as emotions that design experts aim to evoke in fantasy servicescapes, regardless of experiencing presence or not, consumers in Study 2 also felt relaxed, peaceful and calm, comforted and cosy, welcomed and warm-hearted, contended, surprised, amazed, and lucky, as positive emotions, besides rushed, worried, and bored, as negative emotions in the servicescape. Consumers who became present in the story were, however, more likely to feel positive and negative emotions compared to consumers who did not experience presence and thus the findings support the effect of narrative engagement on consumers' affective responses (Escalas, 2004a; Chang, 2009; LaMarre & Landreville, 2009; Van Laer et al., 2014; Dessart, 2018). Presence, further, lead to more positive (versus negative) emotions in consumers, therefore, supporting the transportation theory (Escalas, 2007).

Study 3 found that a servicescape designed based on a fantasy story evokes positive and negative emotions in consumers. Although highlighting the positive story character had a stronger effect on consumers' positive emotions, however, the consumers felt as much negative emotions in the servicescape designed based on the positive character as in the servicescape designed based on the negative character. As such, designing servicescapes based on negative characters does not lead to more negative emotions. Consistent with the transportation theory (see Escalas, 2007) Study 2 found a significant positive effect of presence on positive emotions and a negative effect on negative emotions. As such, regardless of the character the design highlights, presence in a fantasy story told through servicescape atmospherics evokes positive and inhibits negative emotions in consumers. Regardless of the character type, presence resulted in equal levels of positive emotions in both designs of the servicescape. However, the consumers felt less negative emotions as a result of narrative presence in the servicescape highlighting the negative character. The stronger negative effect of presence on negative emotions for the negative character might be, however, related to the sense of humour that the negative character had that could be effective at down-regulating negative emotions (see Samson & Gross, 2011).

Although development of a scale to measure consumers' positive and negative emotions in fantasy servicescapes was beyond the scope of this thesis and the researcher adapted the items from the extant literature and by considering Study 1 and 2 findings, it might provide an idea for future research to share that after CFA analysis, the items left for the final framework include happiness, contentment, love, and comfort for the positive, and sadness, fear, and anger for the construct measuring negative affective responses.

7.2.3 Research question 3

What intentions and behaviours are experienced in fantasy servicescapes?

The designers referred to several intentions and behaviour as a reason for why they use a fantasy story for designing servicescapes. In line with what designers generally expect for consumers in any servicescape, the intentions and behaviour in fantasy servicescapes also include enhancing consumers' engagement with and understanding retailers' offers, increasing purchase intention, spending more money, spending more time, explore and discover, and having fun in such servicescapes (Study 1).

A considerable number of consumers in Study 2 wished they could have spent more time at the servicescape. This intention was higher for consumers who felt present in the story. In addition, consumers shared about their intentions to spend money for eating, drinking, buying souvenirs, and buying beer from the servicescape to take home. Consumers who experienced presence in the story were more likely to buy beer to take home. A possible explanation for the intensity of this intention amongst engaged consumers might be the relevance of the beer with the story where characters used to gather at the servicescape for drinks. Consumers who feel present in the story seem more likely to buy products that are part of the story concept. Therefore, selling products related to the story can encourage the engaged consumers to purchase those products. As for the other spending intentions, consumers do not need to necessarily feel present in the story but the atmosphere of such servicescapes, by itself, has power to trigger consumers' intentions for spending money on eating, drinking, and buying souvenirs. Consumers who felt present in the story were, further, more likely to return to the servicescape. By contrast, consumers who did not feel present in the story mostly shared that their return to the servicescape is conditional to being accompanied by family or friends, if they have finances, for other events or extra experiences, or that they will not return, considering their visit to the servicescape as a

one-time experience, or not reasonable to revisit from a financial perspective. In line with Green et al. (2004), consumers who felt presence were, further, more likely to recommend the servicescape to others whereas those not transported to the story would recommend the servicescape only to people who are fans of the related story, or to tourists travelling to the country.

In terms of actual behaviour, enjoyment and fun, as well as browse and explore were the two behaviours mostly experienced by consumers in Study 2. Given the time limit to be at the servicescape, a very small fraction of consumers were able to spend money on the available options to eat or drink. Presence in the story positively affected enjoyment and fun and spending money. However, consumers were more likely to browse and explore the servicescape when they were not engaged with the story concept, possibility, due to lower levels of attentional focus and/or understanding of the story concept.

To help answer the third question about consumers' behaviour in fantasy servicescapes, Study 3 found the atmosphere of fantasy servicescapes directly and positively influence consumers' behavioural intentions only when the negative character dominates design. This effect was explained by reference to evolutionary psychology (James, 1890) and the fact that consumers might, by instinct, pay more attention to negative stimuli and be more likely to take actions, accordingly. Although the servicescape atmosphere did not directly affect consumers' behaviour when the design highlighted the positive character, the mediation test results found that the servicescape atmosphere influenced behaviour indirectly through narrative engagement (or presence), positive and negative emotions, as well as through brand personality. Moreover, regardless of the character dominating the design of the servicescape, narrative engagement had a moderate, positive influence on behavioural intentions (Lee & Jeong, 2017; Dessart, 2018; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019). The strength of this positive effect did not differ across the two designs.

While developing a scale for measuring consumers' behaviour in fantasy servicescapes was beyond the scope of this thesis and the items were adapted from extant literature and Study 1 and 2 findings, it might provide an idea for future research to share that after the CFA analysis, items left in the final framework related to recommending the restaurant to others, WOM, visiting a similar restaurant over the next year, paying higher price to go to such a restaurant than others, enjoying dining in the restaurant, spending time, and spending more money than planned for in such restaurant.

7.2.4 Research question 4

How do fantasy servicescapes influence perceptions of brand personality?

The personalities designers aim to associate to any servicescape brand, regardless of the theme dominating design, respectively include competence, sophistication, excitement, sincerity, and ruggedness (Study 1). Competence was referred to by traits of leader and confident that relate to the facet successful and the trait of secure that relates to the facet reliable (Aaker, 1997). The designers described sophistication either by referring to the dimension itself or shared their efforts in making the brand look upper-class and high-end or glamorous that relate to the facet upper-class. Regarding the dimension excitement, designers referred to the trait of being unique that relates to the facet imaginative, and to the personality facet up-to-date, and to a trait of this facet known as contemporary and current. Being young and cool were other personality traits shared that both relate to the facet spirited. Sincerity was referred to by the personality facets cheerful, upbeat, jovial, and being honest. And finally, ruggedness was described by traits of being outdoorsy and masculine, both, related to the facet outdoorsy (Aaker, 1997).

From the consumers' perspective (Study 2), regardless of presence in the story, sincerity was the most referred personality dimension associated to the servicescape brand with consumers relating the traits of friendly and welcoming, small-town, country-style and old-fashioned, cheerful, jovial and fun, original and authentic, family-oriented, down-to-earth and humble, as well as honest to the servicescape. Following sincerity, excitement was the second referred dimension with consumers describing the brand as imaginative, fantastic and mysterious, cool and chill, unique, and exciting. The consumers perceived the brand as also rugged, describing it as outdoorsy and adventurous, tough, and strong. The last personality was sophistication with a consumer describing the Inn as upper-class and high-end. In line with what Lundqvist et al. (2013) found in their study, consumers who experienced presence in the story were more likely to perceive the brand as exciting. Consumers who felt present in the story were also more likely to perceive the brand as being sophisticated. By contrast, when consumers did not experience presence, they were more likely to describe the brand as being sincere and rugged.

Study 3 found that regardless of the dominant character, stories told through the servicescape atmospherics positively influence the brand's personality, and that this effect is stronger when the positive story character dominates the design. This finding, in-

turn, explains why managers often prefer their brands to appear in positive storylines with positive characters associated to them (Knoll et al., 2015). While the atmospherics of fantasy servicescapes positively affect brand personality, when consumers engage with the story, their experience of narrative engagement has a negative effect on brand perceptions in servicescapes that highlight a positive character. Study 3 suggests that the more engaged consumers become in a story told through the atmospherics of a servicescape that highlights a negative character, the more positively they perceive the servicescape brand. This finding is proof to what Dias et al. (2017) suggested regarding the fact that consumers "sometimes bond with unpleasant characters" and might find such characters as more attractive (see also Pickett, 2012). Dark stories featuring negative-valenced imagery are proven to result in stronger brand experiences (see Keller, 1993; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010; Campbell et al., 2020). In answering the fourth question, Study 3 suggests that engagement with fantasy stories in servicescapes highlighting a negative character can, in practice, positively affect brand personality and that a positive character might have a negative effect on consumers' brand perceptions, depending on whether consumers get lost in the story.

Although development of a scale to measure brand personality of fantasy servicescapes was beyond the scope of this thesis with all items adapted from the extant literature and Study 1 and 2 findings, it might provide an idea for future research to share that after the CFA analysis, the items left in the final framework related the brand of the servicescape to being honest, sincere, and friendly.

7.2.5 Research question 5

How consumers' empathy with positive (versus negative) characters influences responses to fantasy servicescapes?

Given the potential of positive and negative characters in attracting people's attention, both characters were recommended by design experts in Study 1 to be used for design. According to designers, regardless of a character's personality, what designers deal with is implementing the influential character that would better connect the design to a story. In deciding the story to implement in servicescape design, however, the type of business was considered to be influential. For example, a designer shared that a shoe store could use the Cinderella story as its theme, given the relevance of the story with their product.

Consumers in Study 2 only imagined about the positive characters, relating the reason to the positive vibe of the servicescape they visited. The consumers referred to a number of elements that could help them to imagine the negative characters in the servicescape, including seeing the story events through virtual reality at the servicescape, dressing up as characters and role-plays by consumers, higher level of mimicry at the servicescape, providing story-related information to consumers, and being familiar with the storyline before visiting the servicescape. Given the inability of consumers in Study 2 to imagine the negative characters, this aspect was further examined in the third study.

Regardless of character type, the intensity of consumers' empathy with story characters in fantasy servicescapes did not affect their emotions (Study 3). Further, the intensity of empathy with the positive character did not influence perceptions of brand personality. By contrast, however, the more the consumers empathised with the negative character, the more positively they perceived the servicescape brand. Higher levels of empathy, further, lead to a decrease in behavioural intentions, regardless of the character type the design highlighted. This finding explains why the design experts in Study 1 recommend using fantasy elements at a moderate level. Higher levels of fantasy distract consumers' attention from what the retailer has to offer. The presence of story characters interacting with consumers in the servicescape gets them engaged with the story to the extent their attention is switched from the service to characters, decreasing behavioural intentions in the servicescape. Therefore, a moderate level of fantasy in the servicescape can engage the consumers, not only with the story, but with the retailers' offers, resulting in higher behavioural intentions.

Table 7.1. integrates and summarises the findings from the three studies in answering to the five research questions.

Table 7. 1. Integration of Study 1, 2, and 3 findings

	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
RQ1	Consumers imagine themselves in a story and the story events told through servicescape atmospherics therefore they experience Narrative presence and Narrative engagement in a fantasy servicescape. Consumers' engagement with stories motivates the designers to use stories for designing servicescapes. Consumers feel different emotions in a servicescape that is designed based on a fantasy story and thus they experience Emotional engagement, resulting in Narrative presence and Narrative engagement.	Consumers imagine themselves in the story and the story events in the fantasy servicescape and therefore experienced Narrative presence which in-turn leads to Narrative engagement. Consumers referred to elements that either helped or could have helped them focus on (Attentional focus) and understand the story (Narrative understanding) that result in Narrative presence and subsequently, Narrative engagement in the fantasy servicescape. Consumers feel different emotions in the servicescape and thus experience Emotional engagement that results in Narrative presence and Narrative engagement.	Regardless of character type (positive or negative), the consumers experience narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes. Consumers equally experience narrative engagement in servicescapes designed based on a positive versus a negative fantasy character. The three items of the dimension, Narrative presence, can independently measure narrative engagement in fantasy servicescapes.
	To integrate the findings from the three studies, consumers experience narrative presence and thus engage with fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics.		
RQ2	The design experts expect consumers to experience positive emotions of Excitement, Happiness, Wonder, Encouraged, Patience and forgiveness The designers also expect consumers to experience negative emotions of Fear and Tension that in-turn, result in Fun and Enjoyment in fantasy servicescapes.	Consumers' experience of narrative presence in the servicescape increases the likelihood of Happiness, Relaxed, Warm-hearted, Nostalgia and Contentment. Presence also led to feeling Rushed and worried, but this was due to the time limit the consumers had to be at the fantasy servicescape in Study 2.	Regardless of character type (positive or negative), consumers' experience of narrative presence in the fantasy servicescape: Increases positive affective responses, and Decreases negative affective responses
	The specific positive and negative affective responses found in Study 1 and 2 were replicated as part of the survey items in Study 3. Consumers experience positive and negative emotions in fantasy designed servicescapes, but regardless of the character type that the servicescape design highlights, narrative presence increases positive affective responses and decreases negative affective responses in fantasy servicescapes.		

RQ3	The design experts expect consumers to experience intentions and behaviour of Engagement with offers, Purchase intention, Spend money, Time, and Fun in fantasy servicescapes.	Consumers' experience of narrative presence in the servicescape increases the likelihood of their intention to Spend more Time, Purchase story-related items, Return, and Recommend the fantasy servicescape. Narrative presence in the fantasy designed servicescape also increases the likelihood of the behaviours of Enjoy, Fun, and Spending money at the servicescape.	Regardless of character type (positive or negative), consumers' experience of narrative presence in the servicescape increases their behavioural intentions. Regardless of character type (positive or negative), negative affective responses increase the consumers' behavioural intentions in fantasy servicescapes.
	The intentions and behaviour found in Study 1 and 2 were replicated as part of the survey items in Study 3. Regardless of the character type that the servicescape design highlights, narrative presence increases behavioural intentions in fantasy servicescapes. Also, regardless of character type the servicescape design highlights, negative affective responses increase behavioural intentions in fantasy servicescapes.		
RQ4	The design experts expect consumers to perceive the servicescape brand as communicating Competence, sophistication, excitement, sincerity, and ruggedness Using fantasy stories helps relate these personalities to the servicescape brand.	Consumers' experience of narrative presence in the servicescape increases the likelihood of perceiving the servicescape brand as communicating Excitement. Consumers who did not experience narrative presence were more likely to perceive the brand as being Sincere, Rugged, and Sophisticated.	Consumers' experience of narrative presence in the servicescape highlighting the negative story character positively influences brand personality perceptions. Consumers' experience of narrative presence in the servicescape highlighting the positive story character negatively influences brand personality perceptions. Regardless of character type (positive or negative), consumers' positive and negative affective responses positively influence brand personality perceptions.
	The brand personality traits found in Study 1 and 2 were replicated as part of the survey items in Study 3. Consumers' experience of narrative presence has a positive influence on brand personality only when the negative character is highlighted in the fantasy servicescape. Also, regardless of character type the servicescape design highlights, consumers' positive and negative affective responses positively influence the brand's personality.		

RQ5	Both character types can help attract the consumers to a servicescape. The decision on which character must be highlighted in design depends on type of business. The design experts recommend using a character that better connects the design to the story e.g., using the Cinderella story for a shoe store as the story could be linked to the product being sold.	Given the positive vibe of the servicescape in Study 2, consumers only imagined of the positive characters.	Regardless of character type (positive or negative), higher empathy with the story character positively influences positive and negative affective responses in the fantasy servicescape. Regardless of character type (positive or negative), higher empathy with the story character negatively influences consumers' behavioural intentions in the fantasy servicescape. Higher empathy with the negative character positively influences consumers' brand personality perceptions. Higher empathy with the positive character negatively influences consumers' brand personality perceptions.
	Regardless of character type the servicescape design highlights, higher empathy with the story character positively influences positive and negative affective responses. Regardless of character type the servicescape design highlights, higher empathy with the story character negatively influences consumers' behavioural intentions. Higher empathy with the negative character positively influences consumers' brand personality perceptions. While both characters attract consumers to the servicescape, consumers find the negative character more attractive to connect and emphasise with. Higher empathy with the positive character negatively influences consumers' brand personality perceptions.		

7.3 Contributions

Having addressed all five research questions, this section elaborates on the contributions of this thesis and how the three conducted studies, together, add to the extant knowledge on servicescape environment, narrative engagement, consumer behaviour, and branding research by providing a number of theoretical as well as managerial insights.

7.3.1 Theoretical contributions

The current thesis theoretically contributes to the environmental psychology, storytelling, narrative engagement, empathy, and branding literatures in six ways, as discussed below.

7.3.1.1 Understanding consumers' experiences of fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics

First, the results of this thesis contribute to existing research (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Van Laer et al., 2014; Seregina, 2019) by examining consumers' engagement with and their affective, behavioural and brand experiences in servicescapes designed based on a fantasy story. Through exploring the perceptions of design experts as well as consumers, this thesis was first to integrate narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009) and empathy (Van Laer, 2011) with Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) SOR framework and brand personality (Aaker, 1997). With regard to the fact that narrative engagement and empathy have not been measured and operationalised in servicescape studies in the past, this thesis makes a significant contribution by developing a theoretical framework that helps future studies examine consumers' experiences of fantasy stories in servicescapes.

7.3.1.2 Understanding consumers' narrative engagement in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories

In line with extant research that prove consumers' engagement with stories presented as text, movies or advertisements (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Van Leeuwen et al., 2017; Bilandzic & Sukalla, 2019), findings from the three studies of this thesis were consistent in supporting the fact that consumers feel present and thus engage with fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics. Moreover, the findings indicate that consumers equally engage with stories told through the atmospherics of servicescapes that highlight either a positive or a negative character.

The research findings, further, provide evidence on significance of narrative presence as the subdimension of narrative engagement that measures consumers' engagement with stories told through servicescape atmospherics. Future research can thus focus only on narrative presence for measuring consumers' engagement with stories in servicescapes.

7.3.1.3 Understanding positive and negative affective responses in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories

Telling a fantasy story through the servicescape atmospherics evokes a number of positive and negative emotions, with happiness and excitement being the most common emotions that designers expect, and consumers experience in fantasy servicescapes. In addition to these positive emotions, consumers might experience negative emotions such as the fear of exposure to negative story characters in fantasy servicescapes that, in-turn, were found as resulting in enjoyment of the experience.

The findings further indicated that, regardless of the character type the design highlighted, consistent with the transportation theory (e.g., Van Laer et al., 2014), presence in the story evoked positive and inhibited negative emotions in consumers.

7.3.1.4 Understanding consumers' behavioural intentions in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories

The results of the three studies, together, suggested that telling fantasy stories through the servicescape atmospherics has a positive influence on consumers' intentions to spending time and money in the servicescape, as well as resulting in enjoyment of the experience.

In addition, regardless of the character type the servicescape highlighted, presence in the fantasy story positively, and equally, influenced the consumers' behavioural intentions. This finding, as such, supports existing research on the effect of transportation or presence on consumers' intentions (e.g., Van Laer et al., 2014; Lee & Jeong, 2017) and adds to the extant knowledge about the effect of transportation or presence in stories on consumers' actual behaviour (Van Laer et al., 2014).

7.3.1.5 Understanding consumers' perceptions of brand personality in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories

In line with what Lundqvist et al. (2013) suggest, consumers who experienced presence in the story were found as being more likely to perceive the brand as exciting. However,

engagement with or presence in the story had a positive effect on brand personality when the negative character was highlighted. The positive effect of narrative engagement on brand personality for the negative character supports the extant research (Pickett, 2012; Dias et al., 2017) suggesting that consumers bond with, and find unpleasant characters as more attractive. Accordingly, in line with Keller (1993), Phillips and McQuarrie (2010), and Campbell et al.'s (2020) studies, this thesis finds that featuring negative characters in the servicescape results in stronger brand experiences.

In addition, the negative influence of narrative engagement on brand personality for the design highlighting the positive character might be related to the type of business that uses the character in its environmental design, as different product categories are said to better relate with positive (versus negative) characters (Dias et al., 2017). In this thesis, consumers' engagement with the story in a restaurant highlighting the positive character negatively influenced brand personality. Consequently, for a stronger brand personality, restaurant businesses are suggested to highlight negative characters in their servicescape. Other businesses, however, must be cautious in deciding about the character to highlight in their servicescape design.

7.3.1.6 Understanding how empathy with positive (versus negative) story characters influences consumers' responses in servicescapes designed based on fantasy stories

The research findings indicated that consumers equally engage with stories told through the atmospherics of servicescapes that highlight either a positive or a negative character. However, higher levels of empathy with certain types of characters was found to affect consumers' subsequent behavioural intentions and their perceptions of brand personality.

Higher levels of empathy with both, the positive and the negative character decreased the positive effect of narrative engagement on behavioural intentions. This finding provides evidence for why designers (Study 1) recommend managers to use fantasy elements at a moderate level in design, explaining that higher levels of fantasy might distract attention from retailers' offers. Despite consumers' expectation for experiencing higher mimicry (Study 2), the presence of characters interacting with the consumers (Study 3) gets them engaged with the story to the extent their attention is switched from the offered services to the characters, as a result, decreasing their behavioural intentions in the servicescape.

In line with what the thesis found regarding the positive influence of engagement with the story on brand personality when the atmosphere highlighted the negative character, higher levels of empathy with the negative character strengthen the positive association between narrative engagement and brand personality. In other words, the more consumers empathise with the negative character, the more positively they perceive the personality of the brand. In contrast, however, empathy with the positive character did not moderate the association between narrative engagement and brand personality for the servicescape highlighting the positive character. This finding further supports the advantage of using negative story characters for designing restaurant servicescapes, as consumers' empathy with negative characters further enhances their brand personality perceptions.

Consumers' positive and negative affective responses were not influenced as a result of higher or lower empathy with either of the story characters.

7.3.2 Managerial implications

The findings of this research have strong implications for retailers, design practitioners, and brand managers.

7.3.2.1 The importance of storytelling through the atmospherics on consumers' emotions, behaviour, and brand perceptions

As a type of aesthetic and escapist experience, this thesis found telling stories through the servicescape atmospherics as the most common type of experience created for consumers in servicescapes. Retailers must be cognizant of the growing popularity of telling fantasy and real stories through atmospherics, as consumers' feel present in the story world and this experience, influences their emotions, behaviour, and brand perceptions.

7.3.2.2 Identification of the circumstances in which using a story as the theme for the servicescape is worth the effort

The findings of this thesis indicate circumstances in which implementing a certain story for design can be worth the effort. Indeed, story-based designs are most effective when a) the story is congruent with and thus support the products or services being offered. This is especially important when a retailer has an established business and later decides to connect its offers to a story and to design its servicescapes, accordingly.

Regarding b) the appropriate target audience, in line with Van Laer et al.'s (2014) study that identified age as a non-significant antecedent in consumers' transportation, having a fantasy theme was found to be as interesting for adults as it could be for kids (Study 1). This thesis did not find a consistent, meaningful association between age and consumers' presence in a story (Study 2 and 3). Nevertheless, the majority of consumers in Study 2 were in ages of 20-29, and the relationship between age and narrative engagement in Study 3 was significant with the highest estimate value for consumers in ages of 20-29 in Case 2 designed based on the negative character. These findings, together, suggest that consumers in their 20-29s are more likely to be fans of fantasy stories (Study 2) and to feel present in servicescapes designed based on negative fantasy characters (Study 3).

In terms of gender, men were found as more likely to feel present in the story in Study 2 that contradicts previous research suggesting higher transportation likelihood of women (e.g., Green & Brock, 2000). In line with more recent studies (see Green, 2005), Study 3 did not find gender to have a significant influence on engagement, suggesting that men and women equally engage with fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics.

Regarding c) appropriate retail categories, using stories was perceived by design experts to be suitable for the design of servicescapes that sell products as much as for designing servicescapes that provide services, such as restaurants and cafes.

In the service industry, as stories increase consumers' patience and forgiveness with the level of retailer's services, they help retailers mask the quality of their service, because the story-based theme gets consumers lost in the story. This provides insight to retailers whose quality of service (or products) is less than competitors, suggesting storytelling as a strategy they could use to balance their weakness in service (or product) quality by providing an exceptional experience to consumers that differentiates their business and helps attract consumers.

7.3.2.3 Identification of the types of fantasy and real stories for designing servicescapes

Fantasy and real stories are equally recommended by design experts to be implemented in designing servicescapes. In the fantasy category, while most stories are adapted from famous books or movies, retailers are also encouraged to generate relevant or irrelevant fantasy stories that help promote their offers and entertain consumers. What the retailers must consider when selecting between famous stories for design is the relevance of the

selected story to the product or service being offered. For example, a shoe store can use the Cinderella story as its theme for design and highlight the character's crystal shoes to connect its products to the story.

However, when a retailer creates a fantasy story from scratch, even a story irrelevant to what the retailer offers is believed to entertain consumers. For example, a restaurant that serves food in unusual manner uses the concept of a haunted factory where food is made by weird looking chefs and represents this through its design. While the story relates to the offered service in this restaurant, consumers can be as much (if not less) entertained in another restaurant where a talking moose on the wall tells random irrelevant stories. Regardless of entertainment in both cases, story-based designs are most effective when they are related to and support the retailers' offers.

Retailers can also use real stories about the brand, the product or service, the consumers, or design the atmosphere by exoticizing real, distant locations and transport consumers to another place. As a third type of real stories, a servicescape could be designed around characters who actually exist(ed).

7.3.2.4 Identification of the servicescape atmospherics that help to better connect a story to the servicescape

Regardless of the importance of having servicescape atmospherics to work in harmony as a gestalt system, however, when designing a servicescape based upon a certain story, a number of atmospherics are perceived by design experts as well as consumers as being more powerful in representing the story. Findings from Study 1 and Study 2 of this thesis recommend designers to pay special attention to the level of light, type of music, the level of sound, and scents as ambient elements that better represent a story.

Regarding design elements, the colours, wall coverings, the furniture, layout, materials, the store front, display windows, curtains, visual merchandising and product displays, the ceiling, floor, carpets, accessories, the signs, tagging and fonts, fixtures and racks, and windows and curtains can effectively connect the design to a story.

Finally, as social elements, the costumes and characteristics of the staff can help mimic a certain story in servicescapes.

7.3.2.5 Identification of the elements that help engage the consumers with the stories told through the servicescape atmospherics

Regardless of the character the servicescape atmosphere highlights, presence in stories evokes positive and inhibits negative feelings in consumers, with a positive influence on behavioural intentions. Consumers' presence in stories, further, has a positive influence on brand personality when a negative story character is highlighted in the servicescape.

Given the importance of narrative engagement on consumers' affective, behavioural and brand experiences in servicescapes, this thesis suggests a list of strategies through which retailers can increase the likelihood of consumers getting engaged with stories.

7.3.2.5.1 The level of recommended story mimicry in servicescapes

Although the current thesis found a positive relationship between consumers' perception of the level of story mimicry in a servicescape and their likelihood of engagement with that story, the decision on the type of story to use, and subsequently, the decision on the atmospherics to manipulate to better connect the servicescape to the story can be strategic for retailers and designers. To make a servicescape stand out from competitors and attract the consumers' attention, such decisions must be taken with care in terms of the extent to mimic a certain story in the servicescape. In this regard, the findings suggest that while high levels of story mimicry can be implemented when a story is well-known, in order to meet the consumers' expectations, or when the retailer has sufficient budget to cover the required expenses, on the downside, high mimicry could distract the consumers' attention from the retailers' offer. Therefore, the design experts recommend mimicking stories at a moderate level in servicescapes in order to attract not only the fans but more consumers, to enhance consumers' engagement with the offer, and to increase return intention.

7.3.2.5.2 Offering products and services congruent with the story

Similar to what the research earlier suggested about selection or development of a story congruent with retailers' offers, establishment of a business around a story also requires the retailers to offer service and product that relate to that story.

Offering service and products relevant to the story helps consumers engage with the story, even in cases when the atmospherics are not perceived as mimicking the story. In return, engaged consumers are more likely to purchase the relevant offers.

7.3.2.5.3 Provide story related information to consumers

Providing information about the storyline or how the story relates to the business, also, helps consumers understand the concept and feel present in that story. This information can be provided by videos on a screen, by staff, or printed leaflets.

7.3.2.5.4 Virtual presentation of story events and characters in the servicescape

Another method that can engage consumers with a story involves virtual presentation of story events and characters in the servicescape. Regardless of its effectiveness, however, enjoyment of virtual experiences might depend on consumers' age group, as well as the time allocated to try such technology. Consumers might be less likely to stand in line to virtually see story characters by virtual glasses for only about a few minutes. Moreover, the decision to provide a virtual experience in a physical servicescape brings along the risk of breaking the servicescape design authenticity. As such, retailers must be cautious in their decision on providing virtual experiences in servicescapes.

7.3.2.5.5 Dressing up and role-plays by consumers

Another factor that can help consumers engage with a presented story in the servicescape is to provide them the opportunity to dress as the story characters and perform role-plays. Such activities set the story vibe and increase consumers' understanding of the concept, therefore, resulting in higher engagement with the story.

7.3.2.5.6 Time limitation to be at the servicescape

Based on what designers mentioned about retailers' preference to have consumers spend less time in restaurants, to serve more people, and with regard to what consumers in the second study perceived as the least, decent time required to feel present in a given story, this thesis suggests retailers allocate at least 30 minutes for consumers in servicescapes that are designed based on a story for them to be engaged.

7.3.2.6 The positive effect of negative characters on brand personality

Brand managers need to consider the significance of highlighting negative characters in servicescapes on brand personality. Given that consumers are more likely to have bonds and find negative characters as more attractive, featuring negative characters in design was found in this thesis as positively influencing the personality of servicescape brands.

By contrast, the negative influence of narrative engagement on brand personality for the design highlighting the positive character suggests that highlighting positive characters, particularly, in restaurant business, is likely to deteriorate consumers' perceptions of the brand's personality. Accordingly, retailers are advised to highlight negative characters when designing their restaurant based on a fantasy story.

7.4 Limitations and future research

7.4.1 Limitations

Like all research, this thesis has a number of limitations that create a fertile ground for future studies.

7.4.1.1 Sample size in Study 1

With regard to the busy schedule of design experts, attaining a larger sample size for the first study was challenging. Future research that aim to replicate or extend this research may wish to adopt a fully representative sample of practitioners in their research design.

7.4.1.2 Behavioural intentions versus actual behaviour in Study 3

In line with previous studies measuring consumers' intentions when confronting stories (e.g., Van Laer, 2011) or visiting servicescapes (e.g., Hightower et al., 2002), given its online method of data collection, the third study of this thesis was only able to measure consumers' behavioural intentions, with a construct that merged items for intentions and those initially aimed to measure potential behaviour, based on the CFA analysis results. Therefore, consumers' actual behaviour in the servicescape were not examined.

Although Study 2 examined consumers' actual behaviour in addition to their intentions, the qualitative nature of the study limits generalisability of its findings. Also, in Study 3, the consumers viewed a recording of the restaurant and did not experience the restaurant which might be a reason for why the items measuring intentions and behaviour loaded on a single factor in the EFA and CFA analysis. As intentions do not always translate into actual behaviours (see Chandon et al., 2005; Ajzen, 2020), future research could examine consumers' actual behaviour in story-based servicescapes.

7.4.1.3 Mediation effect hypotheses

Testing mediation effects was beyond the purpose of this thesis and the researcher did not discuss the relevant literature and develop hypotheses for the indirect effects between the studied variables. However, as Case 1 servicescape atmosphere did not directly influence consumers' behavioural intentions, testing the specific indirect effects helped understand that the servicescape atmosphere affects behavioural intentions through other constructs in the conceptual framework. The literature concerning the indirect effect of the variables examined in this thesis might be of interest to other researchers who might thus develop relevant mediation hypotheses for the purpose of their research.

7.4.1.4 Scale development

Developing a scale to measure consumers' experiences of fantasy designed servicescapes was beyond the purpose of the current thesis. In measuring the constructs, the researcher adapts the items by reference to the extant literature and based on Study 1 and 2 findings. While sharing the items left in the final framework after the CFA analysis provide an idea about the most significant items to measure each construct, future research could consider collecting more data and analysis to develop a scale measuring consumers' experiences of story-based servicescapes.

7.4.2 Future research

This section outlines a number of potential avenues for future research.

7.4.2.1 Storytelling in other business categories

In contrast to the general discussions the researcher had with designers in Study 1 about implementation of fantasy stories by all business categories, the second and third study examined consumers' experiences of a fantasy designed Inn and restaurant that mainly offer service. However, as designers in Study 1 mentioned, stories can also be used for the atmosphere design of other business categories, such as stores that sell products, including but not limited to shoes and apparel, and companies that provide experiences such as skydiving.

In addition to what designers in Study 1 suggested, some business categories seem to be inherently apt for telling stories. Theme parks, cinemas, and opera houses, for example, are by their very nature experiential and highly hedonic and consumers' expectations

towards consumption of such services revolve significantly around the opportunity to experience heightened levels of diverse emotions. Moreover, some of these services are augmented by products. For example, Disney heavily emphasises on merchandising to augment and enhance the experience, itself, and sales of products are linked to fantasy by the very nature of the product (e.g., Mickey Mouse, Harry Potter) being sold (Study 1). The servicescape of such business is thus strongly themed to help consumers experience the fantasy life of the character. Future studies could replicate the findings of this thesis and assess the applicability and generalisability of the scale validated in Study 3 across other business categories.

7.4.2.2 Connectedness to characters and consumers' self-concept

Based on what was earlier discussed, some products or services are inherently suitable for storytelling, as consumers, more or less, feel connected to certain types of characters (Study 3). Storytelling might thus better suit the design of stores that sell ego-involving and self-expressive (versus utility) products. When consumers connect with a character and further, find similarities between their self-concepts and the character's personality, this congruity might affect responses to the story, such as their intention to purchasing self-expressive products. Thus, the congruity of one's ideal (versus feared) self-concept (for a review on self-concept see Markus & Nurius, 1986) with a certain character might moderate consumers' responses to a story-based servicescape.

7.4.2.3 Belief change in story-based servicescapes

Given that transportation to the world created by any story (e.g., Green & Clark, 2013; Van Laer et al., 2014), including fantasy stories (Appel & Richter, 2010), can influence consumers' belief in the real world, future studies could investigate how servicescapes designed around a fantasy story can change consumers' beliefs, for example, regarding the use of certain products. Specifically, future research could examine how the use of a negative or positive story character in servicescape design can persuade or discourage consumers from using certain products, as a result of connections with and empathy for the character.

Belief changes in story-based servicescapes are more likely to happen when the story is represented, perhaps in brief, from beginning to the end, therefore affecting consumers' narrative structure thought (e.g., Escalas, 2004a) by communicating a message to them.

7.4.2.4 Consumer engagement and co-creation of value

Findings from the second study indicated that consumers are interested to virtually see the events and characters of a given story, and that can help them engage with the story. Woodside (2010) argues that any engagement in action, such as consumers getting up and moving toward accomplishing a certain objective, is inherently more appealing than listening to someone else talk. One can understand from this statement that consumers prefer to be active, rather than just listening or watching a presented story.

Future studies can take the findings of this thesis to a stage above a physical experience of story-based servicescapes, by virtually designing the interior of any type of business and examining consumers' experiences by giving them the opportunity to interact with the storyline, with characters, change some details, and even change the story outcome.

In a world of infinite choice and unbounded opportunities for innovation, according to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), competition is on experiences that consumers involve is co-creating, resulting in a value unique to every individual. Consumers want to become integrated with companies and participate in creating value. This led to the evolving role of consumers from passive recipients to active co-creators in the value creation process. Consumers like to be part of the creative process and co-create, whether the experience relates to creating coffee at a Starbucks or creating an identity and playing someone else at a medieval event with medieval costume and even medieval names (Mossberg, 2008).

In the latter example, consumers can play the hero of a story while dressed as characters and lost in the story (Ladwein, 2007, Mossberg, 2008) and win a described competition. Relatedly, Wakefield and Blodgett (1994) suggest that servicescapes should be designed to enhance entertainment and involvement, arguing that involvement and co-creating in a servicescape increases consumers' immersion in a given story. In this regard, based on Study 1 findings, a shoe retailer can, for example, implement the Cinderella story into its virtual store design but, re-tell the story in a way that would place the customer as the character, and allow her to change the story outcome by deciding on the shoe type.
Virtual story-based designs might be especially applicable to multi-product brands that a customer, lost in the story, would not only decide to try, for example, a pair of shoes, but likely to also try finding matching clothes and bags, resulting in impulse-purchases. Therefore, this thesis suggests future studies examine virtual story-based store designs where consumers can co-create value in the experience.

7.4.2.5 Individual differences affecting presence in a story

As consumers' transportation (or presence in a story) depends on individual differences (e.g., Dunlop, Wakefield, & Kashima, 2008b, Van Laer, 2011), future studies may wish to examine how the following characteristics influence engagement with a story.

7.4.2.5.1 Age

Although this thesis did not find a consistent meaningful association between age and presence in stories (Study 2 and 3), given the challenges of studying children, all research (Van Laer et al., 2014) on transportation or presence have examined adult consumers. Therefore, in line with Van Laer et al. (2014), the researcher suggests further studies to consider recruiting children participants as "commercial stories are commonly directed at young children" (p. 810).

7.4.2.5.2 Familiarity with the story

Although consumers in the second study referred to familiarity as a factor that can help stay focused and engage with a given story, on a holistic level, the study did not find a consistent, positive relationship between familiarity and presence in story. Nevertheless, in line with research (Van Laer et al, 2014, Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008) supporting the influence of familiarity on one's transportation to a story, this thesis suggests examining consumers' level of familiarity with a story before they visit a story-based servicescape to understand how it affects their presence in the story.

7.4.2.5.3 Repeated exposure

Previous research further find repeated exposure to a certain story, such as seeing the movie version of a beloved book, as influencing consumers' transportation to that story. The reason might be either because of an increased level of understanding of the story that heightens the cognitive component of transportation (Bortolussi & Dixon, 1996) or because people might anticipate moments that they enjoyed the first time and welcome the opportunity to reconnect with favourite characters when repeatedly exposed to a story (Tannenbaum, 1985). Either the ability to fully experience a story or the feelings that arise as a result of familiarity are likely to heighten the emotional engagement component of narrative transportation (Green et al., 2008).

Green et al. (2008) provide both laboratory and field evidence that repeated exposure to stories is not generally detrimental to engagement, but it can increase engagement under right circumstances such as when consumers first read a certain storybook and then watch a related movie. Given the potential influence of repeated exposure to a story genre on engagement or presence in stories, future studies might wish to examine how this variable influences engagement with fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics.

7.4.2.5.4 Transportability

Besides mimicry, another reason for why a consumer in the second study felt present by imagining herself in the story, without familiarity, might be the level of transportability the character had. Previous studies support a strong transportation effect for consumers with higher transportability, which they define as "A story receiver's chronic propensity to be transported" (Van Laer et al., 2014, p. 803, see also Dal Cin et al., 2004).

Transportability is believed to influence narrative transportation (or presence) more than familiarity could, given its correlation with consumers' empathic ability (Davis, 1983), and image-producing capacity (Betts, 1909, Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008). Future studies could examine how one's level of transportability influences their experiences of stories in servicescapes.

7.4.2.5.5 Cultural differences

In addition to more personal characteristics, the culture in which an individual is raised can affect their interpretations of events or contexts and thus result in distinct emotional (Russell & Pratt, 1980) and behavioural responses (e.g., De Mooij & Hofstede, 2002; Monga & John, 2007) in consumers. Accordingly, cultural values could also have an important influence on consumers' responses to store atmospherics (Davis et al., 2008). Nevertheless, research on cross-cultural consumer behaviour, particularly on responses to store design is limited and the existing practices fail to make any direct comparisons or model behaviour (Chan & Tai, 2001; Davis et al., 2008).

For example, as defined by Hofstede et al., (2010), the indulgence (versus self-restraint) cultural dimension refers to the extent to which individuals in a certain society control their desires and impulses. Whereas people in societies with a high score in Indulgence tend to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun, restrained societies believe that such gratification needs to

be restricted and regulated by strict norms, and therefore, do not put much emphasis on leisure time, compared to indulgent societies. As people from an indulgent culture are more likely to engage in fun and playful activities, relatedly, they might be more likely to visit fantasy servicescapes and engage with stories compared to a restraint society.

Future studies that aim to replicate this thesis might wish to have representative samples from indulgent and restraint cultures and examine the effect of this particular, and other cultural dimensions on consumers' experiences of story-based servicescapes.

7.4.2.6 Duration of exposure to stimuli

Consumers in Study 2 were exposed to the story for a relatively longer time than those in Study 3 who watched videos of the fantasy designed servicescape. Although in this thesis the researcher did not specifically control for amount of time spent at the servicescape or for watching the video stimuli, in line with Study 2 consumers' expectations to stay longer at the Inn for higher engagement, it is possible that spending more time in the story world or watching a longer video might result in stronger engagement. Although time per se is unlikely to account for the observed effects of narrative engagement (Green et al., 2008) future studies might wish to examine the effect of consumers' visiting/watching duration on narrative engagement.

7.5 Chapter summary

This chapter described how the three studies conducted in this thesis helped address the five research questions and outlined the theoretical as well as managerial contributions arising from the thesis. The limitations of the research were noted, and opportunities for future research provided.

The current thesis theoretically contributes to the environmental psychology, storytelling, narrative engagement, empathy, and branding literatures. In brief, this research examined practitioner as well as consumers' perceptions of designing servicescapes based on a fantasy story. In doing so, a theoretical framework was developed and, accordingly, a scale validated that can help future studies examine consumers' experiences of narrative engagement, as well as their affective, behavioural and brand responses in servicescapes designed on fantasy stories. The thesis also uncovered how empathy with positive (versus negative) characters influences consumers' responses to fantasy servicescapes.

In addition, this thesis provides managerial insight for retailers, design practitioners, and brand managers, who are involved in decision making on an appropriate interior design, by identifying storytelling as most common type of experiences created for consumers, as well as describing the circumstances in which having a story-based theme for design is worth the effort. The research findings, further, provide retailers and design experts with an enhanced understanding of factors to consider when deciding between famous or original stories to adapt in servicescape design. The findings guide designers towards servicescape atmospherics that better represent a certain story, and the extent to which the story is recommended to be mimicked in design. Retailers were, further, advised on the ways through which they can get consumers engaged with stories in servicescapes. Finally, the results help brand managers by identifying the type of story character they could connect to their restaurant brand and relatedly to the servicescape design in order to positively influence perception of brand personality. Specifically, featuring negative story characters was found as positively influencing the brand personality of restaurants and pubs in this thesis.

In summary, the findings of this thesis confirm consumers' engagement or presence in fantasy stories told through servicescape atmospherics. Presence in a given story evokes positive and inhibits negative feelings, and positively influences behavioural intentions. Consumers' presence in stories, further, has a positive influence on brand personality, particularly, when a negative story character is highlighted in the servicescape design. Higher levels of empathy with positive and negative characters dampen the influence of presence on consumers' behavioural intentions, but the more consumers empathise with a negative story character, the more positively they perceive the servicescape brand.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Study 1 interview guide and questions

The Interview Guide

Hello, and thank you for agreeing to help out with my research. My name is Kousar Sadeghzadeh, and I am conducting this interview as part of my PhD course in Marketing at the School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing at Massey University. Have you read the information sheet outlining the project and your involvement? ***(Go through information sheet highlighting participants' rights and what is required of them)***. Are there any questions you'd like to ask before we start? ***(Ask them to sign the consent form. I will then give a brief background of myself and my research)***

I will begin by asking you about your background and the experiences you have had as a store designer, your opinions regarding the environmental elements you consider important in engaging consumers in a retail store, and affecting their emotions, intentions, behaviour, as well as brand related experiences. As we go along, I will ask specific questions according to your responses.

This interview will take approximately 1 hour of your time. It will be more of a discussion, and a bit like a conversation. Please remember you are free to stop at any time or decline to answer any questions.

The Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about what you do?

   Possible follow-ups:

   Describe <point of interest>

   Tell me more about <point of interest>

   Why do you consider <point of interest> as challenging?

2. What are the core activities of your business?

   Possible follow-ups:

   Tell me more about <point of interest>

   Why do you consider <point of interest> as an important activity?

   How does <point of interest> change from one function to another?

3. What are some retail stores that you were asked to design their interior environment?

   Possible follow-ups:

Tell me more about your experience of working with <point of interest>

4. Think about a time you were asked to design the interior atmosphere of a retail store; what concepts and personalities did you create in the store, and what elements do you consider as more important in creating them?

   Possible follow-ups:

   Explain <point of interest>

   Tell me more about <point of interest>

   What about <point of interest>?

   How does <point of interest> change from one retail store to another?

5. How do you transfer the meaning of the retailer's retail strategy and concept that has been given to you by your client, to your design perspective?

   Possible follow-ups:

   Why is <point of interest> considered as important?

   Tell me more about <point of interest>

6. Are you familiar with any stores around the world that are designed around a story?

   Possible follow-ups:

   Where is <point of interest>?

   For example, The *Rainforest Café* in California?

7. Tell me about any experiences you have had of being asked to adapt a story theme to the design of a retail store?

   Possible follow-ups:

   Describe <point of interest>

   Tell me more about:

   The Retail Store

   The Story

   If not a retail store, what about any other functions?

8. Imagine you are asked to adapt a story theme to the design of a store, what elements of the environment you consider as being more effective in representing the story?

   Possible follow-ups:

   Why do you consider <point of interest> as important?

   Tell me more about <point of interest>

9. Overall, what emotions, experiences, and thoughts do you intend to evoke in consumers when designing a store?

Possible follow-ups:

Tell me more about <point of interest>

What about emotions like <point of interest>?

How does <point of interest> change from one retail store to another?

10. What elements and components of a retail store do you consider as more important in evoking … (the emotions, experiences, and thoughts mentioned in question 9)?

Possible follow-ups:

Tell me more about <point of interest>

Why do you consider <point of interest> as important?

How does <point of interest> change from one retail store to another?

11. Overall, what intentions and behaviours do you intend to evoke in consumers when designing a store?

Possible follow-ups:

Tell me more about <point of interest>

What about <point of interest>?

How does <point of interest> change from one retail store to another?

12. What elements and components of a retail store do you consider as more important in generating … (the intentions and behaviours mentioned in question 11)?

Possible follow-ups:

Tell me more about <point of interest>

Why do you consider <point of interest> as important?

What about <point of interest>?

How does <point of interest> change from one retail store to another?

13. How do you consider adapting a story in retail environment affects evoking the foresaid responses in consumers?

Possible follow-ups:

Tell me more about <point of interest>

Why do you consider <point of interest> as effective?

14. Based on your experience, what are the most popular personalities or images that retailers usually intend to associate to their brands?

Possible follow-ups:

Tell me more about <point of interest>

15. How can design manipulations associate (the characteristics mentioned in question 14) to brands?

Possible follow-ups:

Tell me more about <point of interest>

How does <point of interest> change from one retail store to another?

16. How can adapting a story theme in the retail design help in associating (the characteristics mentioned in question 14) to brands?

Possible follow-ups:

Explain <point of interest>

Why do you consider <point of interest> as effective?

What about <point of interest>?

17. What type of stories are most effective in evoking the foresaid responses?

Possible follow-ups:

Why do you consider <point of interest> as effective?

Describe <point of interest>

What about <point of interest>?

18. When adopting a story plot in the retail design, how much do you control the details?
Do you control every single element or just structural elements?
What is the level of involvement in manipulating the space?

Possible follow-ups:

Tell me more about <point of interest>

What about <point of interest>?

Do you have any further comments? Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you very much for sharing your experiences with me and giving up your time today.

I am very grateful to you for assisting me in my research.

In case we intend to follow-up regarding some of your answers, can we contact you again?

Appendix B: Study 2 interview guide and questions

The Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to help out with my research. My name is Kousar Sadeghzadeh, and I am conducting this interview as part of my PhD course in Marketing at the School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing at Massey University. Have you read the information sheet outlining the project and your involvement? ***(Go through information sheet highlighting participants' rights and what is required of them)***. Are there any questions you'd like to ask before we start? ***(Ask them to sign the consent form. I will then give a brief background of myself and my research)***

I will begin by asking about your reason for visiting the Hobbiton Movie Set, and your familiarity with the stories related to it. The questions will then follow by asking you about the emotional, behavioural, and brand-related experiences you have had during your visit at Hobbiton Movie Set, and in particular, within The Green Dragon Inn, as well as the elements that you consider effective in shaping your experiences. As we go along, I will also ask specific questions according to your responses.

This interview will take approximately **15 minutes** of your time. It will be more of a discussion, and a bit like a conversation. Please remember you are free to stop any time or decline to answer any questions.

The Interview Questions

1. Why did you come to visit the Hobbiton Movie Set?

   Possible follow-ups:

   How important was it for you to visit The Green Dragon Inn on the tour?

   Tell me more about why it was/was not important.

2. How familiar were you with *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings* stories/movies before visiting Hobbiton Movie Set?

   Possible follow-ups:

   Which of the stories/movies had you read/watched?

   Would you consider yourself as a fan of the stories/movies?

   How familiar were you with The Green Dragon Inn within the storyline?

   Had you followed information about the movie set in general, or about The Green Dragon in the media, websites etc.? Which websites?

   How well do the guides provide information about The Green Dragon Inn on the tour?

3. When you were visiting Hobbiton Movie Set, could you easily imagine the events and scenes described in … (the story/movie mentioned above?)

Possible follow-ups:

How about the time when you were inside The Green Dragon Inn?

What elements in The Green Dragon Inn help/hinder imagining the story/movie scenes?

Would providing a short description of the storyline with regard to The Green Dragon Inn, facilitate imagining of the story/movie scenes?

What else could be applied/done in order to facilitate imagining the story/movie scenes?

Tell me more about <point of interest>

4. Which characters of … (the story/movie mentioned above) could you imagine during your visit at Hobbiton Movie Set?

Possible follow-ups:

How about the time when you were inside The Green Dragon Inn?

What about the negative/positive characters?

5. While visiting Hobbiton Movie Set, could you imagine yourself in the scenes of the events described in … (the story/movie mentioned above), as if you were there?

Possible follow-ups:

How about the time when you were inside The Green Dragon Inn?

What elements in Green Dragon Inn help/hinder imagining yourself in the story/movie?

What could be applied/done in order to facilitate imagining yourself in the story/movie?

6. In general, how would you describe the atmosphere/design of The Green Dragon Inn?

Possible follow-ups:

Tell me more about:

Any music that you heard

How about the level of noise/quietness inside?

How was the lighting?

Did you recognise any smells?

How was the weather outside and temperature inside?

Was there any signage placed outside or inside The Green Dragon Inn to place it into the storyline? What about any other signs?

Tell me about the furniture and table assortments

What were the colours used in the overall design?

Tell me about the wall decorations/other décor elements

Tell me about staff numbers/characteristics/costumes

Do you recall anything about the flooring in The Green Dragon?

7. How well did the environmental elements of The Green Dragon Inn reflect your memory of the scenes from … (the story/movie mentioned above?) (Skip if no mention)

   Possible follow-ups:

   Was there anything about the design that seemed different from your expectations?
   How was <point of interest> different?
   Which elements in Green Dragon Inn mostly highlight its relevance to the storyline?

8. Was there anything particular you wish you could have done inside The Green Dragon Inn?

   Possible follow-ups:

   Did you purchase anything in The Green Dragon Inn?
   Was there anything you wish you could have bought inside The Green Dragon Inn?
   How about at the Shire's Store or the Rest Café?
   Why not?
   Tell me more about the things you did inside The Green Dragon Inn.
   Were you interested to walk around and explore its interior environment?
   What about <point of interest>?

9. Would you have liked to spend more time at Hobbiton Movie Set?
   If so, where in particular?

   Possible follow-ups:

   How about inside The Green Dragon Inn?
   How much longer?

10. What emotions or thoughts did you experience while visiting The Green Dragon Inn?

    Possible follow-ups:

    What about <point of interest>?

11. Sometimes, people think of brands as if they were persons. They think that brands have personality traits just like human beings. For instance, a pharmacy store could be seen as 'someone' kind, warm, caring, and trustworthy. On the other hand, the human characteristics associated with a Cafe might be fun, interesting, and exciting. I would like you to think of The Green Dragon Inn as if it was a person. This may sound unusual but think of the personality traits or human characteristics that come to your mind when you think of The Green Dragon Inn. What would they be?

Possible follow-ups:

What about <point of interest>?

12. What activities other than the free beer or soft drink offered in The Green Dragon Inn would you have liked to experience at either Hobbiton Movie Set, or in The Green Dragon Inn?

Possible follow-ups:

What about any VR experiences of the movie?

Would you have liked to dress up as the story characters?

Why didn't you dress up?

Tell me more about <point of interest>

13. Are you familiar with any similar stores around the world designed around a story?

Possible follow-ups:

Where is <point of interest>?

Tell me more about:

The Store(s)

The Story

How was the store, similar/different from The Green Dragon Inn?

14. How would you describe Hobbiton's location (e.g., Transport, Parking, and Destination)?

Possible follow-ups:

Would you consider it as a location that is easy to get to?

15. Based on your overall experience of visiting Hobbiton Movie Set, would you consider traveling again to this location, and how likely would you recommend it to friends/family?

16. Gender:

17. In what year were you born?

18. Which country do you come from?

Possible follow-ups:

How long have you been living in New Zealand?

Do you have any further comments? Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you very much for sharing your experiences with me and giving up your time today.

Appendix C: Study 2 Hobbiton Movie Set approval

First round of data collection

To: Hobbiton Movie Set
Date: Thursday, 21 December 2017

Dear *Hobbiton Movie Set* Management Team:

My name is Kousar Sadeghzadeh. As a PhD Candidate in *Marketing* at Massey University, I am writing to invite you to be part of an exciting, and cutting-edge research project that helps retailers, and tourism managers understand the power of story-based designs on people.

"Why, just now, do so many people find it thrilling to follow Bilbo Baggins into his Hobbit-Hole?" Stories and fantasy have always fascinated people because of their potential to transport us to worlds where in, we imagine ourselves in the shoes of other personas, and experience supernatural creatures' lives.

This amazing project aims to understand peoples' opinions of visiting fantasy designed environments (including cafés), in terms of their emotions, behaviour, and brand related experiences, as well as the (positive versus negative) characters of the story they mostly empathised with. The findings help managers realise the significance of various store elements for visitors, and whether and when to use fantasy elements in design, as well as the type of characters that could dominate the design.

For this purpose, the study intends to (1) observe reactions, and (2) randomly interview visitors of *The Green Dragon Inn*, in Hobbiton, as a significant location used for *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* film series. Hobbiton visitors could be interviewed either when they are back in the Shire's store, or The Shires Rest Cafe after having visited the Green Dragon. They would also be offered a business card with study details so that they can contact me later in case they are interested to be interviewed regarding their experience.

I'd love to share my passion with you and hope to get the opportunity to collect data for this study in Hobbiton Movie Set. I understand that at this time of the year you are too busy and would like to receive advice regarding the best timing that would be appropriate for a researcher to be present in the Shire's Store or Rest Café, or to visit the Green Dragon to observe and talk to people regarding their experience.

Your agreement to support this research, by allowing me to observe and interview visitors, would be greatly appreciated. The list of questions to be asked from visitors could be sent to you upon request.

Eagerly looking forward to hearing back from you!

Regards,

Kousar Sadeghzadeh

PhD Candidate in Marketing,
School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing
Massey University
Auckland, New Zealand

From: Hobbiton Movie Set
Date: Monday, 8 January 2018

Hi Kousar,

Sorry for the delay in getting back to you. I hope you have enjoyed the holiday season!

We are still very busy however I am sure that it would be workable from this point on. You would need to conduct the interviews in a way that did not impact the customer's tour experience or interrupt the flow of visitors. I am happy for you to observe visitors at the Green Dragon, but I would prefer that they are not interviewed there as they only get 20 minutes there and we would like them to be able to enjoy each and every minute there.

…

You are welcome to approach people as they are waiting for their bus to go on tour. Thanks for the question, just one minor correction -

Question 7 – Visitors on tour only have a set amount of time in the Green Dragon. They are there for 15-20 minutes and then they depart again. The Café is the Shire's Rest which is not on set so they can spend as long there as they like. It is important to note the Shire's Rest and Green Dragon are two separate places.

Thanks

Kind regards,

Kirsten Madill
Chief Operating Officer
Hobbiton™ Movie Set
t: +64 7 888 1505 |f: 0508 4 HOBBITON |m: +64 27 469 3624

Second round of data collection

To: Hobbiton Movie Set
Date: Wednesday, 29 August 2018

Dear Hobbiton Movie Set Management Team:

Kia Ora! Hope you are doing great. My name is Kousar Sadeghzadeh. As a PhD Candidate in Marketing at Massey University, I am writing to invite you to be part of an exciting, and cutting edge research project that helps retailers, and tourism managers understand the power of story-based environments and designs on people.

"Why, just now, do so many people find it thrilling to follow Bilbo Baggins into his Hobbit-Hole?" Stories and fantasy have always fascinated people because of their potential to transport us to worlds where in, we imagine ourselves in the shoes of other personas, and experience supernatural creatures' lives. This amazing project titled: "An Unexpected Journey: Consumers' Affective and Behavioural Experiences in Fantasy Servicescapes" aims to understand peoples' opinions of visiting fantasy designed retail or touristic environments (including cafés), in terms of their emotions, behaviour, and brand experiences, as well as the (positive vs negative) characters of the story they do empathise with. The findings help managers realise the significance of various design elements, and whether and when to use fantasy in design, as well as the type of story characters that could dominate the design.

With special thanks to the previous Chief Operating Officer of Hobbiton Movie Set, Kirsten Madill, for her supporting of the current doctoral research, I was permitted to visit Hobbiton Movie Set in April 2018, to (1) observe visitor reactions at the Green Dragon Inn, and (2) I randomly interviewed visitors once they were back to the Shire's store, or the Shires Rest Cafe after having visited the movie set.

Having analysed the visitors' comments, I have now prepared the report for Hobbiton Movie Set, and the file of my findings is attached. Albeit, considering the exploratory nature of this research, and the fact that the size of the sample that I could previously interview is small, the current comments made by respondents are not necessarily reflective of all the visitors to Hobbiton. Further, With regard to the different ideas among respondents, and the points that were unexpected in my initial study framework but seem interesting and worthwhile to further investigate, running a second round of data collection and interviewing at least 20 more people would help me to confirm these initial managerial findings and progress towards more formal academic findings. Therefore, I would appreciate your feedback on the current findings, and your permission for interviewing more visitors at the Shire.

The list of questions to be asked from visitors could be once more sent to you upon request.

Eagerly looking forward to hearing back from you, and your future support.

Kindest regards,

Kousar Sadeghzadeh

PhD Candidate in Marketing,
Massey University, Auckland
School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing
Massey University
Auckland, New Zealand

From: Hobbiton Movie Set
Date: Thursday, 29 November 2018

Hi,

Just back in the office today. Happy for you to come down for the next few days. I have cc'd Marianne Pritchard, who heads up out operations. If you ae coming please let her know so she can brief her staff to support you whilst you're here. She can also look at booking you on a tour.

Cheers

Adam

Adam Lynch
Chief Operating Officer
Hobbiton™ Movie Set
t: +64 7 888 1505 |f: 0508 4 HOBBITON |m: +64 272 032 260

Appendix D: Study 3 survey guide and questions

Introduction

This survey is being conducted by Massey University PhD Candidate, Kousar Sadeghzadeh, to understand the effect of consumers' engagement in a presented story within a retail environment on subsequent emotions, behaviour, and brand perceptions. Your participation in this survey is highly valued, but voluntary. You may stop participating in this research at any time. The survey will take less than 15 minutes to complete. Please answer the questions as accurately as you can. This significantly influences the quality of the data, the results and thus the entire research. The responses provided by you will be treated confidentially and anonymously. If you have any queries, you are welcome to contact the researcher on k.sadeghzadeh@massey.ac.nz.

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email: humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Screening Questions

Age: Dear participant, you must be over 16 to participate to this survey. Are you 16 or over?

Yes
No

Country of Residence: What is your current country of residence?

New Zealand	Germany	China	Other countries
Australia	France	Thailand	
USA	Netherlands	Korea	
Canada	Switzerland	India	
United Kingdom	Italy	Other Asia	
Scandinavia	Other Europe	Middle East	

Survey Instructions

Please click on the link[6] below to watch a video that has been taken by a random visitor at "The Snow White Restaurant[7]" that is inspired by and designed based on fantasy stories and movies related to "*Snow White",* with a character from the story interacting with consumers. Specifically, we are interested in understanding your reactions towards, and perceptions about the restaurant in the video, not the video itself. As such, while watching the video, please ***imagine yourself*** visiting the restaurant and give us your perceptions about the restaurant.

"The Snow White Restaurant" Link: https://youtu.be/_K5iQBGUfA8 last accessed, 13 Jan 2020

"The Evil Queen Restaurant" Link[8]: https://youtu.be/gIUH6UttV3c last accessed, 13 Jan 2020

Survey Questions

1. **Affective Responses[9]:** We would like you to tell us how the restaurant in the video made you feel. We are interested in your *reactions* to the Story presentation in the restaurant. Please tell us the extent to which you agree with having felt each of the following feelings while you were ***imagining yourself*** in the restaurant.

   "While watching the story presentation in "The Snow White Restaurant", I felt…"

1.1. Borrowed items (Source: Richins, 1997)

Positive: (AR1[10]): Happiness, (AR2): Contentment, (AR3): Excitement, (AR4): Love, **(**AR5): Comfort, (AR6): Nostalgia

Negative: (AR7_r[11]): Sadness, (AR8_r): Fear, (AR9_r): Anger, (AR10-r): Shame

[6] To avoid respondent disruption, the links to the videos were embedded in the online survey so that respondents did not have to leave the survey page.

[7] Any reference to the restaurant was replaced with "The Evil Queen Restaurant" for the survey examining consumers' responses to the design highlighting the evil character.

[8] Case 2 respondents saw the second video of the restaurant highlighting the evil character.

[9] Measurement: 7-point Likert scale, 1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree as in Chang (2009).

[10] Items are referred to with their abbreviation throughout the text.

[11] The (_r) at the end of the abbreviation refers to the item being reverse-coded for the analysis.

2. **Empathy**[12]**:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: "While watching the story presentation in the restaurant …" While responding to this question, please have in mind that any reference to the word "Story" throughout the items is only about the *"Snow White"* story that the restaurant is designed upon.

2.1. Original items (Source: Van Laer's (2011) adaptation of Davis's (1983) Fantasy scale)

I could daydream and fantasise about the things that happened to (author name).

I really got involved with the feelings of (author name).

I was objective while reading the blog post, and I did not get completely caught up in it. (_r[13])

I did not get extremely involved in the blog post. (_r)

After reading the blog post, I felt as though I were (author name).

While I was reading the blog post, I could very easily put myself in the place of (author name).

While I was reading the blog post, I imagined how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.

2.2. Modified items[14]

(EMP1): I could daydream and fantasise about the things that were described by Snow White.

(EMP2): I really got involved with the feelings of Snow White.

(EMP3_r): I was objective while watching the story presentation, and I did not get completely caught up in it.

(EMP4_r): I did not get extremely involved in the story presentation.

(EMP5): After watching the story presentation, I felt as though I were Snow White.

(EMP6): While I was watching the story presentation, I could very easily put myself in the place of Snow White.

(EMP7): While I was watching the story presentation, I imagined how I would feel if events described in the story presentation were happening to me.

[12] Measurement: 7-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree as in Van Laer (2011).

[13] _r refers to the item being reverse-coded for the analysis.

[14] For the purpose of this study, "author name" was replaced with the names of characters: Snow White (Case 1) and The Evil Queen (Case 2). Given that the presented stories do not have chronology, and despite the story characters dance and/or interact with consumers, nothing happens to them during the story presentation, "happened" is replaced with "described by". Relatedly, "reading" and "blog post" are replaced with "watching" and "story presentation".

3. **Intentions**[15]**:** What is your level of agreement to the statements below?

3.1. Original items

I would recommend this restaurant to my friends or others.

I would say positive things about this restaurant to others.

(Source: Jang & Namkung, 2009)

I will go to a _____ baseball game over the next few months.

I'd pay a higher price to go to _____ baseball games than I'd pay to go to other stadiums.

(Source: Hightower et al., 2002)

3.2. Borrowed or modified items[16]

(I1): I would recommend this restaurant to my friends or others.

(I2): I would say positive things about this restaurant to others.

(I3): I would like to visit a restaurant like this over the next year.

(I4): I would pay a higher price to go to a restaurant like this than I would pay to go to other restaurants.

4. **Brand Personality**[17] [18]**:** Sometimes, people think of places as if they were persons. For example, they think stores and restaurants have personality traits just like human beings. The following questions are about "The Snow White Restaurant". We would like you to think of this restaurant as if it was a person. We are interested in finding out which personality traits come to mind when you think of "The Snow White Restaurant".

   How much do you agree or disagree with the following personality traits being related to *"The Snow White Restaurant"?*

4.1. Borrowed items (Source: Aaker, 1997)

(BPS1): Cheerful, (BPS2): Honest, (BPS3): Cool, (BPS4): Unique, (BPS5): Upper-class, (BPS6): Outdoorsy

[15] Measurement: 7-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree as in Hightower et al., (2002)

[16] Considering that the respondents watch a video of the servicescape online, the following adaptations were made to Hightower et al.'s (2002) items: "go" was revised to "would like to visit". "Baseball game" and "stadium" were replaced with "a restaurant like this" or "restaurants", and "next few months" was extended to "next year" to assess consumers' intention to visit.

[17] Brand Personality was examined in this question using items that were suggested by Study 1 and 2 findings.

[18] Measurement: 7-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree as in Kressmann et al., (2006)

5. **Narrative Engagement[19]:** Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements: While responding to this question, please have in mind that any reference to the word "Story" throughout the items is only about the *"Snow White"* story that the restaurant is designed upon.

5.1. Original and modified items[20] (Source: Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009)

Narrative understanding:

- Original items

At points, I had a hard time making sense of what was going on in the program. (R)

My understanding of the characters is unclear. (R)

I had a hard time recognising the thread of the story. (R)

- Modified items

(NEG1_r): At points, I had a hard time making sense of what was going on in the story presentation. (R)

(NEG2_r): My understanding of the characters is unclear. (R)

(NEG3_r): I had a hard time recognising the thread of the story presentation. (R)

Attentional focus:

- Original items

I found my mind wandering while the program was on. (R)

While the program was on, I found myself thinking about other things. (R)

I had a hard time keeping my mind on the program. (R)

- Modified items

(NEG4_r): I found my mind wandering while the story was presented. (R)

(NEG5_r): While the story was presented, I found myself thinking about other things. (R)

(NEG6_r): I had a hard time keeping my mind on the story presentation. (R)

[19] Measurement: 7-point Likert scale, 1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree as in Richardson et al., (2018); Dunlop et al., (2010)

[20] This study uses "story" or "story presentation" instead of "program" and relatedly, replaces "the program was on" with "the story was presented". Also, "a main character" was replaced with "the character" and "they" was replaced with "she", as characters in the two videos were both, female.

Narrative presence:

- Original items

During the program, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story.

The program created a new world, and then that world suddenly disappeared when the program ended.

At times during the program, the story world was closer to me than the real world.

- Modified items

(NEG7): During the story presentation, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story.

(NEG8): The story presentation created a new world, and then that world suddenly disappeared when the story presentation ended.

(NEG9): At times during the story presentation, the story world was closer to me than the real world.

Emotional engagement:

- Original items

The story affected me emotionally.

During the program, when a main character succeeded, I felt happy, and when they suffered in some way, I felt sad.

I felt sorry for some of the characters in the program.

- Modified items

(NEG10): The story affected me emotionally.

(NEG11): During the story presentation, when the character succeeded, I felt happy, and when she suffered in some way, I felt sad.

(NEG12): I felt sorry for the character in the story.

6. **Behaviour[21]:** Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements?

6.1. Original items (Source: Mattila & Wirtz, 2001)

I enjoyed shopping in this store.

I liked this store environment.

I liked to spend time browsing in this store.

I want to avoid looking around or exploring the store. (R)

This is a sort of place where I end up spending more money than I originally set out to spend.

6.2. Modified items[22]

(PB1): I think I would enjoy dining in this restaurant.

(PB2): I like this restaurant environment.

(PB3): I think I would like to spend time browsing in this restaurant.

(PB4_r): I expect I would want to avoid looking around or exploring the restaurant. (R)

(PB5): This is a sort of place where I would end up spending more money than I originally set out to spend.

7. **Brand Personality[23] [24]:** Rate each item to indicate your agreement with the following personality traits being related to *"The Snow White Restaurant"?*

7.1. **Borrowed items** (Source: Aaker, 1997)

(BPD1): Family-oriented, (BPD2): Sentimental, (BPD3): Sincere, (BPD4): Friendly, (BPD5): Imaginative, (BPD6): Reliable, (BPD7): Confident, (BPD8): Feminine, (BPD9): Charming

[21] Measurement: 7-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree as in Mattila & Wirtz (2001)

[22] The adaptations to behaviour items include revising "I enjoyed" to "I think I would enjoy", "shopping" to "dining", "store" to "restaurant", "I liked to spend time" to "I think I would like to spend time", "I want to avoid" to "I expect I would want to avoid" and "I end up spending" to "I would end up spending"

[23] Brand Personality was examined in this question using items that were suggested by interior designers specifically for Study 3.

[24] Measurement: 7-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree as in Kressmann et al., (2006)

8. **Servicescape Atmosphere**[25]**:** To what extent do you agree with the statements below?

8.1. Original items (Source: Spangenberg, Grohmann, & Sprott's, 2005)

This scent reminds me of the holiday season.

When I smell this scent, I think about Christmas and the holidays.

This scent captures the spirit of Christmas.

8.2. Modified items[26]

(SA1): This restaurant reminds me of the story, *"Snow White."*

(SA2): When I see this restaurant, I think about the story, *"Snow White."*

(SA3): This restaurant captures the spirit of the story, *"Snow White."*

Demographics

9. Gender: Please indicate your gender.

Male, Female, prefer not to say

10. **Age:** In which age bracket do you belong to?

16 – 19, 20 – 29, 30 – 39, 40 – 49, 50 – 59, 60 years or older

11. **Education:** What is your highest completed education?

None formally completed, High School/College, Polytechnic/Institute of Technology (or equivalent)
Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, PhD Degree

12. **Occupation:** What is your occupation?

Student, employed, unemployed, own business/self employed

13. **Ethnicity:** Which ethnic group do you belong to?

European, Maori, Pacifica, African, Asian, Middle Eastern, Other – please specify

Thank you.

[25] Measurement: 7-point Likert, 1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree as in Spangenberg et al., (2005)

[26] The original items were modified by changing "scent" to "restaurant", as focusing on atmospherics as a gestalt system. Also, "smell" was replaced with "see" given that the respondents saw a video of the restaurant, and "Christmas" was changed to the story name.

Appendix E: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

About Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)[27]

The purpose of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is to examine if proposed scales for a study can evidence construct uni-dimensionality and describe consumer perceptions that are often complex, multi-faceted and multi-factor determined (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011). EFA may be used to generate explanatory theories and identify the underlying latent construct structure. In this study, exploratory factor analysis of the constructs was conducted in conjunction with coefficient alphas to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales.

The study employed the Maximum Likelihood (ML) factoring method for the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses as the most common estimation method in CFA (Brown, 2006). A key advantage of maximum likelihood is that it allows for a statistical evaluation of how well the factor solution is able to reproduce associations among the indicators of the input data and the appropriate number of factors (Brown, 2006). This is a form of common factor analysis that extracts factors by producing better estimates than the principal factor method and has desirable asymptotic properties (Bickel & Doksum, 1977). The maximum likelihood analysis examines only the common variance whereas principal factor analysis considers total variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Maximum likelihood does assume the presence of normally distributed data (confirmed to exist in this study data) and also allows for the computation of a wide range of fit indexes and parameter significance values (Fabrigar, 1999).

While no specific rules guide the researcher in selecting an appropriate rotational technique (Hair et al., 2010), this study choose Promax, an oblique rotation method. An oblique rotation is useful for two reasons. To begin with, an oblique rotation is more representative of the nature of reality, allowing the factors to be correlated with one another. In reality, it is very unlikely that the factors would have a zero correlation with one another. In addition, oblique rotation provides results that "best fit your data". In other words, oblique rotation is strongly influenced by sample specific measurements. For example, the degree of correlation between factors vary from one study to the next, as no two studies will have identical factor matrices. If a researcher chooses to do an oblique rotation, Promax seems to be the optimal choice (Rennie, 1997).

Although an oblique rotation by its nature will provide results that are not likely to be replicated by future studies, Promax appears to offer a solution that will be more replicable than an oblimin rotation.

[27] Note the term factor is used as it is the commonly used term in both, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. I use the term construct instead of factor in the confirmatory factor analysis and structural equations modelling to denote the final measurement models that are used in this study.

The target matrix that is generated in the second step of a Promax rotation is representative of matrices from other studies. Therefore, when the sample matrix is rotated to "best fit" the target matrix, this makes the results of Promax more replicable (Rennie, 1997).

Findings from the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The rationale and method for conducting the EFA analysis was presented above. The purpose of this section is to present the results for the EFA. EFA in this study was conducted merely to have a rough idea of grouping those variables that are intercorrelated and identify items that were potential candidates for removal later in the individual factor level CFA analysis. Thus, no items were removed based on the EFA analysis.

It is recommended to conduct CFA-SEM on a dataset different to the original one on which EFA is conducted but on the same population (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011). This is because, in general, EFA is conducted on Pilot Study data to determine dimensionality of items measuring the constructs. For example, how many components emerged, which items fall under which component, which items have low factor loadings and need to be deleted. And finally, what is the Cronbach Alpha for the components etc. Once the EFA is done, the researcher rearranges the items based on the EFA result, and then collects data. Once new data is obtained, the researcher conducts CFA to validate constructs. Thus, EFA and CFA cannot be done using the same data set. It is advisable to follow the EFA with a CFA on a different data set to establish the stability of the scale across different samples (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, Hair et al., 2010).

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy compares the observed and partial correlation coefficients. Values of at least, 0.50 (see Hair et al., 2010) are necessary to consider a factor analysis of the constructs. The Bartlett's test of sphericity tests the null hypothesis that items in the population correlation matrix are uncorrelated. Values of 0.000 invoke rejection of the null hypothesis predicting that a credible basis for associations among the items is strong. When all of the items were considered in an initial EFA model, the KMO and Bartlett's test values are 0.934 and 0.000 for Case 1, and 0.912 and 0.000 for Case 2 (Table AE1). Therefore, it is considered appropriate to proceed further with the EFA (Field, 2013).

Table AE1. Initial KMO and Bartlett's test for the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

		Case 1	Case 2
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.934	0.912
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity			
	Approx. Chi-Square	10302.515	9884.801
	DF	1540	1540
	Sig.	0.000	0.000

Hair et al. (2010) suggest items with low communality values to be potential candidates for removal, to produce the refined factor model. Tests for communality, where items were examined for their correlation with other items, indicated that communality values were all above the desired 0.30 threshold in both cases of the study.

Moreover, if specific items are excluded from the analysis, the revised pattern matrix present a more definite factor structure. The EFA analysis result suggest that ten identical items can be excluded from both of the cases because of cross-loadings (i.e., a primary loading should be, at least, 0.200 larger than the secondary loading), or low levels of loading in factors. To improve the exploratory factor structure, items with the lowest to greatest differences in cross-loadings were first deleted, followed by items with low loadings in the pattern matrix. Accordingly, the items BPS6, BPS5, BPS3, EMP3_r, PB4_r, PB5, BPS4, EMP4_r, EMP2, and AR6 were identified to be deleted. This study followed Costello and Osborne's (2005) advice about the numbers of factors to retain, and items to drop to improve the factor structure. Dropping the foresaid items definitely improves the factor structure for EFA.

The revised EFAs produced a KMO of 0.933 in Case 1 and 0.909 in Case 2, and Bartlett's of 0.000, and the reduced 7 factors (Case 1) and 9 factors (Case 2) explain a slightly higher 67.78% (Case 1) and 66.85% (Case 2) total variance (Table AE2). The Chi-Square ($\chi 2$) values of 8632.014 in Case 1, and 8122.796 in Case 2, and 1035 degrees of freedom for both cases in the revised EFA produces a desirable model fit at 0.000 significance. Exclusion of the foresaid items promotes Unidimensionality in the EFA and suggests the items be excluded or changed for the CFA (Hair et al., 2010; Pallant, 2010).

Table AE2. Revised KMO and Bartlett's test for the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

		Case 1	Case 2
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.933	0.909
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity			
	Approx. Chi-Square	8632.014	8122.796
	DF	1035	1035
	Sig.	0.000	0.000

The outcomes from EFA have item loadings above 0.30-0.40 (Costello & Osbourne, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and highly correlated in each factor (Convergent validity). BPD8 in Case 1, NEG1_r and NEG5_r in Case 2 cross-load, but at an acceptable level (Discriminant validity), and all factors have at least 3 items (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Hair et al., 2010) as evident in the revised pattern matrix tables.

Factor analyses found one–factor solutions for constructs except affective responses and narrative engagement that had two-factor solutions: positive affective responses (ARP) and negative affective responses (ARN), and narrative engagement part 1 (NEGP1) and narrative engagement part 2 (NEGP2).

As discussed earlier, most studies incorporating multiple instances of the positive and negative emotions find that the measures load on two separate factors, corresponding to positive and negative emotions (Oliver, 1994; Bagozzi et al., 2016; Chiu et al., 2018; Escadas et al., 2019; Ahn & Kwon, 2020).

The EFA analysis revealed that intentions (I) and potential behaviour (PB) items load on a single factor. The resulting construct, Behavioural Intentions (BI), is identical to that of Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) and Hightower et al. (2002) who merged the intention items with behaviour items for the purpose of their study. Similarly, the items for measuring brand personality extracted from Studies 1 and 2 (BPS) and the items suggested by the designers (BPD) loaded on a single factor as brand personality (BP). While the items measuring empathy (EMP) and narrative engagement part 2 (NEGP2) loaded on a single factor in Case 1, the same items did not load together in Case 2 and thus, the two were treated as distinct constructs.

While Anderson and Gerbing (1988) consider the 0.40 Cronbach Alpha as an acceptable minimum reliability value in EFA, Churchill (1979) suggests a more conservative value of 0.70. Following Churchill (1979), all constructs appear to be reliable in this study as the Cronbach Alpha values are higher than 0.70 (Table AE3.).

Table AE3. EFA with item numbers and Cronbach Alpha reliabilities

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha for all items		Cronbach Alpha if item(s) deleted in EFA	
	Identical across the cases	Case 1	Case 2	Case 1	Case 2
Servicescape Atmosphere (SA)	3	0.901	0.931	No items deleted	No items deleted
Narrative Engagement Part 1 (NEGP1)	6	0.895	0.893	No items deleted	No items deleted
Narrative Engagement Part 2 (NEGP2)	6	0.858	0.871	No items deleted	No items deleted
Positive Affective Responses (ARP)	6	0.923	0.888	0.933	0.898
Negative Affective Responses (ARN)	4	0.900	0.883	No items deleted	No items deleted
Behavioural Intentions (BI)	9	0.943	0.909	0.965	0.953
Empathy (EMP)	7	0.878	0.778	0.863	0.854
Brand Personality (BP)	15	0.944	0.928	0.944	0.921

Initial chi-square values and degrees of freedom

A total of 8 factors in Case 1, and 11 factors in Case 2 were suggested in the initial EFA that explain 65.48% (Case 1) and 66% (Case 2) of the total variance before any items are excluded. The initial Chi-square values of 10302.515 (Case 1) and 9884.801 (Case 2) with 1540 degrees of freedom in both cases produce a desired fit result and explain how these factor structures reduce data satisfactorily even before deletion of cross-loaded items or items with low loadings.

Revised pattern matrixes

A typical usage of exploratory factor analysis is to develop scales based on the factor loadings. Factors or constructs are formed by assigning factor loads, and recommendations for this vary where values of at least 0.40 (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988) or between 0.30-0.40 are required for large samples (Hair et al., 2010). Upon the recommendation of Hair et al. (2010), Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), loadings of 0.30-0.40 are minimally acceptable, and values of greater than 0.40 are generally considered necessary for samples of 200 to discern minimum desired loadings between items and their factors or constructs. This condition is met in the revised pattern matrix where the lowest value is for EMP1 (0.440) in Case 1 and BPS1 (0.433) in Case 2. As shown in the revised pattern matrixes (Table AE4 and AE5), BPD8 in Case 1, NEG1_r and NEG5_r in Case 2 are the only items that cross-load. However, difference in loadings are greater than 0.200 and thus there is no need to delete these items. The revised EFA exclude items that do not have minimum factor loadings or evidence cross-loading.

Table AE4. Revised Pattern Matrix for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Case 1

	Factor						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
BPD7	.900						
BPD4	.873						
BPD2	.849						
BPD1	.748						
BPD9	.746						
BPD3	.720						
BPD6	.699						
BPS1	.662						
BPD5	.643						
BPS2	.620						
BPD8	**.574**	**-.321**					
NEG8		.782					
NEG7		.772					
EMP6		.755					
NEG9		.717					
EMP5		.668					
NEG11		.604					
NEG10		.590					
EMP7		.555					
NEG12		.543					
EMP1		.440					
NEG6_r			.874				
NEG4_r			.839				

NEG3_r			.752				
NEG5_r			.752				
NEG1_r			.719				
NEG2_r			.653				
I3				.863			
PB3				.785			
PB2				.771			
PB1				.750			
I1				.691			
I2				.685			
I4				.601			
AR9_r					.921		
AR8_r					.901		
AR10_r					.758		
AR7_r					.723		
AR4						.874	
AR1						.749	
AR3						.737	
AR5						.677	
AR2						.646	
SA2							.733
SA1							.731
SA3							.458

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalisation.

Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

Table AE5. Revised Pattern Matrix for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Case 2

	Factor								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
BPD4	.875								
BPD3	.808								
BPD6	.780								
BPD2	.704								
BPD9	.631								
BPD5	.627								
BPS2	.616								
BPD7	.604								
BPD1	.586								
BPD8	.494								
BPS1	.433								
PB1		.889							
I1		.884							
I3		.849							
PB2		.833							
I2		.827							
PB3		.745							
I4		.646							
NEG6_r			.831						
NEG5_r			.826						-.324
NEG4_r			.796						
NEG1_r			.743						.369
NEG3_r			.711						
NEG2_r			.658						
AR1				.873					

AR2				.817				
AR4				.773				
AR5				.730				
AR3				.685				
AR10_r					.929			
AR9_r					.853			
AR8_r					.779			
AR7_r					.715			
NEG11						.888		
NEG12						.824		
NEG9						.653		
NEG8						.637		
NEG10						.579		
NEG7						.577		
SA1							.905	
SA2							.891	
SA3							.722	
EMP6								1.030
EMP5								.737
EMP7								.629
EMP1								.446

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalisation.

Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Appendix F: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

About Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

This section outlines the theoretical rationale for developing the Confirmatory Factor Analysis. CFA is a sophisticated technique used in the advanced stages of the research process to test a theory about latent constructs and is often performed with SEM (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Whereas EFA may be used as an exploratory first step in development of measures, the CFA may be used as a second step to examine whether the structure identified in the EFA can work (Harrington, 2009). Its positivist purpose involves testing hypotheses structures rather than as a procedure to generate the hypotheses. CFA accounts for observed associations in the data (Loehlin, 2011; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011).

CFA is described as an indispensable tool for construct validation (Brown & Moore, 2012). The results from CFA provide evidence of the convergent and discriminant validity of theoretical constructs. It helps to determine whether constructs are uni or multi-dimensional (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Harrington, 2009) and this assistance in establishing measurement model adequacy before testing the structural associations in SEM is widely considered as best practice (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Bollen, 1989; Bowen & Guo, 2012). This approach thus adds to the environmental psychology, narrative engagement, and branding literatures in proposing constructs that improve our understanding of consumers' responses in fantasy designed servicescapes.

CFA, unlike EFA, assumes that the researcher has some knowledge of the underlying latent construct structure (Byrne, 2001). However, the distinctions between the two become blurred when EFA researchers restrict their analysis to selected indicators influenced by one factor or when CFA researchers modify models in an exploratory way to improve fit (Bollen, 1989).

While the study suggests minor changes in item measurement in the CFA from the EFA and justifies these changes on the basis that the construct measurements are likely to be improved, nevertheless, items that didn't measure well in the EFA were not deleted for the CFA. Rather, CFA was conducted a) for each construct separately, by including all its items, followed by conducting b) CFA for all constructs together, excluding the items that are deleted based on the construct level CFA results.

Confirmatory factor analysis is considered superior to EFA where the adequacy of an EFA model does not stand up to the tests required in CFA (Bowen & Guo, 2012). Specifically, EFA factor loadings cannot be constrained to values of zero, and correlated errors of measurement are not allowed in EFA (Bollen, 1989). By contrast, CFA requires a researcher to specify a specific number of constructs as well as to specify the pattern of zero and non-zero loadings of the

measured items on the common factors or constructs (Fabrigar, 1999). This study thus warrants conducting the CFA.

Although EFA proves useful in suggesting underlying structures in data, EFA is limited in its ability to test the ideas (Bollen, 1989). This is also attributable to the limitation of EFA to not provide explicit tests of uni-dimensionality where every item is allowed to load on every factor. CFA, in contrast, typically allows each observed item to load on only one factor. The more rigorous specification that is required for a CFA of a multiple-indicator measurement model, in-turn, affords a more rigorous evaluation of uni-dimensionality according to the constraints imposed by internal and external consistency (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988).

There are clear differences between EFA and CFA in the manner in that item cross-loadings are handled in solutions containing multiple factors (Brown, 2006). All indicators in EFA freely load on all factors and the solution is rotated to maximise the magnitude of primary loadings and minimise the magnitude of cross-loadings. Factor rotations, however, do not apply in CFA. This is because the identification restrictions associated with CFA are achieved in part by fixing most or all indicator cross-loadings to zero. CFA models are typically more parsimonious than EFA solutions because while the primary loadings and factor correlations are freely estimated, no other associations are specified between the indicators and factors (Brown, 2006).

As CFA typically proposes a more parsimonious solution than EFA, it is possible to estimate such associations when this specification is justified, and identification requirements are met. Consequently, due to EFA identification restrictions, factor models in EFA are mostly specified under the assumption that measurement error is random while correlated measurement error can be modelled in a CFA solution (Brown, 2006). EFA, instead, standardises all of the items in the analysis (Brown, 2006). Although CFA produces a completely standardised solution, much of the analysis does not standardise the latent or observed items. Instead of using a correlation matrix, CFA uses a variance-covariance matrix to produce an unstandardised CFA solution. SEM has a strong preference for unstandardised solutions because the analysis itself is based on unstandardised items and completely standardised values are potentially misleading (Brown, 2006).

The measurement models that follow reflect principal factor models where covariation among the items reflects variation in the underlying latent factor with direction of causality from construct to items. Changes in the latent construct thus cause changes in the items and are thus reflective (not formative) and suited to measuring marketing constructs such as attitudes or purchase intention (Jarvis, MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2003). The development of reflective measurement models in this study benefit with generations of measures of internal consistency reliability in assessment of model adequacy. Unlike formative models, it is also possible to delete items under

standard scale development procedures in reflective models without changing the domain of the construct (Jarvis et al., 2003).

Measurement development

Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices and uni-dimensionality measures evaluate constructs proposed in the conceptual model. Uni-dimensionality is examined by parameter estimates, t-values and R^2; GOF indices; reliability and validity (composite reliability and average variance extracted). Chi-Square (χ^2), degrees-of-freedom (df), RMSEA, RMR, NFI and CFI fit indices are among the more frequently employed GOF indices (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Upon the advice of Schumacker and Lomax (2010), Hu and Bentler (1998, 1999), and Bagozzi and Yi (2012) the Chi-Square, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) (also known as the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices are employed as the primary tests to assess the model fit in the measurement and structural models of this study.

Uni-dimensionality is assessed by Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) consistent with advice of Fornell and Larcker (1981). Composite Reliability examines the reliability of the standardised loadings and measurement error for each construct and values should exceed 0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) explains validity by the level of variance accounted for by measurement error (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and its values should be higher than 0.50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2010).

Uni-dimensionality is also considered with individual parameter estimates (such as *B* and R^2) for each construct for each measurement model. Parameter estimates reflect the population covariance matrix for the model (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The directionality of the sign should prove theoretically consistent and an increase in item values should increase the values of the related construct. Small standard error values indicate that parameter values are estimated accurately and where t-values assume values beyond critical ratios i.e. 1.96 or 2.58, significant differences obtain. Where R^2 values are low it indicates that the item explaining the construct variance possesses a low value. Ideally, Kline (2010) suggests the R^2 should be a minimum value of 0.50 but lower values are acceptable. This study retains items with minimum R^2 values of 0.40. Standardised regression B-values of 0.50 are observed as minimum threshold values in this study based on the recommendation of Hair et al. (2010) and Churchill (1979).

Measurement models Reliability and Validity

This section outlines the rationale for the reliability and validity measures chosen for this study. A measure is considered reliable to the extent that independent but comparable measures of the same trait or construct of a given object agree and where variation in scores is attributable to chance errors (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2003). Internal consistency in measuring reliability thus assesses item interrelatedness where items composing the scale should have high levels of internal consistency where items should correlate well with each other (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2003).

Given that EFA in this study was done to have a rough idea of the items to be later deleted, the Cronbach Alpha as a reliability measurement is examined after the overall model CFA where problematic items were all deleted, and the model is ready for SEM analysis. In examination of CFA reliability, the composite reliability (CR) measurement of reliability is also examined. Composite reliability in measuring the internal consistency of a construct is considered to be a more effective measurement than Cronbach Alpha according to Fornell and Larcker (1981), Bagozzi and Yi (2012). Although, Bagozzi and Yi (2012) state that no universally acceptable standard for composite reliability exists, they recommend the classic reliability standard value of 0.70.

Whilst a measure is considered reliable, however, it may not necessarily be considered valid (Churchill, 1979). In purifying the scales to be employed in the CFA, it is also necessary to check also for validity and ensure that the proposed constructs measure what they are supposed to measure (Bollen, 1989; Chang, Van Witteloostuijn & Eden, 2020). More specifically, validity observes: 1) a construct as a suitable representation of the "domain of observables" related to the construct; 2) a construct well represented by alternative measures; and 3) a construct that relates strongly to other constructs of interest (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

There are several different types of approaches to measuring validity. Construct validity lies at the very heart of the scientific process and is most directly related to the question of what the instrument measures (Churchill, 1979). Unidimensionality, within-method convergent validity, reliability, stability, across-method convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity are among the criteria that need to be satisfied for construct validity to be achieved (Terblanche & Boshoff, 2006; Churchill, 1979). As the most general form of validity, construct validity should be viewed broadly as the degree to which inferences can legitimately be made from measures to constructs (Netemeyer et al., 2003). It thus confirms how hypotheses can be tested based on the suitability of the proposed measures (Hair et al., 2010) where the same constructs can be examined using different approaches to see if same results can be reproduced

(Bollen, 1989; DeVellis, 2003). The presence of nomological validity similarly ensures whether the new proposed scales confirm the corresponding associations obtained in previous research (Hair et al., 2010).

The specification of the measurement models in this thesis requires sufficient content validity to ascertain the extent that a specific set of items reflects its content domain (DeVellis, 2003). Content validity is a qualitative type of validity where, often, expert judges can help confirm the items that define the intended construct (Bollen, 1989). This operation was performed by six PhD students in Massey Business School screening questionnaire items, in advance of the administration of the survey.

Convergent validity is another form of validity, otherwise known as predictive or criterion validity, and is proposed by indicators of theoretically similar or overlapping constructs being strongly interrelated (Brown, 2006). When the criterion exists at the same time as the measure it is called concurrent validity. If the criterion occurs in the future, it is predictive of validity (Bollen, 1989). Where an indicator is associated with a pre-existing indicator it is judged to have convergent validity. Convergent validity, therefore, establishes if the new proposed measure converges (correlates) to other similar measures intended to measure the same construct (Netemeyer et al., 2003). High correlations indicate that the scale is measuring the intended concept. Correlation values of 0.30 are proposed by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) to demonstrate convergent validity. Variance extracted (VE) is another method of establishing convergence recommended by Hair et al. (2010) and indicates the average percentage of variation explained among items. Values of 0.5 or higher are suggestive of adequate convergence although lower values may be acceptable if acceptable inter-correlations are used. Factor loadings are also used to suggest the presence of convergent validity where standardised loadings of 0.5 and ideally 0.70 or higher are advised (Hair et al., 2010).

Discriminant validity differs from the preceding validity concepts and reflects the degree to which conceptually similar concepts are distinct (Hair et al., 2010). Indicators of theoretically distinct constructs should not be highly inter-correlated and instead should load on separate factors or constructs (Brown, 2006). Correlation levels should be low demonstrating that the summated scale is sufficiently different from other concepts (Hair et al., 2010).

Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) Indices

Limitations of Fit Statistics

Determining the existence of Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) and inferring how well the sample data reflect the specified model is debated (Hair et al., 2010; Hoyle, 2012) without agreement on indices for specific analyses or cut-off values suggestive of model fit (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair

et al., 2010). Nor is there an assurance that indices suggestive of model fit are actually consistent with the theory. Researchers can tell very little about where and by how much the specified model departs from data on the basis of fit statistics (Kline, 2010). By its very nature, any model, even if it is mis-specified, can be made to fit the data by adding free parameters (Kline, 2010). SEM is then prone to the risk of inducing researchers to change specifications and thus compromise the theory being tested simply to achieve model fit (Hair et al., 2010).

Criticisms of adjudging fit using fit statistics have been notably raised in the contribution of Barrett (2007) where the merit of using the $\chi 2$ (chi-square) test, in particular, is questioned. Barrett (2007) even goes so far as to advocate the abandonment of approximate fit indices with cut-off values. A number of responses emerged to the Barrett (2007) criticism and authors such as Markland (2007), Miles and Shevlin (2007) tend to agree with Barrett's recommendations on cut-off statistics, but also point to the need for improved reporting practices. The merit of reporting equivalent or near-equivalent models that discredit proposed theory with absence of model fit is also advocated (Hayduk, Cummings, Boadu, Pazderka-Robinson, & Boulianne, 2007).

This thesis has considered these contributions and has reported multiple fit indices with at least one absolute and one incremental fit index (Hair et al., 2010) drawn from the recommendations of Bagozzi and Yi (2012) and Schumacker and Lomax (2010) to a minimum report RMSEA, CFI, and TLI fit statistics. SRMR, a fit statistic recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (2012) and Schumacker and Lomax (2010) is also reported.

Journal reviewers are furthermore advised by Hayduk et al., (2007) and Goffin (2007) to insist on reporting $\chi 2$, its degrees of freedom (df), and p-values in a more comprehensive fit assessment. This more expansive diagnostic approach (as pursued also in the CFA) helps to identify reasons for poor model fit that originate from poor data that do not measure the studied phenomenon (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011).

Absolute Fit Indices

There is no silver bullet or singular index that will determine if model fit exists (Kline, 2010). As a consequence, it is recommended to employ a number of fit indices to provide evidence of model fit (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2010). Absolute fit indices directly measure how well the specified model independently reproduce observed data using indices such as Chi-Square ($\chi 2$), Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA), The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), and the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).

Chi-Square Test

A useful starting point for considering fit is the chi-square (χ^2) test that tests to see if there is ideally no difference between the observed data, and the data implied by the specified model (Hoyle, 2012). If the χ^2 is large compared to the degrees of freedom, then the model does not appropriately mirror the causal process that generated the data (Bentler, 1980).

Although χ^2 is a popular fit index, it faces limitations in requiring data normality: a model could be rejected/accepted even when it is properly/improperly specified (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; McIntosh, 2007). Sample size is also important to the computation of the χ^2 statistic where small samples may not give rise to significant χ^2 statistics and larger sample sizes run the risk of Type II error (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Kline (2010) argues that χ^2 can prove forgiving to a level within the bounds of sampling error but requires that a correct model exists in the population examined. There is little consensus of the acceptable cut-off ratio for the χ^2 statistic, and researchers such as Hair et al., (2010) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggest a non-significant χ^2 value is preferred.

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)

RMSEA advises how well the model with unknown but optimally selected parameter estimates would fit the population covariance matrix. RMSEA is a parsimonious technique. Unlike the chi-square (χ^2), it is not affected by sample size and relaxes the stringent requirement that the model holds exactly in the population. It is therefore, referred to as a population-based index (Kline, 2011). Values of less than 0.05 indicate good fit and values as high as 0.08 represent reasonable errors of approximation in the population (Byrne, 2001).

Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) Index (AGFI)

The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) measures the relative amount of variance and covariance in the sample matrix that is jointly explained by population matrix (Byrne, 2001). The main difference between GFI and AGFI is that AGFI adjusts for the number of degrees of freedom in the specified model with preference given to more parsimonious models (Byrne, 2001; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Both are susceptible to increasing with sample size and need to be complemented with other fit indices. GFI and AGFI Values below 0.90 are not usually associated with good model fit (Byrne, 2001; Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). GFI and AGFI are not reported in this thesis due to their unavailability in the AMOS package.

The Root Mean Squared Residual (RMR)

RMR is a measure of residual variance reflecting the average amount of variances and covariances not accounted for by the model and is computed based on the scales employed. Where items possess 5 or 7-point scales (as was the case in this thesis), the RMR may become difficult to interpret (Kline, 2010). It is recommended to use the standardised RMR (SRMR) in these instances. Values for the SRMR in of less than 0.05 are suggestive of good fit but again values need to be judged against parameter numbers and sample size.

Incremental Fit Indices

Unlike absolute indices, incremental indices assess fit with a comparison to a baseline model. The Incremental Fit Index (IFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Tucker Lewis index (TLI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) are widely used in SEM to assess the relative improvement in fit to the model (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI)

The Normed Fit Index (NFI) compares χ^2 values of the proposed model to a baseline model. The baseline model assumes all variables are uncorrelated and thus have no prospect for fit. The value of the specified model can then be determined (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). As with all incremental fit indices, values range from 0-1 with zero denoting complete lack of fit and 1 denoting perfect fit (Hair et al., 2010). Values equal or greater than 0.90 is considered good fit (Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is considered as an improved version of NFI index and accounts for sample size. Preferred CFI values range from 0 to 1, with values equal or greater than 0.90 considered a good fit (Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) or Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)

The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the related Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI) compare the specified model to the independent baseline model. It is considered sensitive to smaller samples (Kline, 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Values equal to or greater than 0.90 are considered a good fit (Byrne, 2001; Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Findings from the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Servicescape Atmosphere: Construct Measurement

The initial measurement for the servicescape atmosphere construct for both cases produces great parameter values. While the model also has acceptable CFI, NFI, and SRMR, however, other fit indices were not satisfactory or not estimated, as was the case for TLI (Table AF1.).

As a general rule, CFI and NFI values above 0.80 and close to 0.90 indicate acceptable fit with values of 0.95 or higher being considered as great (Hair et al., 2010). The CFI and NFI values of servicescape atmosphere are exactly 1.000 and while this estimate is much higher than the expected threshold, considering that CFA has been done only for a single construct, this would not cause a problem later in the full model CFA. The CFA for this construct resulted in no modification indices and thus neither of the items could be covaried to improve the model fit. As such, the final and initial values are identical. Further, as the construct had only three items, the researcher did not delete any of its items to test for model fit improvement.

Table AF1. Servicescape Atmosphere Measurement for Case 1[28] and Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording		Initial and Final Standardised Loadings Case 1	Initial and Final R^2 Case 1	Initial and Final Standardised Loadings Case 2	Initial and Final R^2 Case 2
SA1	This restaurant reminds me of the story, *"Snow White"*.		0.932	0.869	0.914	0.836
SA2	When I see this restaurant, I think about the story, *"Snow White"*.		0.891	0.795	0.946	0.895
SA3	This restaurant captures the spirit of the story, *"Snow White"*.		0.785	0.616	0.853	0.728
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	**TLI**	**SRMR**	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial and Final Case 1	∞	0.813	Not Estimated	0.000	1.000	1.000
Initial and Final Case 2	∞	0.913	Not Estimated	0.000	1.000	1.000

[28] Parameter values are displayed by item and question for initial standardised loadings (regression weights), initial R^2 and final standardised loadings and their final critical ratio t-values. The fit statistics are displayed at the bottom of these tables for χ^2, RMSEA, TLI, RMR, NFI and CFI.

Narrative Engagement: Construct Measurement

While running CFA for all 12 items of narrative engagement (NEG) as a monolith construct results in terrible model fit and suggests the deletion of the six items NEG7-12 for having negative and/or low standardised loadings and R^2 values, sub-dividing the construct helps in keeping all the items with good standardised loadings and model fit estimates, albeit as two separate constructs. This was also evidenced in the EFA where items of narrative engagement loaded on two separate factors. The scale's ability to be divided into subscales that would distinguish among different aspects of engagement with a narrative (or story, as in this study) is supported earlier by Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) who demonstrated that the ability to distinguish among different dimensions of the concept help researchers to better understand the mechanisms that lead to different outcomes, such as the story receivers' (i.e., consumers') affective and behavioural responses. The scale could be used to investigate whether different dimensions of engagement relate more or less closely to different effects. For example, while emotional engagement may relate more closely to effects associated with fear of crime or sympathy for victims, narrative understanding is expected to be more central to enjoyment of suspense and mystery genres (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009). Relatedly, dividing the construct in this study contributes in understanding the aspect of engagement that is central to one's experience of fantasy designed servicescapes. As presented in Tables AF2 and AF3, while NEG1-6 have acceptable initial standard loadings and R^2 values, the values for NEG7-12 are negative and/or low, suggesting deletion of these six items for both cases. This is while, the items could be all kept as two different sub-constructs of narrative engagement.

Table AF2. Narrative Engagement (NEG) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
NEG1_r	At points, I had a hard time making sense of what was going on in the story presentation.	0.692	0.478	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG2_r	My understanding of the characters is unclear.	0.632	0.40	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG3_r	I had a hard time recognising the thread of the story presentation.	0.761	0.579	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG4_r	I found my mind wandering while the story was presented.	0.841	0.707	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1

NEG5_r	While the story was presented, I found myself thinking about other things.		0.794	0.631	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG6_r	I had a hard time keeping my mind on the story presentation.		0.849	0.72	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG7	During the story presentation, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story.		-0.23	0.053	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
NEG8	The story presentation created a new world, and then that world suddenly disappeared when the story presentation ended.		-0.031	0.001	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
NEG9	At times during the story presentation, the story world was closer to me than the real world.		-0.052	0.003	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
NEG10	The story affected me emotionally.		-0.003	0	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
NEG11	During the story presentation, when the character succeeded, I felt happy, and when she suffered in some way, I felt sad.		0.094	0.009	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
NEG12	I felt sorry for the character in the story.		-0.12	0.014	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	13.612	0.25	0.369	0.253	0.469	0.483
Final	Construct was sub-divided					

Table AF3 presents the CFA output for narrative engagement with all twelve items for the second Case. Similar to the situation in Case 1, having all twelve items together has resulted in terrible fit indices. The negative and/or low factor loadings and R^2 values for NEG7-12 also suggest deletion of these six items. Thus, as earlier suggested in EFA, the construct was sub-divided.

Table AF3. Narrative Engagement (NEG) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
NEG1_r	At points, I had a hard time making sense of what was going on in the story presentation.	0.744	0.554	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG2_r	My understanding of the characters is unclear.	0.798	0.636	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG3_r	I had a hard time recognising the thread of the story presentation.	0.746	0.556	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG4_r	I found my mind wandering while the story was presented.	0.729	0.531	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG5_r	While the story was presented, I found myself thinking about other things.	0.697	0.486	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG6_r	I had a hard time keeping my mind on the story presentation.	0.773	0.597	Item was grouped into NEGP1	Item was grouped into NEGP1
NEG7	During the story presentation, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story.	-0.444	0.197	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
NEG8	The story presentation created a new world, and then that world suddenly disappeared when the story presentation ended.	-0.287	0.083	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
NEG9	At times during the story presentation, the story world was closer to me than the real world.	-0.316	0.1	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
NEG10	The story affected me emotionally.	-0.417	0.174	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
NEG11	During the story presentation, when the character succeeded, I felt happy, and when she suffered in some way, I felt sad.	-0.313	0.098	Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
NEG12		-0.376	0.142		

	I felt sorry for the character in the story.				Item was grouped into NEGP2	Item was grouped into NEGP2
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	12.504	0.232	0.443	0.214	0.528	0.545
Final	Construct was sub-divided					

Based on the CFA results for all the twelve items of narrative engagement, the construct was divided into two separate constructs, with six of the items (that were reverse-coded) grouped as narrative engagement part 1 (NEGP1), and the remaining six grouped as part 2 (NEGP2). The items in NEGP1 reflect the respondents' level of narrative understanding (NEG1,2,3) and attentional focus (NEG4,5,6), whereas NEGP2 examines narrative presence (NEG7,8,9) and emotional engagement (NEG10,11,12).

The initial CFA for NEGP1 results in satisfactory factor loadings and R^2 values for Case 1 (Table AF4). CFI and NFI are also acceptable (above 0.8) although not excellent. To improve model fit the modification indices suggested that the error terms for the following items covary: NEG1_r and NEG2_r, NEG1_r and NEG3_r, NEG2_r and NEG3_r, NEG2_r and NEG5_r, NEG3_r and NEG5_r. The final fit indices are excellent except for Cmin/df (0.884). I argue that although this value is marginally outside the acceptable threshold (i.e., between 1 and 3), the overall model is still indicative of good fit.

Table AF4. Narrative Engagement Part 1 (NEGP1) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
NEG1_r	At points, I had a hard time making sense of what was going on in the story presentation.	0.698	0.487	0.622	9.359
NEG2_r	My understanding of the characters is unclear.	0.63	0.40	0.562	8.058
NEG3_r	I had a hard time recognising the thread of the story presentation.	0.764	0.584	0.732	11.36
NEG4_r	I found my mind wandering while the story was presented.	0.839	0.704	0.86	14.839
NEG5_r		0.793	0.629	0.862	14.698

	While the story was presented, I found myself thinking about other things.					
NEG6_r	I had a hard time keeping my mind on the story presentation.		0.847	0.717	0.841	14.358
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	12.5	0.239	0.764	0.094	0.849	0.859
Final	0.884	0.000	1.002	0.014	0.995	1.000

Table AF5 presents the CFA output for the first category of narrative engagement (NEGP1) in Case 2. As the values indicate, grouping these items together resulted in good loadings and R^2 values as well as acceptable initial fit indices. Although, the Cmin/df and RMSEA values (9.041 and 1.489) did not reach minimum acceptable thresholds. Thus, to improve the model, the modification indices suggest that the error terms for the items NEG1_r and NEG2_r, NEG1_r and NEG3_r, NEG2_r and NEG3_r, NEG3_r and NEG6_r covary. The final model is indicative of excellent fit.

Table AF5. Narrative Engagement Part 1 (NEGP1) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
NEG1_r	At points, I had a hard time making sense of what was going on in the story presentation.	0.736	0.541	0.631	9.707
NEG2_r	My understanding of the characters is unclear.	0.763	0.582	0.655	10.198
NEG3_r	I had a hard time recognising the thread of the story presentation.	0.747	0.558	0.701	10.67
NEG4_r	I found my mind wandering while the story was presented.	0.771	0.595	0.79	13.244
NEG5_r	While the story was presented, I found myself thinking about other things.	0.747	0.557	0.794	13.342
NEG6_r		0.821	0.674	0.877	15.292

	I had a hard time keeping my mind on the story presentation.					
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	9.041	0.194	0.831	0.073	0.888	0.899
Final	1.489	0.048	0.99	0.024	0.99	0.997

Grouping items NEG7-12 together as NEGP2 also resulted in acceptable factor loadings and R^2 values in Case 1 except for NEG12 that had a R^2 value of 0.25 and thus it was deleted. The same item presented no measurement issues for Case 2, but as it is preferable to develop a measurement construct that could measure this dimension of narrative engagement reliably and with validity in different contexts, it is deemed necessary to delete NEG12 in both cases.

The decision to delete item(s) from the measurement of a certain construct for both cases - even if the item measures well for one case - is justified on the grounds that the resulting measured construct proves: a) more reliable and possesses more validity by consistently measuring across different contexts (e.g., Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007); and b) enables comparison of a common construct in the SEM. An invariant analysis would also not be possible on different measurements of the same construct when groups are compared.

The initial model fit indices were satisfactory and met the expected thresholds except the Cmin/df (6.978) and RMSEA (0.172). Upon deletion of NEG12, the modification indices suggest that the error terms for NEG8 and NEG10 covary. The final model has excellent fit (Table AF6.).

Table AF6. Narrative Engagement Part 2 (NEGP2) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
NEG7	During the story presentation, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story.	0.727	0.528	0.707	11.183
NEG8	The story presentation created a new world, and then that world suddenly disappeared when the story presentation ended.	0.783	0.613	0.857	14.025
NEG9	At times during the story presentation, the story world was closer to me than the real world.	0.847	0.718	0.815	13.541

NEG10	The story affected me emotionally.		0.715	0.512	0.777	12.01
NEG11	During the story presentation, when the character succeeded, I felt happy, and when she suffered in some way, I felt sad.		0.664	0.441	0.649	10.031
NEG12	I felt sorry for the character in the story.		0.5	0.25	Deleted from both cases[29]	Deleted from both cases
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	6.978	0.172	0.832	0.076	0.886	0.899
Final	1.465	0.048	0.99	0.026	0.988	0.996

The CFA for the second category of narrative engagement (NEGP2) for Case 2 resulted in good factor loadings and R^2 values. Nevertheless, NEG12 was deleted to develop a reliable and valid construct and for consistency across the cases. The modification indices suggest that the error terms for items NEG7 and NEG8 covary. The final factor loadings are all good and model fit indices are excellent. As for Cmin/df, I argue that although the value (0.579) is marginally outside the acceptable threshold, the overall model is still indicative of good fit (Table AF7.).

Table AF7. Narrative Engagement Part 2 (NEGP2) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
NEG7	During the story presentation, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story.	0.654	0.428	0.641	9.78
NEG8	The story presentation created a new world, and then that world suddenly disappeared when the story presentation ended.	0.649	0.421	0.627	9.522
NEG9	At times during the story presentation, the story world was closer to me than the real world.	0.825	0.681	0.878	14.912

[29] Deleted from both cases denotes that the item is deleted from both Case 1 and 2 and this is evident in the tables for each construct where this takes place.

NEG10	The story affected me emotionally.		0.779	0.607	0.783	12.767
NEG11	During the story presentation, when the character succeeded, I felt happy, and when she suffered in some way, I felt sad.		0.727	0.528	0.652	10.043
NEG12	I felt sorry for the character in the story.		0.732	0.536	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	**TLI**	**SRMR**	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	8.141	0.183	0.823	0.074	0.882	0.894
Final	0.579	0.000	1.01	0.016	0.995	1.000

Affective Responses: Construct Measurement

While studies incorporating both positive and negative emotions often find that the measures load on two factors (e.g., Bagozzi et al., 1998; Oliver, 1994), this study conducted the CFA first for the items together to test the possibility of whether they work well together as a single construct.

The model fit indices for the measurement of affective responses as a monolith construct is statistically unsatisfactory (Tables AF8 and AF9). The low factor loadings and R^2 values for the negative emotions suggest deletion of these items, which is not ideal, given the importance of understanding the emotions experienced in fantasy servicescapes. Accordingly, as proposed by earlier research and the EFA results in this study, the construct was divided to two different categories, representing the positive (ARP) and negative (ARN) affective responses, and the CFA was run separately for each category for both cases.

Running the CFA for the positive and negative emotions as a monolith construct further results in low R^2 values for nostalgia. The item has low R^2 even upon running the CFA for the positive and negative emotions as separate constructs, requiring the researcher to delete it from both cases.

Table AF8. Affective Responses (AR) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
AR1	Happiness	0.857	0.735	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR2	Contentment	0.856	0.733		

					Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR3	Excitement		0.866	0.75	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR4	Love		0.858	0.736	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR5	Comfort		0.849	0.721	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR6	Nostalgia		0.618	0.382	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR7_r	Sadness		0.246	0.061	Item was grouped into ARN	Item was grouped into ARN
AR8_r	Fear		0.154	0.024	Item was grouped into ARN	Item was grouped into ARN
AR9_r	Anger		0.181	0.033	Item was grouped into ARN	Item was grouped into ARN
AR10_r	Shame		0.222	0.049	Item was grouped into ARN	Item was grouped into ARN
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	17.485	0.286	0.499	0.246	0.599	0.610
Final	Construct was sub-divided					

Table AF9. Affective Responses (AR) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
AR1	Happiness	0.853	0.728	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR2	Contentment	0.795	0.631	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP

AR3	Excitement		0.787	0.62	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR4	Love		0.776	0.603	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR5	Comfort		0.779	0.607	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR6	Nostalgia		0.547	0.3	Item was grouped into ARP	Item was grouped into ARP
AR7_r	Sadness		-0.236	0.056	Item was grouped into ARN	Item was grouped into ARN
AR8_r	Fear		-0.225	0.051	Item was grouped into ARN	Item was grouped into ARN
AR9_r	Anger		-0.138	0.019	Item was grouped into ARN	Item was grouped into ARN
AR10_r	Shame		-0.08	0.006	Item was grouped into ARN	Item was grouped into ARN
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	15.767	0.263	0.446	0.237	0.556	0.569
Final	Construct was sub-divided					

The initial CFA for positive affective responses resulted in acceptable fit indices at both cases except for Cmin/df and RMSEA values of 4.966 and 0.14 (Case 1), 4.027 and 0.119 (Case 2) (see Tables AF10. and AF11.). However, the low R^2 values for AR6 suggested deletion of the item for both cases. The modification indices further indicated that model fit could be improved with covariance of the error terms for AR1 and AR4, AR2 and AR4 in Case 1 and error terms for AR2 and AR5, AR4 and AR5 in Case 2. The final factor loadings are great. While the final Cmin/df of Case 1 (0.100) is outside the acceptable threshold, the overall model is still, indicative of good fit in both cases.

Table AF10. Positive Affective Responses (ARP) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	Item Wording		Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
AR1	Happiness		0.852	0.727	0.879	15.434
AR2	Contentment		0.854	0.728	0.869	15.154
AR3	Excitement		0.865	0.749	0.851	14.908
AR4	Love		0.867	0.752	0.933	16.741
AR5	Comfort		0.852	0.726	0.827	14.283
AR6	Nostalgia		0.618	0.382	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	4.966	0.14	0.935	0.036	0.952	0.961
Final	0.100	0.000	1.011	0.004	1.000	1.000

Table AF11. Positive Affective Responses (ARP) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
AR1	Happiness	0.865	0.749	0.871	15.446
AR2	Contentment	0.802	0.643	0.842	14.535
AR3	Excitement	0.79	0.625	0.782	13.2
AR4	Love	0.76	0.578	0.72	11.629

AR5	Comfort		0.777	0.604	0.769	12.444
AR6	Nostalgia		0.542	0.294	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	4.027	0.119	0.934	0.041	0.949	0.961
Final	1.389	0.043	0.994	0.018	0.993	0.998

While the initial CFA for negative affective responses (ARN) in Case 1 results in acceptable factor loadings and R^2 values, as well as SRMR and CFI estimates, but the other fit statistics are statistically unsatisfactory (Table AF12.). To improve model fit, the modification indices suggest that the error terms for AR7_r and AR8_r covary. The final fit indices are excellent.

Table AF12. Negative Affective Responses (ARN) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	**Item Wording**		**Initial Standardised Loadings**	**Initial R^2**	**Final Standardised Loadings**	**Final C.R. (t- value)**
AR7_r	Sadness		0.749	0.562	0.714	11.171
AR8_r	Fear		0.885	0.783	0.857	14.618
AR9_r	Anger		0.914	0.835	0.936	16.755
AR10_r	Shame		0.797	0.636	0.803	13.353
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	4.45	0.131	0.499	0.029	0.599	0.987
Final	1.569	0.053	0.994	0.012	0.997	0.999

The initial fit indices for the measurement of negative affective responses in Case 2 are statistically satisfactory (Table AF13.) except for the Cmin/df (10.31) and RMSEA (0.209). The modification indices indicated that model fit could be improved with covariance of the error terms

for AR7_r and AR8_r. Although the final Cmin/df (0.302) is below the minimum acceptable value, the overall model is indicative of good fit.

Table AF13. Negative Affective Responses (ARN) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording		Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
AR7_r	Sadness		0.687	0.472	0.642	9.996
AR8_r	Fear		0.784	0.614	0.751	12.354
AR9_r	Anger		0.883	0.78	0.899	15.891
AR10_r	Shame		0.869	0.756	0.878	15.364
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	10.31	0.209	0.884	0.053	0.958	0.961
Final	0.302	0.000	1.009	0.004	0.999	1.000

Intentions and Potential Behaviour: Construct Measurement

While CFA was first run for intentions (I) and Potential Behaviour (PB) as two constructs, running the test for the constructs, together, resulted in higher reliability for the new construct and thus following Zeithaml et al. (1996) and Hightower et al. (2002), and in line with what was also evidenced in the EFA where the two constructs loaded on a single factor, they were merged together as Behavioural Intentions (BI) for the full model CFA.

The initial fit indices for the measurement of intentions was satisfactory for both of the cases (Tables AF14 and AF15) except for Cmin/df (4.286, 5.698) and RMSEA values (0.128, 0.149) respectively for Case 1 and 2.

The modification indices for both cases indicated that model fit could be greatly improved with covariance of the error terms for I3 and I4. I argue that although the Cmin/df values of 0.602 (Case 1) and 0.343 (Case 2) are outside the acceptable threshold, the overall model is still indicative of the presence of good data in both cases.

Table AF14. Intentions (I) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	Item Wording		Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
I1	I would recommend this restaurant to my friends or others.		0.93	0.864	0.933	17.34
I2	I would say positive things about this restaurant to others.		0.933	0.87	0.939	17.514
I3	I would like to visit a restaurant like this over the next year.		0.908	0.825	0.898	16.228
I4	I would pay a higher price to go to a restaurant like this than I would pay to go to other restaurants		0.782	0.612	0.762	12.534
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	4.286	0.128	0.974	0.02	0.989	0.991
Final	0.602	0.000	1.003	0.004	0.999	1.000

Table AF15. Intentions (I) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording		Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
I1	I would recommend this restaurant to my friends or others.		0.926	0.858	0.933	17.63
I2	I would say positive things about this restaurant to others.		0.919	0.845	0.922	17.31
I3	I would like to visit a restaurant like this over the next year.		0.858	0.737	0.845	15.059
I4	I would pay a higher price to go to a restaurant like this than I would pay to go to other restaurants		0.716	0.513	0.693	11.265
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	5.698	0.149	0.957	0.031	0.983	0.986
Final	0.343	0.000	1.006	0.004	0.999	1.000

The initial fit indices for measurement of potential behaviour are also satisfactory in the cases (Tables AF16 and AF17.) except for Cmin/df (6.251, 5.615) and RMSEA values (0.162, 0.147) respectively for Case 1 and 2.

It was decided to delete PB4_r due to low standardised loadings (0.39, 0.002) and R^2 values (0.152, 0) for Case 1 and 2. While the R^2 values for PB5 were also below 0.4 for both cases, deleting this item deteriorates the model fit indices and given its acceptable factor loadings, the item was not deleted. The results of the overall model CFA, as discussed subsequently in this chapter also indicate that keeping this item has no harm to the overall model, resulting in good fit in both cases. The modification indices upon deletion of PB4_r, however, suggest the error terms for PB3 and PB5 covary, albeit only in Case 1.

While the final Cmin/df (0.52) for Case 1 is lower than the minimum acceptable threshold, the overall models of both cases are still indicative of good fit.

Table AF16. Potential Behaviour (PB) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	Item Wording		Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
PB1	I think I would enjoy dining in this restaurant.		0.968	0.936	0.975	18.821
PB2	I like this restaurant environment.		0.933	0.87	0.929	17.284
PB3	I think I would like to spend time browsing in this restaurant.		0.902	0.813	0.894	16.209
PB4_r	I expect I would want to avoid looking around or exploring the restaurant.		0.39	0.152	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
PB5	This is a sort of place where I would end up spending more money than I originally set out to spend.		0.558	0.311	0.543	8.202
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	6.251	0.162	0.931	0.061	0.960	0.966
Final	0.52	0.000	1.004	0.006	0.999	1.000

Table AF17. Potential Behaviour (PB) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording		Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
PB1	I think I would enjoy dining in this restaurant.		0.946	0.896	0.946	18.157
PB2	I like this restaurant environment.		0.884	0.781	0.884	16.204
PB3	I think I would like to spend time browsing in this restaurant.		0.889	0.79	0.889	16.356
PB4_r	I expect I would want to avoid looking around or exploring the restaurant.		0.002	0.000	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
PB5	This is a sort of place where I would end up spending more money than I originally set out to spend.		0.578	0.334	0.6	9.016
	χ^2**/df (Cmin/df)**	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	5.615	0.147	0.927	0.082	0.956	0.964
Final	1.883	0.064	0.991	0.017	0.994	0.997

The initial fit indices for the measurement of behavioural intentions (BI) that includes both the BI and PB constructs are statistically satisfactory (Tables AF18 and AF19.) except for Cmin/df and RMSEA values of 4.748 and 0.137 for Case 1, and 4.376 and 0.126 for Case 2. It was decided to delete PB4_r given its low standardised loading and R^2 values of 0.397 and 0.158 for Case 1, and values of -0.009 and 0 for Case 2. While the R^2 values for PB5 were again below 0.4 for both cases, as earlier discussed, the item was not deleted given its acceptable factor loading and the fact that its absence deteriorates the model fit indices.

Further, the modification indices indicated that the model fit could be greatly improved with covariance of the error terms for I1 and I2, I4 and PB5 for both cases, I2 and PB1, PB1 and PB2, PB1 and PB3 for Case 1, and I3 and PB1 for Case 2.

I argue that while the final Cmin/df value of 0.895 in Case 1 is below the threshold, that the overall model is still indicative of the presence of good data in both cases.

Table AF18. Behavioural Intentions (BI) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
I1	I would recommend this restaurant to my friends or others.	0.891	0.794	0.891	16.076
I2	I would say positive things about this restaurant to others.	0.914	0.835	0.902	16.43
I3	I would like to visit a restaurant like this over the next year.	0.914	0.835	0.926	17.209
I4	I would pay a higher price to go to a restaurant like this than I would pay to go to other restaurants	0.794	0.63	0.803	13.655
PB1	I think I would enjoy dining in this restaurant.	0.937	0.878	0.911	16.682
PB2	I like this restaurant environment.	0.908	0.825	0.888	16.025
PB3	I think I would like to spend time browsing in this restaurant.	0.919	0.844	0.916	16.889
PB4_r	I expect I would want to avoid looking around or exploring the restaurant.	0.397	0.158	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
PB5	This is a sort of place where I would end up spending more money than I originally set out to spend.	0.59	0.349	0.6	9.109

	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	RMSEA	TLI	SRMR	NFI	CFI
Initial	4.748	0.137	0.929	0.045	0.933	0.946
Final	0.895	0.000	1.002	0.012	0.993	1.000

Table AF19. Behavioural Intentions (BI) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
I1	I would recommend this restaurant to my friends or others.	0.9	0.81	0.875	16.104
I2	I would say positive things about this restaurant to others.	0.898	0.807	0.87	15.939
I3	I would like to visit a restaurant like this over the next year.	0.857	0.734	0.871	15.849
I4	I would pay a higher price to go to a restaurant like this than I would pay to go to other restaurants	0.729	0.532	0.724	12.162
PB1	I think I would enjoy dining in this restaurant.	0.915	0.837	0.94	18.13
PB2	I like this restaurant environment.	0.874	0.764	0.874	16.091
PB3	I think I would like to spend time browsing in this restaurant.	0.874	0.763	0.881	16.291
PB4_r	I expect I would want to avoid looking around or exploring the restaurant.	-0.009	0.000	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
PB5	This is a sort of place where I would end up spending more money than I originally set out to spend.	0.617	0.381	0.6	9.528

	χ^2**/df (Cmin/df)**	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	4.376	0.126	0.926	0.057	0.930	0.945
Final	1.67	0.056	0.988	0.022	0.983	0.993

Brand Personality: Construct Measurement

The initial fit indices for the measurement of brand personality with the items that were based on the findings from the two previous studies of this research (BPS) as well as the items that were suggested by interior design experts to be tested for this study (BPD) are satisfactory for both

cases (Tables AF20 and AF21), although the Cmin/df and RMSEA did not reach the satisfactory minimum values in Case 1.

Two items were deleted for having low factor loading (BPS6) and R^2 values (BPS6, BPD8) in both cases. The modification indices of both cases also indicated that model fit could be improved by deletion of the items BPS3, BPS5, and BPD7, as well as covariance of the error terms for BPS2 and BPD3, BPD2 and BPD3 in Case 1.

In addition to items that were deleted based on Case 1, BPS4 and BPD5 had low R^2 in Case 2 and therefore, it was decided to delete these items in both cases. The modification indices upon deletion of all foresaid items in Case 2 suggest that error terms for BPS1 and BPS2, BPS2 and BPD3, BPD1 and BPD6 covary. The final parameter values for standard loadings and R^2 are good and the model has excellent fit in both cases.

Table AF20. Brand Personality (BP) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
BPS1	Cheerful	0.845	0.714	0.862	15.066
BPS2	Honest	0.831	0.69	0.812	13.702
BPS3	Cool	0.725	0.526	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPS4	Unique	0.684	0.467	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPS5	Upper-class	0.677	0.458	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPS6	Outdoorsy	0.392	0.154	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPD1	Family-oriented	0.715	0.512	0.744	12.068
BPD2	Sentimental	0.72	0.519	0.743	12.037

BPD3	Sincere		0.836	0.698	0.81	13.64
BPD4	Friendly		0.78	0.609	0.798	13.362
BPD5	Imaginative		0.801	0.642	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPD6	Reliable		0.827	0.684	0.797	13.355
BPD7	Confident		0.838	0.703	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPD8	Feminine		0.526	0.277	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPD9	Charming		0.823	0.678	0.814	13.779
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	TLI	SRMR	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	3.412	0.110	0.884	0.063	0.866	0.901
Final	2.155	0.076	0.972	0.03	0.967	0.982

Table AF21. Brand Personality (BP) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
BPS1	Cheerful	0.726	0.527	0.701	11.392
BPS2	Honest	0.733	0.537	0.62	9.695
BPS3	Cool	0.756	0.572	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPS4	Unique	0.573	0.329	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPS5	Upper-class	0.605	0.366	Deleted from both cases	

					Deleted from both cases
BPS6	Outdoorsy	0.469	0.22	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPD1	Family-oriented	0.707	0.5	0.785	13.179
BPD2	Sentimental	0.731	0.534	0.776	13.139
BPD3	Sincere	0.772	0.596	0.773	13.054
BPD4	Friendly	0.734	0.538	0.791	13.522
BPD5	Imaginative	0.612	0.374	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPD6	Reliable	0.705	0.497	0.736	12.001
BPD7	Confident	0.725	0.526	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPD8	Feminine	0.627	0.393	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
BPD9	Charming	0.8	0.641	0.758	12.69

	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	RMSEA	TLI	SRMR	NFI	CFI
Initial	5.525	0.146	0.755	0.082	0.757	0.790
Final	1.881	0.064	0.975	0.032	0.969	0.985

Empathy: Construct Measurement

The initial fit indices for measurement of empathy were unsatisfactory (Table AF22 and AF23) except for the CFI (0.812) in Case1 that reached minimum threshold of 0.8. It was decided to delete EMP3_r and EMP4_r in both cases due to low factor loadings and/or R^2 values.

The modification indices suggest that the error terms for EMP1 and EMP2, EMP1 and EMP7 for Case 1, and EMP5 with EMP6, EMP5 and EMP7, EMP6 and EMP7 for Case 2 covary.

While the final Cmin/df of Case 1 (0.987) is marginally below the acceptable threshold value, I argue that the overall model is still indicative of good fit in both cases.

Table AF22. Empathy (EMP) Measurement for Case 1

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
EMP1	I could daydream and fantasise about the things that were described by Snow White.	0.729	0.531	0.602	8.933
EMP2	I really got involved with the feelings of Snow White.	0.79	0.624	0.673	10.358
EMP3_r	I was objective while watching the story presentation, and I did not get completely caught up in it.	0.45	0.202	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
EMP4_r	I did not get extremely involved in the story presentation.	0.592	0.35	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
EMP5	After watching the story presentation, I felt as though I were Snow White.	0.785	0.616	0.836	14.002
EMP6	While I was watching the story presentation, I could very easily put myself in the place of Snow White.	0.83	0.688	0.902	15.657
EMP7	While I was watching the story presentation, I imagined how I would feel if the events described in the story presentation were happening to me.	0.772	0.596	0.774	12.542

	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	RMSEA	TLI	SRMR	NFI	CFI
Initial	11.3	0.226	0.718	0.106	0.799	0.812
Final	0.987	0.000	1.000	0.017	0.995	1.000

Table AF23. Empathy (EMP) Measurement for Case 2

Item Label	Item Wording	Initial Standardised Loadings	Initial R^2	Final Standardised Loadings	Final C.R. (t- value)
EMP1	I could daydream and fantasise about the things that were described by Snow White.	0.848	0.719	0.93	16.453
EMP2	I really got involved with the feelings of Snow White.	0.813	0.662	0.857	14.649

EMP3_r	I was objective while watching the story presentation, and I did not get completely caught up in it.		-0.048	0.002	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
EMP4_r	I did not get extremely involved in the story presentation.		0.08	0.006	Deleted from both cases	Deleted from both cases
EMP5	After watching the story presentation, I felt as though I were Snow White.		0.622	0.4	0.5	6.844
EMP6	While I was watching the story presentation, I could very easily put myself in the place of Snow White.		0.757	0.573	0.62	9.599
EMP7	While I was watching the story presentation, I imagined how I would feel if the events described in the story presentation were happening to me.		0.78	0.608	0.689	11.005
	χ^2/df (Cmin/df)	**RMSEA**	**TLI**	**SRMR**	**NFI**	**CFI**
Initial	18.951	0.290	0.506	0.168	0.662	0.671
Final	1.411	0.044	0.993	0.01	0.996	0.999

Appendix G: Structural Equations Modelling (SEM)

About Structural Equations Modelling (SEM)

SEM is an analysis procedure that examines multiple dependent associations simultaneously (Hair et al., 2010; Bowen & Guo, 2012), conceived of in terms of non-directly measurable or well-defined theoretical constructs. These models are subjected to structural examination for construct validation and clarification of theories (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011). A number of steps feature in SEM including model specification, identification, estimation, assessment of model fit and re-specification (Kline, 2010). SEM has been described as an umbrella approach encompassing a set of multivariate statistical approaches to data (Bowen & Guo, 2012) that are multiple regression, factor analysis and canonical correlation (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007; Hoyle, 2012). Certain constructs in an SEM are latent whereas others are directly observed. The decision on which kinds of construct to employ depends on the type of SEM to employ. SEM evaluates whether the model provides reasonable fit to data and the level of association of each independent construct to the dependent constructs (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007).

Using SEM has a number of advantages. Its multiple construct, simultaneous association examination of theoretical models overcomes the problem of employing a small number of constructs to understand complex behavioural phenomena (see Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) go further in this respect suggesting SEM as the only method that allows for complete and simultaneous tests of associations. Achieving construct validity is enhanced using SEM given its ability to control for measurement error and dimensionality (Terblanche & Boshoff, 2006). The ability of SEM to estimate direct, indirect and total effects gives SEM more privileges over other statistical techniques. Advancements in the SEM further enable group differences in theoretical models to be assessed through multiple-group SEM (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Kline, 2010).

The goal of SEM is to examine research hypotheses about the observed means, variances and covariances in a set of constructs (Bowen & Guo, 2012). The fundamental hypothesis for these structural equations procedures is that the covariance matrix of the observed construct is a function of a set of parameters that allow correct fitting models to reproduce the population covariance matrix (Bollen, 1989).

Among the assumptions required for SEM to operate efficiently, Bentler and Chou (1987) suggest that independence of observations and normal distributions are necessary. However, as stated by Schumacker & Lomax (2010), SEM differs from traditional regression techniques by also requiring sufficient covariance structure or multicollinearity to improve the prospects for model stability. Interval or ratio-scaled item values, Schumacher and Lomax (2010) argue should have

a sufficient range of score values to introduce variance. If the range is restricted, the magnitude of the correlation value is decreased, and correlation associations cannot manifest in construct development (Schumacher & Lomax 2010). As such, this study employed 7-point Likert-scaled questions.

This study employed SEM and not the Partial-Least-Squares (PLS) alternative approach to SEM. I argue that small sample sizes do not pose a problem for this study and the emphasis is on theory testing rather than on prediction (see Hair et al., 2012; Kline, 2010). PLS estimates are considered statistically inferior compared to those generated under the full-information method (e.g., Maximum Likelihood) in SEM.

Multiple-group comparisons are also important in comparing the two design types in this study and are easily conducted in Predicted Analytics Software (PASW) AMOS.

The SEM further has the ability to consider potential errors of measurement. SEM includes error terms and considers them as parameters estimated when the model is fit to the data (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). In so doing, SEM corrects the amount of error in constructs and estimates the association as if there is no measurement error (Hair et al., 2010).

Making definite causal inferences based on SEM test results, however, is controversial and possibly points to limitations of SEM (Pearl, 2012; Bollen, 1989). Bollen (1989) suggests that proposing structural associations between constructs means suggesting parameters that are not just descriptive measures of association, but also reveal invariant causal relations. By contrast, Pearl (2012) disagrees with this understanding of "structural", questioning what is understood as "causation". With reference to SEM, he questions if it is possible to prove causality or yield any results capable of causal interpretation. Concerns surrounding the falsifiability of models, where it is not possible to disprove an SEM fit have also been raised and in-turn, challenge the usefulness of SEM (Bollen, 1989).

In response to these concerns, a number of authors, including Edwards and Bagozzi (2000), Bollen (1989), and Kline (2012) propose specific reporting conventions before it is reasonable to infer causal relations between constructs.

Overview to the SEM procedure

This section explains how the Andersen and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach to the SEM enables the investigation of the associations proposed in the conceptual model of this study. CFA analysis involved completion of the first of the two Anderson and Gerbing (1988) steps. The modelling of SEM covers the second of the two steps. Completion of SEM, by itself, involves

meeting the following requirements[30]: model specification, identification, estimation, testing and re-specification. The SEM findings in Chapter 6 interpret these requirements.

SEM specification

Model specification is considered as one of a number of requirements (or steps) in the SEM according to Schumacker and Lomax (2010). Model specification involves using all of the available theory to decide which observed and latent constructs to include in the model. It also considers which constructs are related and whether the associations between these constructs are directional or non-directional (Hoyle, 2012). The parameter and associations of interest must be specified as fixed or freely constrained with specification of each observed indicator's measurement error and suspected correlation (Hoyle, 2012; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Bowen & Guo, 2012).

These specifications propose how the true population (actual data) model is deemed consistent with the implied (specified) theoretical model being tested i.e. the sample covariance matrix is sufficiently reproduced by the implied theoretical model (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). If the true model is not consistent with the implied model, then the implied theoretical model is considered as being mis-specified (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). This is principally owing to exclusion or inclusion of constructs that can result in biased parameter estimates and specification error (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

Model specification is very important in accounting for naturally occurring patterns in data. This study has undertaken an extensive literature review and taken care to propose a robust conceptual framework. The study, therefore, proposes reliable and valid factor structures and aims to build on this solid base by investigating the associations between the constructs in SEM.

SEM identification

In addition to specification in a SEM, it is necessary to identify the SEM (see Kline, 2010; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010), and identification relates to the uniqueness of the parameters (Bentler & Chou, 1987). Models may have many different parameter values that equivalently account for data, but models are described as identified when parameters assume single values that are consistent with data (Hoyle, 2012). This depends on the transposition of the variance–covariance matrix of observed items and constructs in the structural parameters of the model under study. This facilitates model estimation and, therefore, the model can also be tested (Byrne, 2001).

[30] These SEM (as distinct from CFA) requirements are also known as steps. The five SEM steps or requirements commonly identified are specification, identification, estimation, testing and possibly re-specification.

If the parameter values are subject to arbitrariness, it implies that different parameter values define the same model. This means that the model cannot be evaluated empirically, and the SEM may not converge on a final estimated solution (Bentler, 1980; Byrne, 2001). SEM is considered as identified if there is only one estimate for each parameter and thus the SEM generates zero degrees of freedom (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Under-identified models pose problems as they yield statistics that are not correct (Bentler & Chou, 1987). However, the most desirable identification is over-identification when there are few parameters to the number of data points or observed constructs, thus yielding positive degrees of freedom (Bentler & Chou, 1987).

Identification can be achieved by fixing parameter values as a fixed parameter, by definition, can assume no other value and is therefore, identified (Hoyle, 2012). However, this solution may not prove possible in complex SEM (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

The specified SEM in this study is over-identified and parameter values can thus be trusted (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Critically, in this respect, given that there are 28 items in the model after CFA, the number of free parameters is 434 (28(28+3)/2) as against the number of 406 (28(28+1)/2) distinct values, a vital condition for identification known as order condition (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Kline, 2010).

SEM estimation

Having specified and identified SEM, the next step is to choose a model estimation approach (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Kline, 2010). Maximum likelihood (ML) is the most common estimation procedure (Hair et al., 2010; Hoyle, 2012) and the estimation procedure employed in this study. If the data are normally distributed then maximum likelihood is the best choice because it allows for a wide range of fit indexes to be computed (see Bowen & Guo, 2012; Costello & Osbourne, 2005). Maximum Likelihood estimates the parameters of the model and determines the Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) to the sample data that minimises the difference between the observed covariance matrix and the estimated or implied covariance matrix (Hoyle, 2012; Bentler, 1980; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). The process of estimation is iterative and is described as a simultaneous or full-information method, which means that the estimates of model parameters are calculated at once (Kline, 2010). The process begins with a set of start values and after a series of re-runs substantial reductions can materialise in the differences between the two matrices and values of the fitting function (see Hoyle, 2012). Convergence is obtained when the fitting function is minimised and no further updates of the parameter estimates is obtained (Hoyle, 2012). For most just-identified models, the fit of the model to the data is eventually perfect while for over-identified solutions the fit of the model achieves predefined minimum values (Kline, 2010). While the specified SEM in this study is over-identified, however, the fit of the model to data was also

perfect. Accurate start values or initial estimates of parameters promote convergence (Kline, 2010). Due to error propagation, Kline (2010) suggests that correctly specified models are essential; as specification errors in one parameter can affect results for other parameters elsewhere in the model otherwise.

The requirements for estimation include sample size and the plausibility of normality and independence assumptions (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Hair et al., 2010), model complexity, level of missing data, and error variance (Hair et al., 2010). In this regard, simpler models with fewer parameters, constructs with at least three indicators and one group analysis can be tested with smaller samples (Hair et al., 2010). Model stability and power is compromised with complexity where achieving optimal solutions demands more estimates and is, therefore, inversely related to the sample size (Bentler & Chou, 1987; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

This study aims to propose a reasonably parsimonious model with normal, independent data and adequate sample sizes to meet these estimation requirements (normality is confirmed in the data earlier as is the appropriateness of the sample sizes for the analyses of this study).

SEM testing and possible re-specification

This section presents the theoretical rationale for the model testing in the SEM (Kline, 2010; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). It revisits the theoretical ground covered by the examination of Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) in the CFA.

In evaluating the fitness of a SEM, Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) criteria and parameter values are typically assessed. Once the specified model is estimated, model fit compares theory to reality by assessing the similarity of the estimated covariance matrix (the theory) to the reality (observed covariance matrix). Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) measures compare these two matrices and when lower values are observed then the better the SEM is said to fit and represent the observed data (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011; Hair et al., 2010). The specified model where this happens supports the sample data. However, if specified model is not supported by data, the researcher has to modify the model to improve model fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

In addition to measurement changes in the CFA, re-specification requires a reconsideration of identification, estimation and re-evaluation of fit and the consideration of separate fit indices and structural associations and shifts the emphasis of the research towards model generation (Hoyle, 2012).

The actual testing of the proposed model is completed in the chapter and verifies that data for Case 1 and 2 with different designs support the sample data. Consumers' responses to designs of each case, as hypothesised in the conceptual model, are consistent with the sample data.

Findings from the Structural Equations Modelling (SEM)

Indirect effects

This section presents the theoretical rationale and the method used to test for mediation effects. An indirect effect assesses the impact of one variable on another as that variable's influence works through one or more intervening variables (Hoyle & Kenny, 1999). Researchers can also disaggregate a total effect that works through multiple intervening variables into specific indirect effects (Brown, 1997; Fox, 1980). Each specific indirect effect isolates and assesses the role of a single intervening variable in a given relationship. The total effect of one variable on another is the sum of its direct and indirect effects.

To test for the specific indirect effects of various mediators, Preacher and Hayes's (2008) bootstrapping technique was used. This method allows for multiple mediators to be examined in the same model, has greater power to detect significant effects while allowing for the control of covariates, and does not impose questionable distributional assumptions on the data (e.g., Preacher & Hayes, 2004). To reveal the precise nature of the mediation, Preacher and Hayes's technique produces point estimates (i.e., unstandardised estimates) and bias-corrected and accelerated (BCA) confidence intervals for each proposed indirect effect, and a point estimate of the remaining direct effect. For the indirect effect tests, confidence intervals that do not include zero suggest significant mediation.

An extensive body of methodological literature encourage the use of the bootstrap method for examining indirect effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007; MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004; Mallinckrodt, Abraham, Wei, & Russell, 2006). Bootstrapping is a non-parametric resampling approach for estimating and testing effects which makes no distributional assumptions about the sample statistic and the observations (Hayes, 2009; Preacher et al., 2007; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Instead, the procedure infers the distributional properties of the sample statistic via the resampling of the empirical data (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). In the bootstrap procedure, the parent sample is considered to represent the population from which it was derived. The sampling distributions of test and sample statistics are empirically determined by multiple resamples of equivalent size to the original sample indiscriminately drawn from the parent sample (see Preacher et al., 2007; Hayes, 2009). For instance, in the framework of specific indirect effects, bootstrapping is conducted by arbitrarily drawing a large number of samples denoted *k* (typically between 1,000 and 5,000), with replacement, from the parent sample. The indirect effect *ab* is calculated in each of the *k* samples. The point (or unstandard) estimate of the indirect effect is the mean *ab* value calculated over *k* samples (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

In addition to the derivation of a point estimate based on the empirical approximation of the sampling distribution of the statistic, the bootstrap procedure can also produce 100 (1 – α) % percentile and bias-corrected confidence intervals for *ab* (Hayes, 2009; Preacher et al., 2007). These procedures are lengthy and computationally intensive and thus will not be elucidated in this study. In terms of testing the null hypothesis using the bootstrap procedure, the H0 of no indirect effect is not supported at, for instance, α = .05 if zero is not included in lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval. Any probability value can be set as 100 – *ci%* to determine the desired level of significance.

The bootstrap approach is recommended by methodologists over the causal steps approach and product of coefficients strategies because the resampling procedure not only directly tests the mediation hypotheses but it further, yields greater statistical power in simulation studies (MacKinnon et al., 2004; Williams & MacKinnon, 2008).

Appendix H: Human Ethics Notifications

Study 1 Human Ethics Notification

Date: 07 September 2017

Dear Kousar Sadeghzadeh Fesaghandis

Re: Ethics Notification - **4000018394**

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please contact a Research Ethics Administrator.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director - Ethics, telephone 06 3569099 ext. 86015, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. "

Please note, if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "yes" to the publication question to provide more information for one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Brian Finch
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Study 2 Human Ethics Notification

Date: 07 April 2018

Dear Kousar Sadeghzadeh Fesaghandis

Re: Ethics Notification - **4000019268**

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please contact a Research Ethics Administrator.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Associate Professor Tracy Riley, Acting Director - Ethics, telephone 06 3569099 ext. 84408, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. "

Please note, if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "yes" to the publication question to provide more information for one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Associate Professor Tracy Riley, Dean Research
Acting Director (Research Ethics)

Study 3 Human Ethics Notification

Date: 30 September 2019

Dear Kousar Sadeghzadeh Fesaghandis

Re: Ethics Notification - **4000021802**

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please contact a Research Ethics Administrator.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director Ethics, telephone 06 3569099 ext. 85271, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Please note, if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "yes" to the publication question to provide more information for one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)