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**Abstract**

Constant growth of online retail and changing consumer preferences bring new challenges for retailers. To keep up with the competition, retailers now need to provide consumers with something more than goods and services – they need to provide them with novel and unique experiences. Pop-up retailing is a relatively new concept, aiming primarily at creating consumer experiences through establishing highly experiential stores that are only opened for a fixed period of time. These so-called pop-up stores are not merely brick-and-mortar spaces but also experiential marketing tools. They answer primarily the hedonic needs of the consumers and their main objective is typically related to strengthening the brand rather than making sales.

Pop-up stores are increasingly gaining popularity as an experiential marketing tool, but not much comprehensive academic research on the phenomenon exists yet. The purpose of this study is to fill the gap and better understand what kind of an experiential marketing tool a pop-up brand store is. For this purpose, a systematic literature review on pop-up store literature is conducted. The review suggests that two concepts, experience stores and marketing events, are closely related to and central for understanding pop-up stores. Therefore, the two are also reviewed in a similar manner.

As a result, pop-up stores are positioned at the intersection of experience stores and marketing events within the context of experiential marketing. Pop-up stores are characterized by their experiential orientation, temporal transiency and novel approaches to location, store environment and marketing. Furthermore, a key feature of pop-up stores turns out to be their interactive nature and co-creation of the experience between the consumer and the brand. The term “pop-up experience” is coined to describe the consumer responses that the pop-up store related stimuli evoke. From the brand's side, experience management and evaluation are discussed. Lastly, the study proposes a preliminary framework for pop-up experience and presents an agenda for further research on the subject.

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Key words           | Experiential marketing, pop-up store, temporary store |
| Further information |   |







**UNIVERSITY  
OF TURKU**

Turku School of  
Economics

## **TEMPORARY STORE, LASTING IMPACT**

**Developing a framework and a research agenda for pop-up  
stores**

Master's Thesis  
in Marketing

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The originality of this thesis has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background for the research

The retail sector is facing major changes today. The fast pace of globalization and constantly growing e-commerce sector are re-shaping the market, creating new challenges for traditional retailers. Contemporary consumers are becoming discerning and resistant to conventional marketing methods. They want something more than mere goods and services – they demand engaging and exciting *experiences* (e.g. Pine & Gilmore 1998, 1999; Schmitt 1999; Baker et al. 2002; Verhoef 2009).

In fact, the idea that “fantasies, feelings and fun” affect our behavior and consumption choices was first introduced to marketing literature by Holbrook and Hirschman already in 1982. The authors challenged the old information processing model view, claiming that consumers are not always rational and that consumption is not just a way to fulfill utilitarian needs. Instead, it can also be a source of entertainment – a way to reach our hedonic goals. Since then, research on this kind of *experiential marketing* has been gaining more and more ground in academic literature.

It is safe to say that the trend is towards more experiential marketing methods in the modern society. Keeping up with experiential marketing trends is crucial for all marketers, but even more so for retail brands. In the report Retail 2020 (2010), Jones Lang LaSalle predicts that consumers’ demand for authenticity and experiences will inevitably lead to changes in retailing, one of them being increase in so-called *pop-up retail*.

Pop-up retail aims to meet the contemporary consumers’ needs by combining sensory, relational and experiential marketing methods to create an exclusive, highly experiential setting (Niehm et al. 2007, 2). These experiential settings form a new store concept called pop-up stores (sometimes referred to as temporary stores or guerrilla stores). Pop-up stores are intentionally opened for a short period of time, and are generally focused more on promotional activities rather than selling goods (Niehm et al. 2007, 4; Kim et al. 2010, 134; Pomodoro 2013, 344; Klein et al. 2016, 5762).

The term pop-up store was coined to describe brand stores that quickly draw crowds around an event before disappearing (Russo Spina et al. 2012, 26). In other words, pop-up store can be viewed as a sort of a hybrid between a brand store and an event. However, some retailers seem to call even seasonal outlets pop-up stores sometimes. This study is going to mainly focus on marketing objectives led pop-up stores, whose main focus is to enforce the brand. Such experientially oriented stores are also known as pop-up brand stores (Klein et al. 2016). When using the term pop-up store, this study will refer to experientially oriented pop-up brand stores in particular.

Pop-up stores are increasingly gaining popularity as an experiential marketing tool (Niehm et al. 2007, 2; Klein et al. 2016, 5761), and more research on this relatively new marketing concept is definitely needed. The phenomenon that started out as completely novel and unique is now becoming mainstream, calling for more knowledge on how to successfully market and design pop-up experiences that stand out in the saturated retail market (Pop-Up Stores: A growing retail strategy, 2014).

The existing academic research on experiential marketing is plentiful yet varied. Pine & Gilmore (1999) propose that the firm's role is to "stage the scene" where the experience happens. Some newer perspectives emphasize the active role of the customer, dividing experiences into smaller components based on whether they can or cannot be controlled by retailers (Grewal et al. 2009, 2; Verhoef et al. 2009, 32). This view suggests that experiences are co-created with the customers, and cannot be provided to them ready as a whole (Gentile et al. 2007). In other words, the retailer provides the consumers only with the setting for the experience, where the customers then create their own interpretation of the experience (Schmitt 1999; Berry et al. 2002). As Carù and Cova (2007, 36) put it: "Firms can create and manage experiential contexts, not experiences".

Even though temporary retailing is a growing trend, little attention has been paid to it in academic literature (Lowe et al. 2018, 75) and systematic research on the subject remains largely deficient (De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014, 62). Russo Spena et al. (2012, 36) state there is a definite need for further research on pop-up stores in order to provide managers with guidelines on how to effectively use them as a strategic, communicative platform.

## **1.2 Research purpose and structure**

To the author's knowledge, no structured literature reviews on pop-up stores have yet emerged in academic literature, and this research seeks to fill the gap. The purpose of this study is to find out how pop-up stores have been identified and studied. To achieve that kind of understanding, a comprehensive, systematic literature review is conducted. The study compiles together scattered research findings and integrates the knowledge on the subject into a comprehensive framework, hoping to serve as a reference guide to current and future pop-up store researchers.

This paper is structured as follows. After the introduction, chapter 2 presents the methodology used to conduct the literature review. Chapter 3 first introduces the concept of experiential marketing, after which it covers three topics: pop-up stores, experience stores and marketing events. The two latter topics were chosen as the review on pop-up store literature suggested they are essential for understanding the phenomenon.

Each topic is first covered through a brief introduction and presentation of its key concepts, after which a structured literature review of relevant articles on the subject is conducted. Parts of the chapter are based on the author's previous work (see Vilkanen 2016). Chapter 4 brings together the information gathered in chapter 3, presenting a framework for studying pop-up store experiences. Chapter 5 concludes and discusses the findings and provides an agenda for further research.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research approach**

This study uses systematic literature review as its methodology. This approach was chosen as it provides a transparent evaluation of the chosen topic and recognizes current shortcomings in the field. Moreover, a comprehensive review felt very much needed, as no systematic literature reviews on temporary retail exist yet.

Chronologically, the study process went as follows. First, the author conducted a systematic review on pop-up store literature. This method revealed that two specific topics were relevant for understanding pop-up stores: experiential retail and events.

The author decided to conduct a review on these two topics as well in order to gain deeper understanding on the background of pop-up stores. Before proceeding to a systematic review part, she first familiarized herself with experiential retail and event literature in general. This helped her to gather knowledge on the subject, which made searching for relevant papers for the review easier. The structure of this study follows the chronology of the research process; each topic is first introduced briefly, after which a structured literature review is presented.

The literature review method of this study is largely based on the guidelines provided by Booth et al. (2016). The literature review consists of three consecutive phases that will be further explained in the following subchapters:

- Searching the literature
- Evidence base assessment
- Analyzing and synthesizing the findings

### **2.2 Searching the relevant literature**

Searching of the relevant literature for the review was done primarily through electronic databases, as it is an effective way to find a wide coverage of scientific publications with a straight access to them. As for the databases, EBSCO (Business Source Complete) and Emerald were chosen to be used for this study, as they are known to offer a broad collection of scientific publications specifically in the field of business. The searches were performed using keywords and keyword combinations. Combinations were used in cases when the amount of entries was too high and not specific enough. Table 1 shows the keywords and keyword combinations that were used for the search.

Table 1 Keywords used for literature search

| <b>Topic</b>             | <b>Keywords</b>  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Pop-up stores</b>     | “pop-up store”<br>“pop-up shop”<br>“temporary store”<br>“temporary shop”               |
| <b>Experience stores</b> | “experience store”<br>“flagship store” AND “brand”<br>“experiential store” AND “brand” |
| <b>Marketing events</b>  | “marketing event”<br>“event marketing” NOT “sponsor”                                   |

First, the pop-up store literature was searched using relevant keywords. After the assessment and analysis of pop-up store literature, experience stores and marketing events were found to be related to the phenomenon. Hence, a similar systematic review approach was applied to both experience store and marketing event topics.

As for the choice of keywords, “brand” was chosen as a part for the keyword combination as this research is focused on experiential pop-up store types, i.e. pop-up brand stores. After some searches, keywords found to be unrelated to this study were also utilized in the search process by using the “NOT” operator. Chapter 2.3 will further discuss the assessment and narrowing of the evidence base.

## 2.3 Assessing the evidence base

Assessment of the evidence base was done through guidelines provided by Booth et al. (2016) to find the most suitable studies within the scope and focus of this paper. To begin with, evidence base was narrowed down to peer-reviewed journal articles in order to find the most recent, validated knowledge on the subjects. Then, non-English studies were excluded from the analysis, mainly because of the author’s language skill limitations. Lastly, the publications were screened for unrelated papers.

To determine whether a paper is suitable for this study or not, the titles and abstracts were read carefully. If more information was needed, also introduction and conclusion parts were read. In some cases, the whole article was screened to make an educated decision. The examination revealed that there were also redundant entries that did not relate to this study in particular. The main principle of the article selection was to find

papers that are primarily focused around the key concept in question: pop-up stores, experience stores or marketing events.

The review on pop-up store literature guided the article selection for experience store and marketing event topics, as the goal of the two was to first and foremost deepen our understanding of the pop-up store concept. As peer-reviewed English-language journal articles were used for pop-up store review, the same was done for the two other topics in order to have comparable findings. Non-related papers were excluded from the study; for example, papers focused on sponsorship and virtual environments were excluded, as they do not fit the scope of the study. Ultimately, 10 articles on pop-up stores, 10 articles on experience stores and eight articles on marketing events were selected for the literature review.

## **2.4 Analyzing and synthesizing the findings**

In order to analyze the findings, articles were first read through from the beginning. After that, the articles were organized in a chronological order and their key details (author(s), year, publication, title, findings) were listed in a table to get a holistic view on the subject. This type of approach allowed the author to perceive a sense of structure.

As pop-up store literature was reviewed first, its analysis guided the review process of the two other topics. No pre-determined codes for this review were set; instead, they were allowed to rise inductively from the articles. Ultimately, pop-up stores were reviewed on their key characteristics and objectives, as that helped to get a better understanding of the concept. Moreover, antecedents and outcomes of pop-up store experiences were noted, as they were found central for understanding experientially oriented pop-up stores.

The findings on pop-up stores guided the analysis of experience stores and marketing events; whenever a relevant text for characteristics, objectives, antecedents or outcomes was found, it was annotated. Finally, all the findings on the topics were grouped together with the aim of creating a holistic understanding of pop-up stores and the phenomenon's background.

### **3 EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH TO TEMPORARY STORES: A LITERATURE ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1 Outlining the overall theoretical starting point for the analysis: Experiential marketing**

In order to study experiential marketing tools, we must first understand the experiential marketing phenomenon and its background as a whole. Therefore, this subchapter will introduce the basic principles of experiential marketing, thus outlining the overall theoretical starting point for the following literature reviews.

Modern economics have shifted from delivering commodities and services to providing holistic experiences. In other words, we have entered the *experience economy*, as Pine and Gilmore (1998) call it. Experiential marketing is defined as customer-oriented marketing practice that connects with customers, aiming at creating holistic, exciting experiences for consumers (Schmitt 1999, 70; Carù & Cova 2007). Engaging consumers is seen as a necessary component of experiential marketing (Wikström, 2005; Carù & Cova 2007; Gentile et al. 2007).

Definitions of experiential marketing often emphasize the role of customers in value-creation and formation of the experience: for example, Gentile et al. (2007, 397) define customer experience as a strictly personal set of interactions that involve both the customer and the company and its offerings. The authors also propose that evaluation of the customer experience is dependent on how well the stimuli from the interaction meet the customer's expectations. Verhoef et al. (2009, 32) in turn propose that customer experience is constituted of two kinds of elements: those that the retailer can control, and those that they cannot control. Retail-controlled factors are also known as retail drivers (Grewal et al. 2009, 2).

In order to compose a more structured view of experiential marketing, several authors have distinguished key attributes that are essential for an offering to become experiential. Pine and Gilmore (1998, 101-102) view experiences through the dimensions of participation and connection. Schmitt (1999, 58–60) states that the key characteristics of experiential marketing are focus on customer experience, seeing consumption as a holistic experience, recognizing consumers as both rational and emotional, and using eclectic tool and methods. Wikström (2005, 36–43) proposes a customer-oriented categorization, suggesting that in order for an event to be experiential, it must include four key attributes: personal involvement, social bonding, novelty and excitement.



Even though motives for consumption are generally both rational and emotional (i.e. utilitarian and hedonic), the experiential view on marketing is particularly concerned with fulfilling the emotional needs of the customers. Highly subjective and personal, hedonic values reflect the emotional worth of the shopping experience through fostering sensations such as excitement and entertainment (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Babin et al. 1994). Experiential marketing has to feel entertaining for the consumer – it has to provide pleasurable experiences and give consumers a sense of delight (Srinivasan & Srivastava 2010, 194). The experiential emphasis is particularly suitable for business-to-consumer contexts (Frow & Payne 2007, 91).

An experience can be considered successful when the customer finds it unique and memorable, and promotes it via word-of-mouth (WOM) (Srinivasan & Srivastava 2010, 194). A good experience is unforgettable, even extraordinary. An experience can be considered extraordinary when it immerses consumers in extravagant simulations and provides surprising decors (Carù & Cova 2007, 10). Experience design is of great importance, as well-designed experiences can help brands build loyalty and satisfaction (Pullman & Gross 2004, 553; Brakus et al. 2009, 52; Verhoef et al. 2009, 31). When engaging with companies or brands, customers always have some kind of an experience – whether it is positive, negative or neutral – so the crucial thing is how well the company can manage the experience (Berry et al. 2002, 88). The downside to experiential marketing, however, is that it is rather hard to measure as each consumer experiences an experience differently. Moreover, the factors contributing towards the formation of an experience are often implicit or intangible.

Indeed, measuring experiences remains a challenge still today. Models for service design have been around from the 1980's – most renowned one perhaps being the SERVQUAL<sup>1</sup> questionnaire tool – but they have lacked the needed capabilities to measure customer experience from especially an experience designer's point of view (Bladen et al. 2012, 68). Even though some contributions to experience measurement have been made, none of them have yet to gain traction in current marketing practice. Customer experience is a complex field that requires a multi-disciplinary approach. Research that seeks to further conceptualize, measure and assess customer experience management in organizations is definitely required. (Lemon & Verhoef 2016, 81).

There are, however, several categorizations of the components of customer experience management in marketing literature. First experience framework proposition was suggested by Schmitt (1999), who divided experiential marketing into five *strategic experiential modules* (aka SEMs): SENSE (sensory experiences), FEEL (affective experiences), THINK (creative and cognitive experiences), ACT (physical / lifestyle related

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<sup>1</sup> See Parasuraman et al. (1988).

experiences) and RELATE (social identity related experiences). Schmitt also introduced the concept of ExPros; i.e. experience providers, or the means that are used to deliver the experience. Building upon existing literature, Gentile et al. (2007, 398) identify six components for customer experience; sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle and relational. In comparison to Schmitt's framework, Gentile et al. added a new dimension, pragmatic component (i.e. practical acts, including usability, for instance).

Verhoef et al. (2009, 32) divide experiences into retail-controlled and uncontrolled elements. Furthermore, they develop a framework for customer experience strategy, proposing that customer experience consists of several determinants including social environment (e.g. service personnel, tribes), retail atmosphere (e.g. design), service interface (e.g. co-creation), assortment (e.g. uniqueness and quality) and price (including e.g. loyalty programs and promotions). Also Srivastava & Kaul (2014, 1035) support the division into retail-controlled and uncontrolled factors.

Regardless of the experiential context in question, a thing they share in common is that the context has to always be secured, enclavized and thematized in order for the consumers to become immersed. Secured environment means not having to pay attention to one's everyday duties inside the environment, and its enclavization refers to setting boundaries that keep the consumer in the enchanted space. Thematization in turn adds symbolism to the context, ascribing meaning to the consumption activity. (Carù & Cova 2007, 41). Russo Spena et al. (2012, 25) also emphasize the importance of immersion, proposing that a brand strategy, sensory environment and store design are required to build consumer engagement.

Designing a pleasant atmosphere and providing customers with a remarkable experience can bring competitive advantage to companies, and researchers widely agree that firms – especially those who wish to attract new customers – should consider experience design a top priority (Baker et al. 2002, 139; Bäckström & Johansson 2006). In summary, customer experience management is seen as a win-win exchange of value between the firm and its customers (Grewal et al. 2009, 1).

In order to keep up with the competition in the modern marketplace, firms are increasingly trying to provide their customers with experiences and make them feel something while interacting with brands and products. And above all, these kinds of sensations flourish in new places of consumption. (Carù & Cova, 2007, 155). With the growth of the pop-up retail phenomenon, it seems that the pop-up store may be exactly this kind of new experiential consumption place that is needed.

## 3.2 Pop-up stores: A systematic literature review

### 3.2.1 *Defining pop-up stores*

The fast pace of online retail growth and changing consumer preferences pose challenges for retailers. They need to consider new approaches in order to attract customers to their stores – they must provide consumers something novel and unique. Pop-up retailing is a relatively recent concept, aiming primarily at creating exciting, memorable experiences through establishing temporary stores that are only opened for a fixed period of time. These so-called pop-up stores can thus be viewed not only as a brick-and-mortar retail space, but also, as an experiential marketing tool (De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014; Klein et al. 2016).

The interest in temporary retail activities started truly growing at the turn of the millennium. While academic research does not quite define a specific starting point for the phenomenon, it appears that pioneers of pop-up retail include at least Levi's and Swatch in London (De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014, 61) and Vacant in San Francisco (Pop-Up Stores: A growing retail strategy, 2014), all opened in 1999. Since then, more and more companies and brands have utilized pop-up stores to achieve different kinds of goals. Having started small, the concept has now been adopted also by big, multinational corporations. Establishing a pop-up store may be a useful tool for marketing research purposes; for instance, it can be used to test a new market. An example of this is Japanese fashion brand Comme Des Garçons, which opened a unique pop-up store in Germany in 2004 (Picot-Coupey 2014, 643–644).

Today, pop-up stores have steadily established their place as a potential marketing tool for brands and businesses. Pop-up stores are known to work as an experiential marketing tool to achieve different kinds of objectives. According to Taube and Warnaby (2017), pop-up store may have e.g. communicational, experiential, transactional or testing emphasis. Pop-up stores are a fresh addition to the retail market, enhancing the shopping experience and making it more experiential and meaningful for the customer.

Pop-up stores can be considered manifestations of the new view of stores as show-cases for a branded experience (Russo Spina et al. 2012, 25). Simply put, *brand experience* is conceptualized as the subjective internal responses that brand-related stimuli evokes. Brand experience consists of four dimensions (see Figure 1), which are differentially induced for different brands. (Brakus et al. 2009).

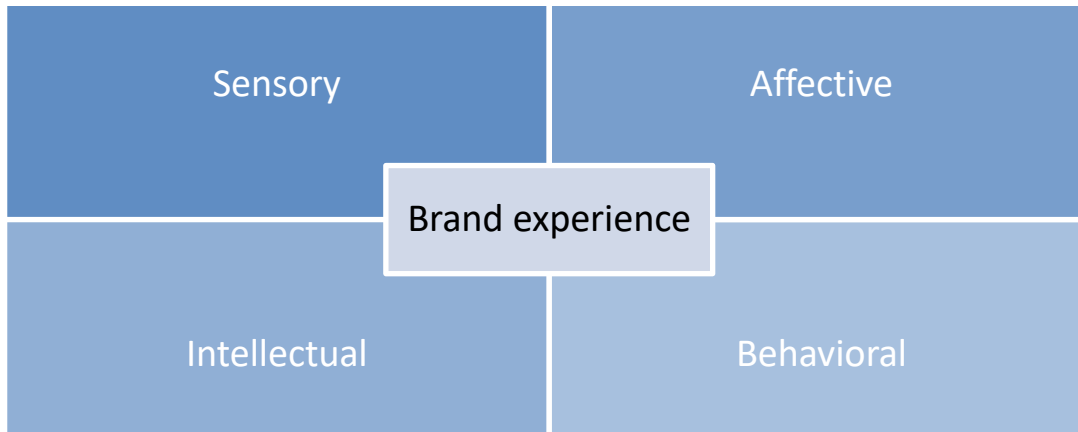


Figure 1 Brand experience dimensions (Brakus et al. 2009)

Multi-sensory pop-up retail spaces provide an effective way of engaging consumers through brand experiences (Lowe et al. 2018, 78). The interactive and temporary nature of pop-up stores heightens the uniqueness of the brand experience (Pomodoro 2013, 347). The store can bring new experiences and potential value to both the firm and the customer; in other words, the experience is co-created in the pop-up store environment (Russo Spina et al. 2012, 35–36).

Lowe et al. (2018) propose that as retailers are in an ideal position to create potential experiences for their customers, they should regard themselves as a host and the store as their stage. This is in line with Pine and Gilmore's (1998) renowned manifest in early experience economy studies; that "work is theatre and every business is a stage". An important thing to remember is that pop-up store hosts can only prepare a stage for the experience; consumers will use the experiential setting to create their own, personal interpretation of it.

The unique concept of pop-up stores answers particularly the contemporary consumers' demand for *hedonic* shopping experiences (Niehm et al. 2007 6, 25; Pomodoro 2013, 348; Klein et al. 2016). Hedonic value is personal and subjective, and is received from entertainment and fun rather than completing tasks (Babin et al. 1994, 646). In order to produce entertaining, unique experiences, firms must carefully plan and execute the pop-up store to achieve their goals. It is important to notice that different strategic goals call for different types of pop-up retailing (Pomodoro 2013). Hence, it is also crucial to carefully determine the goals the firm is trying to achieve through utilizing pop-up retailing as their marketing tool. If retailers are able to meet the consumers' expectations for a novel shopping experience, it may initially lead towards greater brand loyalty (Niehm et al. 2007, 25; Brakus et al. 2009).

Taube and Warnaby (2017) identify four dimensions of pop-up stores that are based on business objectives: communicational, experiential, transactional and testing. Quite similarly, Vilkanen (2016) earlier categorized the objectives as creating brand aware-

ness, engaging consumers, increasing word-of-mouth intentions and testing new markets. The various objectives of temporary stores will be more thoroughly covered in chapter 3.2.3.

Ultimately, the primary goal for pop-up stores should be the formation of customer relationships, eventually leading to higher emotional affection towards the brand (Kim et al. 2010, 148). Although pop-up stores should be designed with experience orientation in mind, it is crucial that the fundamentals of retail are also correctly implemented (Lowe et al 2018, 79). All in all, the critical factor is determining the pop-up store's objectives, and then planning the execution so that the customers can have personalized unique experiences that shape their attitudes towards the brand.

### **3.2.2 *Pop-up store research***

Pop-up retailing primarily seeks to create exciting, memorable experiences through establishing temporary stores. Despite the newness of the concept, there are already some openings in recent academic literature on how to define pop-up stores more specifically. For instance, pop-up stores can be categorized by their primary purpose.

Klein et al. (2016) divide pop-up stores into seasonal pop-up stores and pop-up brand stores, suggesting the two differ by their focus: while seasonal stores have stronger emphasis on sales, the brand stores are established to create superior experiences and generate word-of-mouth. Lowe et al. (2018) similarly talk about sales-led and marketing-led temporary retail activations. Sales-driven activations are focused on achieving "hard" metrics based (e.g. financial) goals, whereas marketing-led pop-up retail seeks e.g. to generate "buzz" or raise brand awareness. According to the authors, marketing-led activations can also co-align with pre-existing happenings to create a more tangible brand experience. This study is interested in pop-up stores with brand-related goals in particular.

Pop-up retail is still a rather new topic in academic research, and quite unsurprisingly no coherent school of thought or a universally accepted typology has emerged yet. With the growth of pop-up trend and experiential marketing in general, more research and conceptualizations on the matter are definitely needed. Table 2 portrays the work of pop-up retail researchers thus far, summarizing the studies' key findings.

Table 2 Prior academic research on pop-up stores

| <b>Author(s)</b>          | <b>Year</b> | <b>Article</b>  | <b>Journal</b>  | <b>Key findings</b>  |
|---------------------------|-------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Niehm et al.</b>       | 2007        | Pop-up retail's acceptability as an innovative business strategy and enhancer of the consumer shopping experience | Journal of Shopping Center Research                       | Identifying constructs to reflect consumers' perceived benefits about pop-up stores: 1) product novelty/uniqueness, 2) facilitator of purchase decision 3) product trial and unique experience.                            |
| <b>Kim et al.</b>         | 2010        | Psychographic characteristics affecting behavioral intentions towards pop-up retail                               | International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management | Pop-up stores are more effective on consumers who have higher innovativeness tendencies or who enjoy shopping. Hedonic aspects of pop-up stores are more important than utilitarian ones.                                  |
| <b>Surchi</b>             | 2011        | The temporary store: a new marketing tool for fashion brands  | Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management               | Pop-up stores have promotional and investigative functions. Their primary function is to manage the brand rather than create sales.  |
| <b>Russo Spena et al.</b> | 2012        | Store experience and co-creation: the case of temporary shop  | International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management | Pop-up store experiences activate a two-way learning process between the brand and the customer by developing emotional and sensory links. Social dimension and co-creation are crucial parts of a pop-up store's success. |
| <b>Pomodoro</b>           | 2013        | Temporary retail in fashion system: an explorative study  | Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management               | Identifying four different categories of pop-up stores: concept brand store, community store, test store, sustainable brand store.   |

|                                      |      |  |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|------|--|---|--|
| <b>De Las-sus &amp; Anido Freire</b> | 2014 | Access to the luxury brand myth in pop up stores: A netnographic and semiotic analysis             | Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services                | Pop-up stores complement luxury brands by adding informality, friendliness, lucidity and accessibility to the sector. Additionally, they enforce the brand's mythical aspects.   |
| <b>Picot-Coupey</b>                  | 2014 | The pop-up store as a foreign operation mode (FOM) for retailers                                   | International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management | Identifying three key motivations for the use of pop-up store as a FOM: to test and adapt the concept, to raise and sustain the international profile of the brand, to develop relationship networks with stakeholders in foreign markets. |
| <b>Klein et al.</b>                  | 2016 | Linking pop-up brand stores to brand experience and word of mouth: The case of luxury retail       | Journal of Business Research                              | Pop-up stores' hedonic shopping value, store atmosphere and uniqueness increase consumers' WOM intentions towards the brand, while brand experience mediates the effect of these characteristics.  |
| <b>Taube &amp; Warnaby</b>           | 2017 | How brand interaction in pop-up shops influences consumers' perception of luxury fashion retailers | Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management               | The temporal dimension and the promotional and experiential aspects affect the consumers' perception of the pop-up store. Pre- and post-stages of the experience too are of great importance.  |
| <b>Lowe et al.</b>                   | 2018 | Critical success factors of temporary retail activations: A multi-actor perspective                | Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services                | Identifying four critical success factors for pop-up stores: relational touch point, strategic alignment, surprise and delight, serendipity.   |

A great deal of pop-up store research has been conducted in a fashion/luxury context, which poses certain limitations towards the generalizability of the findings. Temporary store phenomenon is extending to various different forms such as restaurants or bars

(Pomodoro 2013, 350) and given its contextually specific nature (Lowe et al. 2018, 75), future research could study whether the previous findings apply to those types of settings as well.

Consumers with higher innovativeness and shopping enjoyment have been found to have more patronage intentions towards pop-up retail (Kim et al. 2010). Moreover, pop-up stores seem to particularly attract young consumers and female consumers of all ages. Geographic region, education level or income level do not seem to impact the pop-up store experience. (Niehm et al. 2007).

To sum up the prior research, it is widely agreed that pop-up stores are brand-centered interactive environments, which enable communication between the consumer and the brand. Pop-up stores are characterized by unique traits such as temporality, novelty and interactivity. In the end, pop-up stores aim to create engaging experiences for the consumers in the hopes of achieving different kinds of brand-related outcomes. Chapter 3.2.3 will review the key characteristics and objectives of pop-up stores more in-depth.

### ***3.2.3 Key characteristics and objectives of pop-up stores***

One of the key differences between a conventional brick-and-mortar store and a pop-up brand store is their objective: usually, a pop-up brand store's objective has to do with strengthening the brand image and gathering information on customers' experience with the brand. In fact, pop-up stores can act as showrooms or experiential spaces without selling products at all (Surchi 2011, 265; Klein et al. 2016, 5762). Kim et al. (2010, 148) even suggest that pop-up stores should possibly eliminate the selling aspect entirely in order to focus on building customer relationships and creating a novel, unique experience.

Table 3 depicts the most recognized objectives of pop-up stores, while Table 4 lists the most prominent characteristics of a temporary store. Each aspect is further illustrated with relevant examples.



Table 3 Pop-up store objectives (adapted from Vilkanen 2016)

| <b>Objective</b>                | <b>Comments</b>  | <b>Exemplary studies</b>   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Creating brand awareness</b> | Pop-up brand stores' primary focus is to strengthen the brand image and create experiences, rather than to make sales. They go beyond conventional marketing techniques, potentially reaching new customers. Examples of brand promotion methods include e.g. product sampling and testing, product promotion and innovative store design. | Niehm et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Surchi 2011; Russo Spena et al. 2012; Pomodoro 2013; De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014; Picot-Coupey 2014; Klein et al. 2016, Lowe et al. 2018 |
| <b>Increasing word-of-mouth</b> | Positive WOM increases the consumers' exposure to the brand. Initially, positive WOM is expected to contribute to enhancing brand image. Ways to encourage word-of-mouth behavior include e.g. providing novel information, creating unique happenings and experiences and choosing a unique store design and/or location.                 | Surchi 2011; Pomodoro 2013; Picot-Coupey 2014; Klein et al. 2016, Lowe et al. 2018   |
| <b>Engaging customers</b>       | Examples include fostering dialogue with brand representatives, creating multi-sensory experiences and building a compelling environment that encourages social interaction.   | Niehm et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Surchi 2011; Russo Spena et al. 2012; Pomodoro 2013, Taube & Warnaby 2017, Lowe et al. 2018  |
| <b>Market research</b>          | Examples include testing new market internationally and establishing a physical presence for a formerly online-only store. Pop-up store is a cost-efficient way for conducting practical market research.  | Surchi 2011; Pomodoro 2013; Picot-Coupey 2014; De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014, Lowe et al. 2018   |

Based on prior research, enhancing the brand image seems to be the most common purpose for pop-up stores. Creating personalized, exciting experiences allows brands to distinguish themselves in the competitive market. The unique environment offered by temporary stores can on one hand attract new customers to the store environment, making them exposed to the brand, and on the other hand, offer fun experiences and insights for the customers already familiar with the brand. Pop-up stores may offer samples of new products or sell new, often limited edition, products or feature entire product lines. Even when pop-up stores sell goods, the goal is still primarily not on sales but on getting the maximum visibility. Creating awareness of the brand may also provide utilitarian value for the customers, as it makes them better educated about the products, resulting in a feeling that they are able to make better purchase decisions in the future.

In addition to handing out free samples, another way of educating consumers about brand and its products is engaging with them and providing information. Pop-up stores are a source of new information, providing useful and fun environment for both new and existing customers. As involvement is a key factor in the formation of customer experience (see e.g. Carù & Cova 2007; Gentile et al. 2007), it is crucial to make the customers feel engaged in the pop-up experience. Ways to succeed in this include e.g. designing the store so that it makes socializing easy and making sure the staff is comprehensively educated.

If the customer feels excited about and satisfied with their experience, they are likely to tell their friends and family about it as well. When consumers feel positively about a brand, they are more likely to spread the word forward. WOM communication can also be seen as a way for consumers to enhance their social self, allowing them to appear in a certain, desired way. Consumers are known to most preferably share content that is interesting, unique and entertaining. (Klein et al. 2016). Surchi (2011, 260–261) notes that if the store has surprising features (such as a distinctive design or location) that spark the consumers' curiosity enough, that may enhance WOM in itself. The goal behind the attempt of encouraging WOM is to create “buzz” around the pop-up store, exposing more people to the brand than it would otherwise reach.

Looking from the marketer's perspective, establishing a pop-up store may also be an effective tool for testing new markets or store concepts. Establishing a pop-up store is a lower-risk alternative to founding a permanent store; the startup costs are significantly lower and it also gives the retailer the option to evaluate customers' responses and feedback before making any binding, long-term decisions. This might be particularly useful for bigger decisions whose results are hard to predict: such as brand expanding to another country, or an online retailer trying to distinguish oneself and fight the saturation of online retail market. An example of expanding internationally is Japanese Comme Des Garçons, which opened an experiential store in Germany for one year. The store

was built into an old warehouse, thus building up the uniqueness factor of the store environment. An example of online retailer's attempt to create awareness offline is Amazon, which set up a pop-up store in San Francisco in 2013 to promote and sell Kindle devices (Pop-Up Stores: A growing retail strategy, 2014).

Aside from their objectives, pop-up stores also differ from traditional brick-and-mortar stores by some characteristic features, most notable one of these probably being their temporary nature. The limited opening time encourages causes a feeling of feeling of urgency to the consumers, intensifying the need to act before the pop-up store is gone (De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014, 66). Not visiting a pop-up store before it disappears can lead to sensations of perceived loss and regret (Taube & Warnaby 2017, 387).

Temporality is a key characteristic of not only events but also pop-up stores – so much so that pop-up stores are sometimes considered as events (Surchi 2011, Pomodoro 2013). Adding to this notion, Taube and Warnaby (2017, 386) suggest that views from both experiential marketing and event management literature should be accommodated into the planning of temporary retail activities. Limited availability, whether of products or just the store experience itself, communicates something about the uniqueness factor as such (Surchi, 2011). Taube and Warnaby (2017) note that in addition to the actual pop-up store experience, the pre-pop-up stage and the post-pop-up stage are also important factors concerning the temporality aspect of the pop-up store. The pre-stage includes strategic marketing decisions such as store location, promotional methods and store selection, while the post-stage involves measures for evaluation.

As it can be seen from Table 4, the most highlighted (and so perhaps the most important) characteristics in addition to temporality are dialogue, interactivity, store environment/location and novelty/uniqueness. Many studies emphasized the importance of well-informed brand representatives' presence in the pop-up stores. Brand representatives engage in face-to-face dialogue with the consumers, providing information about the brand and the products. The ability to gather information, communicate with knowledgeable staff and share insights with them is seen as a top factor attracting people to attend experiential stores (Kim et al. 2010, 134). Informing consumers on the product attributes is also connected to the learning aspect of pop-up stores. The ability to learn new information and experiment with products contributes to formation of an exciting pop-up store experience.

Table 4 Typical pop-up store characteristics (adapted from Vilkanen 2016)

| <b>Characteristic</b>                           | <b>Comments</b>   | <b>Exemplary studies</b>   |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Temporality</b>                              | Pop-up stores are open for a fixed time period, but the limitedness might also include e.g. availability of products, highlighting the exclusivity of the offering.   | Niehm et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Surchi 2011; Pomodoro 2013; De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014, Klein et al. 2016, Taube & Warnaby 2017   |
| <b>Promotion of specific products</b>           | If a pop-up store is promoting specific products or product lines, they need to be somehow new, unique or exclusive (e.g. limited edition).   | Niehm et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Pomodoro 2013; Klein et al. 2016, Lowe et al. 2018   |
| <b>Knowledgeable staff</b>                      | Fostering dialogue with the employees aims to create a more personalized contact with the brand. This interactivity attracts people to the experience and increases brand strength.   | Niehm et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Surchi 2011; Russo Spena et al. 2012; De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014  |
| <b>Interactivity and social dimension</b>       | Satisfies consumers' need for socialization. Examples of ways to support social interaction include games to participate in, store design (such as having socializing areas for "hanging out") and use of multimedia tools.                           | Kim et al. 2010; Russo Spena et al. 2012; Pomodoro 2013; Klein et al. 2016, Taube & Warnaby 2017, Lowe et al. 2018   |
| <b>Emphasis on store environment / location</b> | Creative store design and location choices may increase curiosity, interaction between consumers and increase WOM. The environment must be authentic and experiential. Also, virtual presence might be considered in order to reach larger audiences. | Niehm et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Surchi 2011; Russo Spena et al. 2012; Pomodoro 2013; De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014; Picot-Coupey 2014; Klein et al. 2016, Lowe et al. 2018 |

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|                               |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Novelty and uniqueness</b> | Pop-up stores must offer something new, surprising or different in order to spark curiosity and interest in consumers. Examples include sneak previews, promotions and innovative locations.   | Niehm et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Surchi 2011; Pomodoro 2013; De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014; Klein et al. 2016, Lowe et al. 2018 |
| <b>Guerrilla marketing</b>    | Eclectic marketing techniques that go beyond traditional media are used to reach the modern consumers who are accustomed to conventional marketing methods. The aim is to create “buzz”. Examples include e.g. stickering, use of social media networking sites and creating happenings. | Niehm et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Surchi 2011; Pomodoro 2013   |
| <b>Learning aspect</b>        | Pop-up stores allow visitors to gather information, experiment with the brand’s products and learn about its offerings. Ability to test products educates customers about the brand, thus promoting it – thus also fulfilling utilitarian needs.   | Niehm et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Russo Spena 2012; Picot-Coupey 2014  |
| <b>Event orientation</b>      | A pop-up store might resemble an event itself, or it may be connected to one. This may attract more media attention and make the visitors feel more immersed in the experience.  | Niehm et al. 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Surchi 2011; Russo Spena et al. 2012; Pomodoro 2013; De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014             |

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Regarding formation of the experience, store design and location are of great importance as well; they can spark consumers’ curiosity and attract attention. Moreover, it is the design-related factors that ultimately enable the customers to create their own personal in-store experience. An example of this is Louis Vuitton, which created a multi-sensory pop-up store named “Senses in Blossom” in 2011 to promote their new collection (Pomodoro, 2013, 347). Here, the store was divided into five areas, each repre-

senting one of the five senses. The focus was on creating an engaging experience for the customers.

In the example above, Louis Vuitton used the temporary store as a marketing tool to promote their new collection. Promotion of new products or product lines is often an important feature of pop-up stores. To create feeling of exclusivity and even induce “fear of missing out” in consumers, the products featured in pop-up stores are often exclusive or limited edition. The emotional context of the store can act as a facilitator for product purchase, even if the effect is not necessarily immediate (Surchi, 2011, 260). Hence, the focus still remains on brand image enforcement rather than making sales right there and then.

If a pop-up store has marketing-led objectives, it can be worthwhile to combine the store with a pre-existing event to maximize brand awareness and leverage the credibility of the parent brand (Lowe et al. 2018). These could be e.g. fashion weeks or trade shows. A good example is Chanel, who opened a pop-up boutique during Cannes Film festival in 2011 to promote their spring/summer jewelry collection (Pomodoro 2013, 345). Sometimes, the pop-up store itself resembles more an event than a store; in fact, Surchi (2011, 263) even defines temporary stores as non-repeating events.

In order to appear exclusive, pop-up stores always need to offer something new or surprising to the visitors. This can be achieved by e.g. by providing “sneak peeks” of upcoming products or events, by offering limited edition collections (as in the Louis Vuitton example), or setting up the store in an innovative and / or highly visible location (as in the Comme Des Garçons example). Professionals in the industry support that novel, fleeting aspects of pop-up retailing can help in offering engaging experiences contemporary consumers are looking for (Niehm et al. 2007, 5). Excitement and entertainment that the consumers experience contribute to fulfilling their hedonic values (also known as experiential values).

In addition to seeking personal entertainment, consumers also wish to fulfill social needs by visiting temporary stores. It is important that the pop-up store is designed in a way that allows for social interaction between customers to happen. Ways to encourage socializing in a store environment include e.g. special events and theme nights or interactive games customers can compete in (Pomodoro 2013, 348; Klein et al. 2016, 5762). Additionally, use of multimedia tools can establish a connection with other people and places, thus adding in to the customers’ interactive experience (Russo Spena et al. 2012, 35). The social factor also enhances the customers’ likelihood to promote the happening via word-of-mouth (Klein et al. 2016).

In fact, pop-up stores traditionally rely almost entirely on word-of-mouth promotion. Going beyond conventional marketing methods helps in reaching new target groups for the brand. This is important because younger consumers are most aware of the pop-up store concept (Niehm et al. 2007, 17) and they are also more resistant to marketing in

traditional channels. Examples of WOM-inducing guerrilla marketing tools include social media usage, temporary websites, street marketing campaigns and stickering.

Lowe et al. (2018) distinguish four factors generally affecting the success of pop-up stores: strategic alignment, relational touch point, serendipity and surprise and delight. In turn, Taube and Warnaby (2017) found that in the context of luxury fashion, consumer perceptions were most influenced by factors relating to temporality, promotional emphasis and the experiential aspect. Pomodoro (2013) also studied temporary fashion stores, categorizing them into four subtypes with different objectives: concept brand stores, community stores, test-stores and sustainable temporary stores. She proposes that different strategic objectives result in different types of temporary retail activities. In spite of this opening, research on different pop-up store subtypes remains neglected.

To sum it up, pop-up stores can be defined as uniquely designed temporary stores in highly representative locations. They utilize word-of-mouth communication in marketing and aim to encourage social interaction and engage the customers in order to build a memorable experience, ultimately seeking to build brand image and loyalty among consumers. The temporality of the pop-up store makes it quite event-like, but on the other hand, the store's concept is quite reminiscent of experiential brand stores. Figure 2 represents the unique position of pop-up retail in the experiential marketing field.

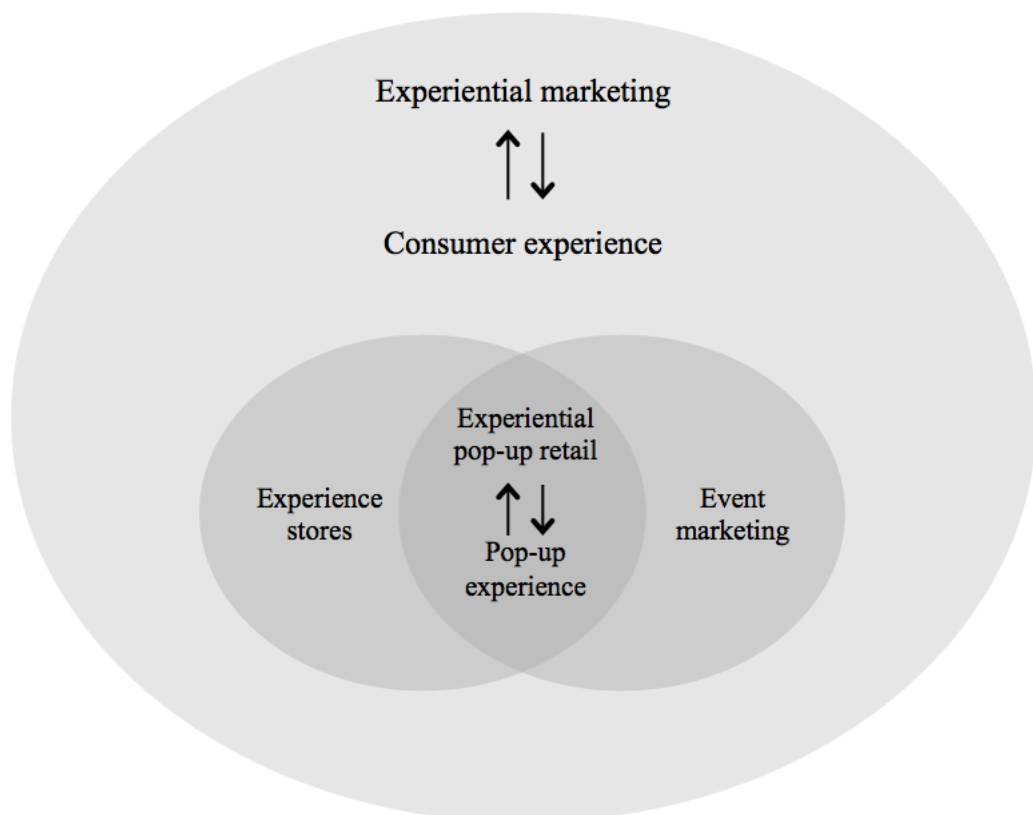


Figure 2 Positioning pop-up retail from consumer and marketer perspectives

Pop-up brand stores clearly encompass elements from both marketing events and experience stores – combining of the two is when the “magic happens”. By designing and managing such experiential pop-up retail activations, marketers may produce spaces where consumers leave their everyday lives for a fleeting moment in time, entering an enchanted, temporary brand space that provides them with an extraordinary experience. This branded experience in the pop-up store context shall be referred to as *pop-up experience*.

This study is particularly interested in what causes a positive or a negative pop-up experience, what are the outcomes of it, and how it can be researched. To achieve this understanding, chapters 3.3 and 3.4 will take a more in-depth look at experience stores and marketing events. It is the fusion of these two fields that will advance thinking in the area of pop-up stores.

### **3.3 Experiential retail: A systematic literature review**

#### **3.3.1 *Defining experiential retail***

Creating extraordinary experiences for the consumers has become one of the main areas of interest in the retail sector (Verhoef et al. 2009, 31). Retail experience is defined as the elements that inhibit or encourage customers during their interaction with the retailer. In the new format retail stores, a successful customer experience can e.g. be involving, absorbing, entertaining or memorable. (Jain & Bagdare 2009). Experiential store design aims at creating a personalized shopping experience for each one of the customers (Goel & Sachdeva, 2015, 293). Retailers’ input is important as they create the suitable setting for the customers’ experience forming process (Wikström 2005, 34), but in the end, the consumers play a key role in creating their own subjective experiences (Carù & Cova 2007; Gentile et al. 2007). According to Frow and Payne (2007), this value co-creation can significantly improve the customer experience.

Bäckström & Johansson (2006, 418) studied specifically in-store experiences, suggesting they consist of personal and situational variables. Personal variables include all the aspects affecting consumers themselves, whereas situational variables have more to do with store environmental factors. Situational variables can further be divided into atmospheric, design and social dimensions (see also Baker et al. 2002).

When it comes to store experience design, the contextual factors are of greater importance (Pullman and Gross 2004, 553; Grewal et al. 2014, 469). Experience design is mainly concerned with designing and implementing these context-related clues instead of focusing on the product or service itself – this is a key difference when comparing



experience design to service design (Carbone & Haeckel 1994, 10). Moreover, experience design takes into account also the emotional nature of customers' reactions (Pullman & Gross 2004, 577). Experiences are composed of both emotional and functional characteristics (Babin et al. 1994; Srivastava & Kaul 2014, 1029).

In practice, in-store experience can be managed through an array of means. For example, company employees can aid in positive customer experience formation by wearing unified costumes or encouraging a play mentality (Carbone & Haeckel 1994, 13; Ballantine et al. 2010, 651). Knowledgeable staff positively affects the shopping experience, so retailers need to provide improved touch points to enable dialogue and engagement between consumers and employees (Srinivasan & Srivastava 2010, 197). High involvement is also found to make consumers more responsive to atmospheric cues (Ballantine et al. 2010, 650).

In addition to fostering a dialogue between staff and customers, a compelling environment for socialization between the store visitors is crucial. Social aspects of stores can help with meeting certain social needs of the consumers (Bäckström & Johansson 2006, 426). Social interaction can also act as a mediator for customer satisfaction via customer experience (Srinivasan & Srivastava (2014, 1034), so designing an environment where socialization can happen is critical.

Creating superior customer experiences allows firms to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Srivastava & Kaul 2014), but it is also noteworthy that customer experience in itself does not bring direct value to the retailer. Instead, it evokes emotions and motivational stimuli that can later turn into satisfaction and purchase intentions. Possible consequences from good quality experience include loyalty, word-of-mouth and customer satisfaction (Klaus and Maklan 2012, 5). Considering the importance of experiences, it is necessary that today's managers understand how to create and manage the customer experience in order to achieve the desired marketing objectives. A pleasant store atmosphere provides significant hedonic utility to the customers (Ailawadi & Keller 2004, 333), so managing in-store cues is the key to success in creating a superb experience for the customers. Moreover, an appealing store atmosphere can also help the brand differentiate from its competitors.

Generally, researchers seem to agree that it is particularly the environmental factors – so called environmental *cues* or *clues* – that are one of the key factors to be considered when creating and managing experiences. Providing right kinds of cues is crucial in order to create a desired impression for the customers (Pine & Gilmore 1998, 103). When planning experiences, products, services and the store environment should be constituted in a consistent manner (Frow & Payne 2007, 99; Gentile et al. 2007, 405). Making sure that all sensory stimuli are congruent is generally advisable – although if managed skillfully, incongruity can in some cases act as a stimulator for more surprising and unique experiences (Spence et al. 2014, 480). Even though customer experience

is a complex construct, customers themselves rarely recognize these structures but instead, perceive experiences as unitary feelings (Gentile et al. 2007, 398).

### 3.3.2 *Experiential cues*

Retail atmospherics refer to anything that has an impact on the consumers' in-store environment, e.g. lighting, staff, or music (Grewal et al. 2014, 469). Atmospherics depend on both the physical and the social environment of the store (Foxall et al. 1998, 203). Research on atmospherics has been present in marketing literature since 1970's<sup>2</sup>, and with the growth of experiential marketing, it remains a topical issue in marketing research still today. In fact, atmospherics is receiving growing amounts of attention from retailers as physical environment is becoming more and more significant in the pursuit of attracting customers to stores (Bäckström & Johansson 2006, 421). In order to keep up with the competition in the retail market, companies need to design compelling, experiential environments that help lure customers in.

Atmospherics can be further divided into specific experiential cues (also known as environmental cues or experience clues), i.e. the individual factors affecting the store environment. Together, all the experience clues constitute the total experience of the customer (Berry et al. 2002, 86). There are various categorizations of experiential cues in the experiential marketing literature. Turley and Milliman (2000) divide atmospheric cues into five different kinds of variables; external, general interior, design, point-of-purchase and human, seeking to provide a classification that is utilizable for managers. Puccinelli et al. (2009, 24) suggest that aforementioned external, internal and point-of-purchase values could all be considered as a part of "design" variable. Ballantine et al. (2010, 642, 645) challenge Turley and Milliman's detailed view, proposing that a more holistic perspective is needed since customers do not experience the atmospheric variables in isolation from one another. The authors introduce two categories: attractive stimuli (exciting, approach-behavior inducing cues) and facilitating stimuli (the necessary cues that allow engagement to happen). Moreover, they pose that attractive stimuli are crucial components in hedonic experience creation, which is the primary focus of experiential marketing. Carbone and Haeckel (1994) also divide experiential cues into two, stating that customer experiences can be performance or context-based. Performance-based cues are created by the function of the product, answering more utilitarian

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<sup>2</sup> First, Kotler (1973) introduced the concept of atmospherics in his study in 1973, defining the term as conscious effort to design buying spaces so that they create certain emotional responses in the customers. In 1974, Mehrabian and Russell developed a pleasure-arousal-dominance (P-A-D) model to explain how shoppers' react to their environment, and how that influences their behavior.

needs of the consumers. Context-based cues on the other hand are not related to performance at all, but instead concern more affective factors. Contextual cues can be further divided into mechanics cues, generated by things, and humanics cues, emanating from people. Combining humanics with mechanics seems to result in the most effective outcome.

Baker et al. (2002) draw from previous research and propose a division of store environment cues into design, social and ambient. Design cues are perhaps the most researched, including e.g. external and store interior factors. Ambient cues on the other hand are usually non-visual and processed more on subconscious level. Examples of ambient cues include music and scents. Social cues have to do with people; e.g. employees or store crowdedness. Later on, other customer experience researchers have used a similar division into design, social and ambient cues (see Bäckström & Johansson 2006, Puccinelli et al. 2009). Marketing research sometimes also approaches design and ambient cues together (Baker et al. 2002, 121). Figure 3 attempts to summarize the existing views and capture the different levels and categories of experiential cues in the hopes of making the various terms more understandable. Emphasis is put on affective factors, as they are more significant for experiential stores.

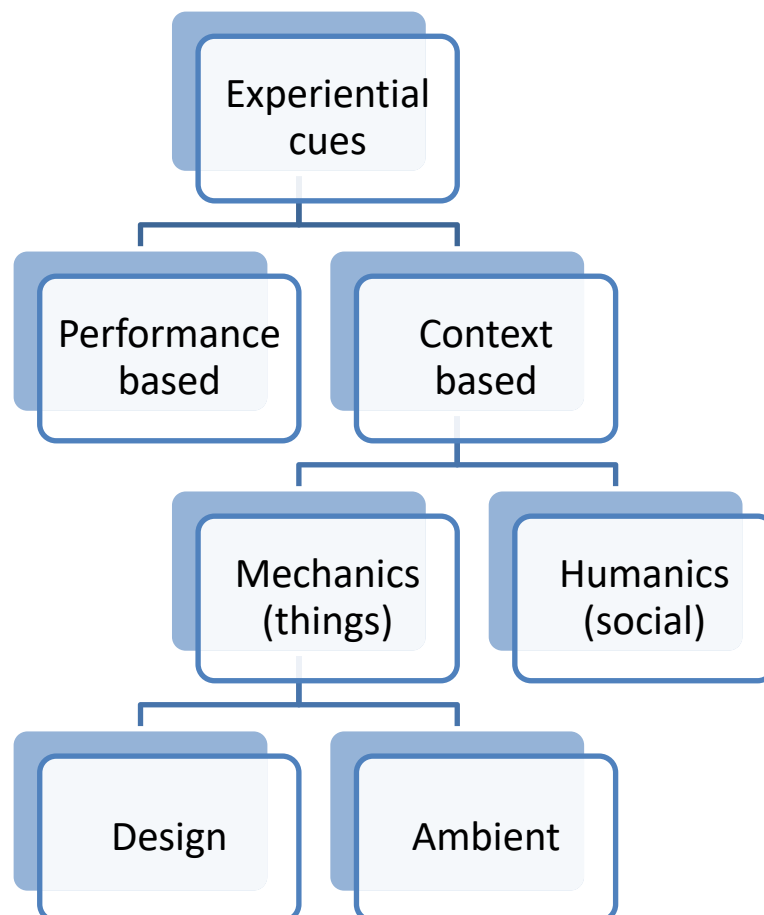


Figure 3 Categorization of experiential cues

Summarizing the existing views, researchers widely suggest that environmental and social factors are of great importance when creating customer experiences. Another perspective for categorization appears to be making a difference between more utilitarian and more hedonic aspects. When designing experiential stores, it may be a good idea to focus more on the hedonic facets; studies suggest that while utilitarian consumers are content in hedonic environments, hedonic consumers feel strong negative emotions in highly utilitarian environments (Ballantine et al. 2010, 651). That being said, entirely neglecting the utilitarian needs of the customers is risky and may lead to the store's failure (Carú & Cova 2007, 170).

It is widely recognized that good experience design is multisensory and utilizes all the elements of the environmental context to support the chosen vision and theme (Pullman & Gross 2004, 557). Higher involvement in the shopping environment is found to increase the consumers' responsiveness to environmental cues (Ballantine et al. 2010, 650). Overall, the most desirable outcome is a holistic experience that combines cues from multiple dimensions. Rich experiences and a strong in-store personality help retailers strengthen their brand equity (Ailawadi & Keller 2004, 333). If a firm succeeds to provide an appropriate context for experiences to happen, it will also generate experiential value for its customers.

### **3.3.3 *Experience store research***

While all kinds of stores can utilize experiential marketing practices, there are stores that are specifically dedicated to providing the customers with experiences. Experience stores have been around since 1970's (Nobbs et al. 2012, 920), but only recently have they started to gain ground in academic research. Kozinets et al. (2002) can be seen as pioneers for researching the shift towards experience economy in retail outlets.

Despite the growth of the phenomenon, marketing research is still lacking a universal terminology on experience stores. This presents challenges for understanding, analyzing and reviewing it. For instance, Jones et al. (2010) use the terms "experience store", "concept store" and "flagship store" interchangeably, whereas Kozinets et al. (2002) even differentiate multiple kinds of flagship stores. This study will use a similar approach as Jones et al. did. Since the ultimate purpose of this paper is not to produce a typology for flagship store research but to focus on pop-up stores in the context of experiential marketing, an in-depth analysis on different experience store subtypes is not presented here. Table 5 presents previous studies on experience stores relevant for this study.

Table 5 Prior research on experience stores

| <b>Author(s)</b>                   | <b>Year</b> | <b>Article</b>  | <b>Journal</b>  | <b>Key findings</b>  |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Kozinets et al.</b>             | 2002        | Themed flagship brand stores in the new millennium: theory, practice, prospects                 | Journal of Retailing                                      | Flagship stores have several unique entertainment features and narratives that vary significantly from traditional retail stores.                                |
| <b>Ponsonby-McCabe &amp; Boyle</b> | 2006        | Understanding brands as experiential spaces: axiological implications for marketing strategists | Journal of Strategic Marketing                            | Brandscape place experiences can enhance customers' commitment and loyalty.  |
| <b>Borghini et al.</b>             | 2009        | Why are themed brandstores so powerful? Retail brand ideology at American Girl Place            | Journal of Retailing                                      | Themed brand stores manifest brand ideology throughout different areas within the store.   |
| <b>Jones et al.</b>                | 2010        | Retail experience stores: experiencing the brand at first hand                                  | Marketing Intelligence & Planning                         | Experience stores are a small yet important addition to retail market and they have a significant role in developing relationships between consumers and brands. |
| <b>Moore et al.</b>                | 2010        | Flagship stores as a market entry method: the perspective of luxury fashion retailing           | European Journal of Marketing                             | Identifying key characteristics for fashion flagship stores in an international context.   |
| <b>Nobbs et al.</b>                | 2012        | The flagship format within the luxury fashion market  | International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management | Identifying key characteristics of luxury flagship stores.   |

|                            |      |   |   |   |
|----------------------------|------|---|---|---|
| <b>Dolbec &amp; Chebat</b> | 2013 | The impact of a flagship vs. a brand store on brand attitude, brand attachment and brand equity   | Journal of Retailing                                      | Store image has an impact on brand attitude, brand attachment and brand equity. Store type moderates the effect between store image and brand experience. |
| <b>Manlow &amp; Nobbs</b>  | 2013 | Form and function of luxury flagships. An international exploratory study of the meaning of the flagship store for managers and customers | Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management               | Luxury flagship is a branding tool whose defining features include size, location and product range.  |
| <b>Arrigo</b>              | 2015 | The role of the flagship store location in luxury branding. An international exploratory study  | International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management | Location-based co-branding strategy for flagship stores may help improve luxury brand positioning.  |
| <b>Nierobisch et al.</b>   | 2017 | Flagship stores for FMCG national brands: Do they improve brand cognitions and create favorable consumer reactions?                       | Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services                | Flagship stores can create word-of-mouth intentions through brand experience, brand equity and brand attachment, although not always favorable ones.      |

Flagship stores can be differentiated from conventional brand stores by the main objective: a flagship store is operated with the focus on reinforcing the brand as opposed to making sales. They generally provide more experiential offerings – so called “anchoring points” – that convey the brand’s ideology (Dolbec and Chebat 2013, 460–461). Like brand stores, flagship stores usually carry a single brand and are owned by the brand’s manufacturer (Kozinets et al. 2002). They can blend concepts from retailing, advertising and entertainment. In fact, according to Kozinets et al. (2002), entertainment and brand experience become so intertwined in the themed flagship store environment that they become indistinguishable with one another.

Borghini et al. (2009) suggest that retailing in themed brand store environments is an ideological affair; the ideology of the brand is manifested through a variety of different areas within the store. They identified ways how ideological commitment could be en-

acted on brand experience level in retail context, finding that antecedents for commitment include enhancement of one's identity. Also Ponsonby-McCabe and Boyle (2006, 180) found that consumers feel more positive consumption experiences if the experience reflects their identity. In the end, the goal of a flagship store is to provide a space for consumers in which to live holistic brand experiences (Arrigo 2015, 522). Table 6 will elaborate on the objectives of experience stores more specifically.

Table 6 Experience store objectives (in relation to pop-up stores)

| <b>Objective</b>                | <b>Comments</b>   | <b>Exemplary studies</b>  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Creating brand awareness</b> | The difference between regular and experiential brand stores is that experience stores are generally focused mainly on reinforcing the brand. | Kozinets et al. 2002, Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle 2006, Dolbec & Chebat 2013, Arrigo 2015 |
| <b>Engaging customers</b>       | Experience stores seek to make consumers immersed in the branded hyperreality and allow them to communicate with the brand.                   | Kozinets et al. 2002, Borghini et al. 2009, Jones et al. 2010                         |
| <b>Market research</b>          | Experiential flagship stores can be used as a (foreign) market entry method or a "blueprint" for other stores.                                | Moore et al. 2010, Manlow & Nobbs 2013  |

The experience store can answer both the hedonic and the utilitarian goals of the consumer. On one hand, experience stores allow consumers to test and try products before making the purchase decision. On the other hand, they also allow consumers to communicate with the merchandise, possibly developing an emotional bond with the brand. (Jones et al. 2010, 242). Thus, experience stores can also be viewed as unique *brandscape*<sup>3</sup>. The term *brandscape* is used to describe a place that is dedicated to providing consumers with opportunities to have a brand-related experience and create an idyllic utopia for them (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle 2006, 183).

<sup>3</sup> For a more comprehensive take on the *brandscape* concept, see Sherry (1998).

Flagship stores can also be used as a foreign market entry method. The most distinguishing factor this form of market entry is that it is essentially used within the most important foreign markets (Moore et al. 2010). However, Manlow and Nobbs (2013, 59–60) found that the objective of luxury flagship store quite seldom involves market entry. Instead, strategic purposes for such stores more often include marketing communications, being a conduit for market relations and being a blueprint for other stores.

While a flagship store can bring a variety of positive outcomes for brands, it is always not necessary or even sensible to establish a store of this kind. Flagship store may not be the best option when speed, convenience, price and brand choice are the main issues. One of the most notable downsides of the experience store is the high cost of running the store. Additionally, it takes commitment from human resources. (Kozinets et al. 2002, 27). Extensive training of the store personnel is a key trait of experience stores: it enables the staff to convey the brand ideology (Kozinets et al. 2002, Borghini et al. 2009). The more knowledgeable the personnel are, the more likely it is that components of consumer brand experience will be activated (Nierobisch et al. 2017, 120). Table 7 will portray more of the typical characteristics of experience stores.



Table 7 Experience store characteristics (in relation to pop-up stores)

| <b>Characteristic</b>                         | <b>Comments</b>   | <b>Exemplary studies</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Promotion of specific brand</b>            | Generally, flagship stores focus around a single brand, although these days exceptions do exist.  | Kozinets et al. 2002, Dolbec & Chebat 2013                              |
| <b>Promotion of specific products</b>         | Experience stores may focus on specific or exclusive products or product ranges, which leads consumers to think the brand serves their needs.                           | Nobbs et al. 2012, Manlow & Nobbs 2013                                  |
| <b>Emphasis on store environment/location</b> | Flagship stores are generally notably large, and the store atmospherics are an important experience antecedent. Smart location choice can lead to co-branding benefits. | Kozinets et al. 2002, Moore et al. 2010, Nobbs et al. 2012, Arrigo 2015 |
| <b>Interactivity and social dimension</b>     | Experience stores seek to form a social environment instead of just displaying merchandise.   | Jones et al. 2010, Manlow & Nobbs 2013                                  |
| <b>Knowledgeable staff</b>                    | Knowledgeable staff helps activate consumer brand experiences.  | Kozinets et al 2002, Borghini et al 2009, Nierobisch et al. 2017        |
| <b>Learning aspect</b>                        | Experience stores provide a chance to learn about specific products and “try before you buy”.   | Jones et al. 2010   |

Moore et al. (2010) studied luxury fashion flagship stores, finding out that crucial characteristics to consider include store location and store design. Also Arrigo (2015) highlighted the location aspect in her study, finding out that when many experience stores exist within the same area, they may develop a “luxury sense of place”; in other words, the stores can improve their brand positioning through a co-branding strategy. Manlow and Nobbs (2013) in turn listed location, size and product range as the defining features of luxury flagship stores.

Traditionally, flagship stores have been associated with luxury or fashion brands (see e.g. Dolbec & Chebat 2013, Nobbs et al. 2012, Manlow & Nobbs 2013), but they can be useful in e.g. FMCG sector as well (Nierobisch et al. 2017). According to Nierobisch et al. (2017, 125), flagship stores can drive brand experiences, but sometimes they only reinforce them. The authors pose that in-store attractions, entertainment and information that lack novelty may prevent the store-fueled brand experience from happening. Hence, the effectiveness of experience stores should be studied between categories and industries.

Another important feature of experience stores is the interactional aspect. Interpersonal facets of shopping include communicating with salespeople and spending time with significant others. Further, shopping can be seen as a way for stores to engage with consumers. (Manlow & Nobbs 2013, 52). In experience stores, the main focus is on utilizing the space to create a social environment instead of devoting most space to the storage and display of the merchandise. Above all else, experience stores seek to encourage consumers to develop an emotional bond with the brand. (Jones et al. 2010, 242).

### **3.4 Event marketing: A systematic literature review**

#### **3.4.1 *Defining event marketing***

Bladen et al. (2012, 3) define events as purposive, temporary gatherings that are generally unique displays of ritual. Getz (2007, 18) additionally notes that events are temporal, have a beginning and an end, and are usually confined to specific places. Hoyle (2002, 2) approaches the purpose of event marketing through three E's: entertainment, excitement and enterprise.

Event marketing can be used as a tool for strategic marketing communication (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013). In brand marketing literature, events are usually seen as a way to build brand equity – to create the added value for enhancing a brand's product (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013, 257). Events have the capability of creating brand *hyperrealities* and turning them into real-lived multisensory experiences for consumers. A hyperreality refers to consumption sites that are “more real than real” – in other words, spaces where the distinction between fantasy and reality is blurred for a moment (Foxall et al. 1998, 242). The main difference between event marketing and classic marketing communications is the way event marketing encourages consumers to be actively immersed in the brand hyperreality. Consumers are often highly motivated to participate in these kinds of hyperrealities voluntarily, despite

knowing that the events are specifically planned to convey brand messages to them. (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, 314).

Traditionally, event studies have been often impact-related and focused heavily on economics and tourism, neglecting social and cultural aspects. There has been much less research on branding-specific events. (Getz 2007, 282, 379). Events present themselves in numerous forms from fundraisers to trade shows and product launches to exhibitions, which creates challenges for constructing a coherent school of thought on the topic (Wood 2009, 249; Crowther & Donlan 2011, 1447). According to Zarantonello and Schmitt (2013, 257), also pop-up stores have recently been developed under the umbrella of "unconventional communication". These less traditional, newer event types rely heavily of word-of-mouth marketing, media coverage and creativity to reach their audience. Recentness of the subject, however, poses challenges for its measurement.

In order to better research this complex field of study, events can be narrowed down to categories that are more specific. One possible way to evaluate events is through dividing them into pre-, concurrent and post-stages (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006). Crowther (2011) calls this the *experience journey*. Pre- and post-stages of the event manifest themselves as attendee anticipation and reflection (Crowther 2011, 74). Also Hoyle et al. (2002) recognize the need for pre- and post-event research, stating that both quantitative and qualitative approaches can be used for research. Pre- and post-event stages are particularly important in evaluation cases when an event's impact and outcomes are under review (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013).

In addition to short-term impact, experiential events have the potential to build long-term changes in attitudes as well. Therefore, evaluation and measurement are critical parts of successful event management, even though it is rarely simple as the event outcomes are related to individual and subjective experiences. (Wood 2009, 249–250). When it comes to event studies, there should be a premise of treating event experiences as both personal and social constructs (Getz 2007).

To determine the success of a special event, marketers have to have its goals carefully defined (Hoyle 2002, 167). A significant issue with the evaluation of experiential marketing events is the need to measure a consumer's subconscious feelings towards a brand (Wood 2009, 259). For instance, the renowned strategic experiential modules (SEM) model by Schmitt (1999) has been tested for validity and used for a variety of experiential marketing areas, including events; however, this quantitative tool fails to measure factors such as emotional attachment or behavioral changes (Wood 2009, 258). According to Bladen et al. (2012, 373), events can be evaluated from three perspectives: management, attendees and impacts. The authors propose that possible qualitative approaches to event evaluation are e.g. interviews, event-related social media analyses and communicational analyses, while quantitative approaches include statistics or impact analyses.

Wood (2009, 253) notes that according to the integrated marketing communication theory, measurement of a single component is meaningless, as the effect of using a variety of integrated communication tools is of synergistic nature. However, she recognizes the need to be able to show a return on investment on specific event marketing activities, and therefore calls for attempts to develop credible methods for event evaluation. As mentioned earlier, since research on brand-related marketing events is extremely scarce, it may be worthwhile to utilize concepts from experiential marketing research also in event studies. Events are living albeit temporary happenings, which require a multi-faceted approach in order to ensure a successful outcome (Hoyle 2002, 191).

It is important to understand that the form and function of an event do not determine its outcomes, for each attendee always creates their own personal event experience within the event (Getz 2007, 23). Hence, a constructive event strategy should always include treating consumers as value co-creators (Crowther & Donlan 2011, 1456). Relationships that result in co-produced value must be built on trust and an emotional connection between the consumer and the brand (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, 327). After all, as discussed in earlier chapters, firms cannot create experiences; they can only provide a favorable environment for experiences to be formed.

Experiences are an important part of event marketing; even though events can occur in many different forms, all of them are always experiences for the attendees (Bladen et al. 2012). Kotler (2003, 576) included the experiential approach in his view on events, defining experiential marketing events as occurrences that are designed to communicate particular messages to their target audiences. Wood (2009, 248) notes that Kotler's definition is overly broad, and that while all events could be seen as "marketing events", a more specific definition is needed in order to usefully develop the existing event marketing theory. She suggests limiting the "marketing event" definition to events that are specifically created for marketing purposes, excluding events that either a) exist for another purpose but are used later for marketing (such as sponsorship activities) or b) are not primarily meant for marketing at all (such as community festivals). Crowther and Donlan (2011, 1447) are somewhat critical towards Wood's approach, claiming that it disregards events with secondary marketing purposes. On the other hand, Drenger et al. (2008) also define marketing events as events hosted by the brand itself, highlighting the focus on brand, product or company. The authors further call for clear distinction between marketing events and event sponsorship.

This study will follow the approach proposed by Wood. The main focus of this paper is to study pop-up brand stores that are primarily used for marketing purposes. Therefore, in order to find comparable findings, it was deemed necessary for this study to go along the road mapped by Wood and focus on marketing events with specifically marketing-related objectives.

### **3.4.2 Marketing event research**

Experiential event marketing is growing steadily today. Reasons for the growth lie in changes in the market (Drengner et al. 2008, 139). These include overuse of traditional media and the consumers' demand for novel experiences (Wood 2009, 252). Marketing events can help brands stand out from conventional marketing communication methods in the saturated market.

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, event studies have grown especially within the areas of sponsorship and sports marketing, but less within communications (Wood 2009, 248). Marketing events are organized by the brand itself and feature the active participation of the attendees, so they have to be clearly distinguished from sponsorship activities. Whereas marketing events immerse consumers in brand hyperrealities, messages from event sponsors usually fail to get full attention from the event participants. (Drengner et al. 2008, 138).

While there has not been too much academic research on the specific area of event marketing directly, work undertaken in other fields (e.g. experiential marketing) can be utilized in developing unique models and concepts within its growing area (Wood 2009, 247–248). Paradigms that relate to event marketing include integrated marketing communications, service-dominant logic, relationship communication and relationship marketing (Crowther 2011, 69).

Even though research on marketing events is scarce and requires more attention in the future, some notable contributions to the subject have already been made. Table 8 summarizes previous studies on marketing events to date.

Table 8 Prior research on marketing events

| <b>Author(s)</b>                  | <b>Year</b> | <b>Article</b>  | <b>Journal</b>   | <b>Key findings</b>   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Whelan &amp; Wohlfeil</b>      | 2006        | Communicating brands through engagement with 'lived' experiences  | Brand Management                                       | Event marketing facilitates customer engagement with the brand through brand experience and dialogue.   |
| <b>Drengner et al.</b>            | 2008        | Does flow influence the brand image in event marketing?   | Journal of Advertising Research                        | Flow can influence emotions, which have an effect on event image and furthermore brand image.   |
| <b>Wood</b>                       | 2009        | Evaluating event marketing: experience or outcome?  | Journal of Promotion Management                        | Current event measurement techniques are not comprehensive enough. Events need to be evaluated also on consumer experience and consumer response levels.                                |
| <b>Crowther</b>                   | 2011        | Marketing event outcomes: from tactical to strategic  | International Journal of Event and Festival Management | Demonstrating event life cycle through a marketing space framework. Central to the model is that marketing events need to be integrated to strategy and customer experience management. |
| <b>Crowther &amp; Donlan</b>      | 2011        | Value-creation space: The role of events in a service-dominant marketing paradigm                         | Journal of Marketing Management                        | Conceptualizing the role of events within the service-dominant logic paradigm. Events have potential for not only value creation but also value destruction.                            |
| <b>Zarantonello &amp; Schmitt</b> | 2013        | The impact of event marketing on brand equity: The mediating roles of brand experience and brand attitude | International Journal of Advertising                   | Brand experience is an antecedent for brand attitude and it mediates the relationship between pre- and post-event brand equity.   |

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|                     |      |  |                                 |  |
|---------------------|------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Tafesse</b>      | 2016 | Conceptualization of brand experience in an event marketing context      | Journal of Promotion Management | Four factors enable brand experience in an event context: multisensory stimulation, bodily performance, social interaction and discovery/learning.   |
| <b>Addis et al.</b> | 2018 | Facing contradictory emotions in event marketing: leveraging on surprise | Journal of Consumer Marketing   | Purchase intention and brand attitude are outcomes of positive emotions induced by the event. Events can also elicit negative emotions, but adding an element of surprise may help in reducing them. |

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Marketing events consist of a bunch of components and are further enhanced through integration with other communicational tools. Event marketing can facilitate dialogue and interaction between the participants both internally and externally, potentially resulting in stronger attachment and commitment to a shared brand vision. (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, 327). In brand management literature, marketing events are usually viewed as a way to build brand equity (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013).

Interestingly, it seems that different kind of events can impact the brand equity differently. Zarantonello and Schmitt (2013) studied the role of brand experience and brand attitude in the formation of brand equity in event contexts. They found that brand attitude only mediates the relationship between pre- and post-event brand equity for certain kinds of events. For instance, pop-up shops did not appear to influence brand attitude at all. However, the authors found that as for pop-up stores, brand experience contributed to brand equity more than in cases of trade shows or street events. This leads us to the conclusion that brand experience is indeed a relevant and central construct for pop-up store research.

Experience is an important dimension of all kinds of marketing events – so much so that scholars sometimes refer to event marketing as experiential marketing (Tafesse 2016, 37). Experience design practices are applicable to event design as well, enabling the event space to be customized for the desired outcomes. An innovative event experience design can lead to an array of positive outcomes, such as social connections and feeling of enjoyment. (Crowther & Donlan 2011, 1450, 1456).

Brand experience in an event context can be enhanced through engineering the experiential cues appropriately (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013, 273). To ensure this, the experiential environment should meet the following criteria:

- Provide sensorial stimulation
- Trigger positive emotions
- Stimulate consumers' intellect
- Allow consumers to interact with other people

However, no matter how well the tangible and intangible atmospheric elements are designed, customer experience is not fully controllable by the brand due to social nature of events (Addis et al. 2018, 190). Brand experiences are only able to arise when the marketer facilitates experiential cues that consumers actively then interact with (Tafesse 2016, 46). The risk, though, is that the consumer may experience also negative emotions that will impact their perception on the brand negatively (Crowther 2011, Addis et al. 2018).

Also Crowther and Donlan (2011) highlight the consumers' active role as value co-creators, referring to event settings as "agoras" – places where potential of the resources can be actualized. The active role of consumers continues to the post-event stage, too: creating WOM or "buzz" about the brand can often be one of the primary goals of an experiential marketing event (Wood 2009, 258).

Overall, objectives of event marketing can be various, ranging from building awareness to strengthening loyalty towards the brand. (Wood 2009, 253). An overview on the goals of event marketing can be seen in Table 9.



Table 9 Marketing event objectives (in relation to pop-up stores)

| <b>Objective</b>                | <b>Comments</b>  | <b>Exemplary studies</b>   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Increasing word-of-mouth</b> | Positive word-of-mouth can influence purchase intentions and enforce the effects of communication strategies.  | Drengner et al. 2008, Wood 2009, Crowther 2011                     |
| <b>Creating brand awareness</b> | Event marketing can lead to brand awareness and further help companies achieve a bunch of brand-related outcomes in the end, such as strengthened brand equity or brand loyalty.                               | Wood 2009, Crowther 2011, Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013              |
| <b>Engaging customers</b>       | Events offer consumers chances for interaction not only with one other, but also with the brand. Engagement can lead to higher loyalty. Additionally, elicited consumer emotions can impact brand perceptions. | Wood 2009, Crowther & Donlan 2011, Tafesse 2016, Addis et al. 2018 |

The key distinctive traits of marketing events are that they are organized by the brand itself and aim to strengthen the brand in some way. Additionally, they involve the participants' active role, offering them opportunities for social interaction. (Drengner et al. 2008). The main benefits of event marketing seem to be related to the emotional setting through which the company's brand message is delivered: the event "becomes" the brand and represents its values in an interactive, physical form (Wood 2009, 263). This means that the consumers get to experience the brand on a behavioral level (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, 322).

Events are characterized by high interactivity, which allows the brand to enhance emotional connections with the consumers (Crowther 2011, 72) and communicate even detailed product information (Drengner et al. 2008, 139). Furthermore, the experiential and interactive nature of events allows consumers to sample aspects of the brand's value proposition. Engaging with prospective customers can move them up the loyalty ladder. (Crowther 2011, 78). The degree of consumers' active participation depends on the nature of the event and the way in which the event is designed (Crowther & Donlan 2011, 1456).

As noted earlier, events can be viewed as a tool for experiential marketing communications due to their features and goals. As marketing events are staged by the brand itself, it can help in minimizing the number of competing messages (Drengner et al. 2008, 139). According to Whelan and Wohlfeil (2006, 316), the communicative capabilities of event marketing are constituted of four features: experience orientation, interactivity, self-initiation and dramaturgy. These characteristics differentiate marketing events from e.g. event sponsorship. The authors also note that in comparison to traditional marketing communication strategies, key distinguishing features of event marketing are inclusion and focus on the event experience itself.

Consistent with other forms of experiential marketing communication, events should be experiential, relational, interactive and targeted (Crowther 2011, 71). In line with this notion, Tafesse (2016, 37) characterizes events by experiential richness, novelty, high audience involvement and temporal transiency. Moreover, he adds that consequently, brand experience conceptualizations in marketing event context should then reflect these characteristics. Table 10 summarizes the typical characteristics of marketing events.

Table 10 Marketing event characteristics (in relation to pop-up stores)

| <b>Characteristic</b>                     | <b>Comments</b>   | <b>Exemplary studies</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Temporality</b>                        | Events happen for a fixed period of time and have a beginning and an end. Temporality can cause a “fear of missing out” in potential attendees, motivating them to participate. | Wood 2009, Tafesse 2016   |
| <b>Promotion of a specific brand</b>      | Marketing events are staged by the brand itself, which differentiates them from e.g. sponsorship activities.  | Drengner et al. 2008, Wood 2009   |
| <b>Interactivity and social dimension</b> | Events provide an interactive platform where consumers act as co-creators of experiences.   | Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, Wood 2009, Crowther 2011, Crowther & Donlan 2011, Tafesse 2016, Addis et al. 2018 |
| <b>Novelty and uniqueness</b>             | Events providing novelty and surprise may help create flow state experiences and higher satisfaction among consumers.   | Wood 2009, Tafesse 2016   |
| <b>Learning aspect</b>                    | In an event context, learning can happen through e.g. demonstrations or presentations. Learning can lead to sense of novelty.   | Crowther 2011, Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013, Tafesse 2016  |

Wood (2009, 251) has identified specific event attributes – the “7I’s of event experience” – which can enhance the event experience, making the event an effective experiential marketing tool:

- Involvement
- Interaction
- Immersion
- Intensity
- Individuality
- Innovation
- Integrity

Looking at the seven I's, it is clear that the experiential aspect is strongly present in marketing events. In fact, the more marketing events are capable of generating intense brand experiences, the higher their effect on brand equity will be (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013, 273). In the end, the event experience has to always be extraordinary in order to have an effect.

Novelty is an important precursor of extraordinary experiences. Novelty can be evoked through activations of discovery and learning. (Tafesse 2016, 44). When a consumer learns to think about a topic in a different and new way, it can stimulate their intellect and thus contribute towards a more positive brand experience (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013). Novelty can also create a feeling of surprise for the event attendees. According to Addis et al. (2018, 186), positive surprises can lead to higher levels of satisfaction. They pose that surprise causes three kinds of reactions in consumers:

- Expressing a feeling of surprise
- Interrupting ongoing activities
- Focusing attention on the event

Judging by this notion, events with an element of surprise can be a great way to get the consumers' attention in the saturated market. Furthermore, surprise can diminish the impact of negative feelings (such as embarrassment) on brand equity (Addis et al. 2018, 189).

Perhaps one of the most noticeable traits of events is their temporality, which indeed separates them from more conventional marketing methods. Temporal transiency can elicit a sense of urgency in consumers and motivate them to become involved in the event as early as possible (Tafesse 2016, 37). Whereas traditional marketing communication strategies tend to leave consumers as passive recipients for brand messages, event marketing allows them to actually experience the brand by becoming a part of its hyper-reality (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, 316–317). High audience involvement leads to consumers thinking of the event as less intrusive, which further motivates them to interact with the brand (Tafesse 2016, 36).

Immersion in the branded environment may in some cases result in a flow state. Flow experience has an effect on emotions, which play a significant role in the formation of event image. Further, event image is known to affect the brand image. (Drengner et al. 2008, 144). Events may, however, elicit also negative emotions (Addis et al. 2018). As Crowther and Donlan (2011) note: events have the potential for not only value co-creation but also value co-destruction. If a brand manages to stage a suitable environment for positive experiences to happen, it can have a positive impact on the brand.

## **4 EXPERIENTIAL POP-UP RETAILING AND THE CONSUMER POP-UP EXPERIENCE: A SYNTHESIS AND A PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK**

### **4.1 Conceptualizing the pop-up experience**

As learned from the previous chapter, pop-up stores are characterized by experiential orientation, temporary nature and novel approaches to location, store environment and marketing. These characteristics need to be taken into account when studying experiences within this context. Pop-up stores share most of their typical characteristics with two better-known concepts: experience stores and marketing events. Hence, views from both areas should be accommodated into the planning of temporary retail activities (Taube & Warnaby 2017, 386). To sum up the findings on experience stores and marketing events, it can be said that both...

- Can be seen as marketing communication tools
- Are brand-related hyperrealities
- Are “stages” where consumers co-create experiences with the brand
- Have a strong emphasis on interactivity and social dimension
- Have a strong emphasis on environment and location

Experience stores are more than just brick-and-mortar shopping spaces, and marketing events are more than gatherings of people. The common thing they share is focus on the host brand. Both can be viewed as experiential marketing tools (Wood 2009, Nierobisch et al. 2017) so it is important to separate them from traditional sales channels and push-type advertising. Instead of using traditional marketing methods, experience stores and marketing events try to attract consumers by providing them with engaging experiences. In order to fully immerse consumers, experiential marketers seek to create branded hyperrealities – spaces where the distinction between reality and fantasy is blurred for a moment (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle 2006, Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006). Immersion in the branded environment could even lead to flowstate experiences (Drengner et al. 2008).

Social aspects and interactivity are prominently present in these types of experiential environments as well. The environments allow consumers to engage with not only each other but also the brand, which can in the end lead to favorable brand-related outcomes (Crowther 2011, Manlow & Nobbs 2013). The downside to the social emphasis, however, is that managing environmental cues in an interactive setting can be challenging (Crowther 2011, 75).

Another highlighted feature of the studied concepts is unique location. In the context of flagships, co-locating the flagship store with a pre-existing store is found to support both of them, enabling them to feed off one another (Nobbs et al. 2012, 931; Arrigo 2015). Similarly, Lowe et al. (2018) propose that co-aligning marketing-led activations with pre-existing events can aid in creating a more tangible experience for the consumers. Judging by prior research, it may be a good idea to combine a pop-up store with a pre-existing store or an event.

As for marketing events, the short lifespan is perhaps their most distinguishing feature. This is something they share with pop-up stores. The temporal transiency and strong interactivity heighten the uniqueness of the pop-up experience compared to flagship store brand experiences (Pomodoro 2013, 347). Additionally, limited time and uniqueness motivate consumers to visit the happening through anxiety of exclusion and missing out (Tafesse 2016, 36; Lowe et al. 2018, 75).

Comparing the discoveries on experience stores and marketing events to the pop-up store literature review earlier, we can conclude that the findings match pop-up stores as well. While a pop-up store is not clearly an event or a flagship store, it certainly comprises features from both of them, forming a unique concept of its own.

Even though experiential stores are focused on staging extraordinary experiences for the consumers, it is important to remember that the experience itself is not ever the ultimate goal (see e.g. Brakus et al. 2009, Klaus & Maklan 2012). From both consumer and marketing practitioner perspectives, the truly interesting thing is what the experience *leads to*; i.e. what are the outcomes of a positive (or a negative) pop-up experience. Additionally, the antecedents of the pop-up experience should be understood in order to successfully create a stage for positive experiences to happen. Indeed, more research on experience antecedents and outcomes has been called for (Brakus et al. 2009, 66). To answer the need and illustrate a holistic approach, Figure 4 presents a framework of the pop-up experience.

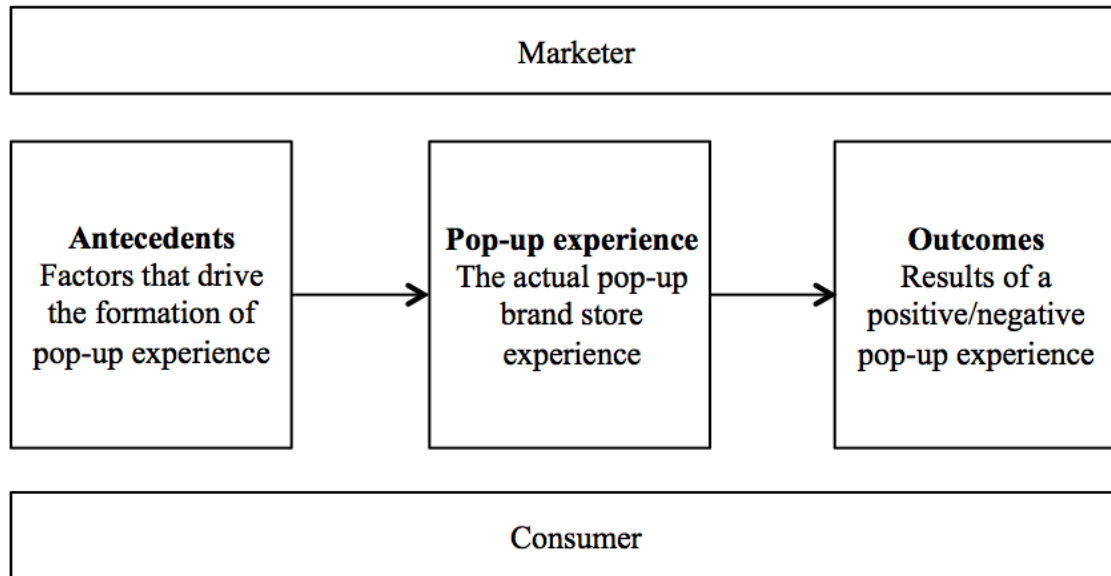


Figure 4 Framework of pop-up experience from marketer and consumer perspectives

In the end, experiential marketing aims at building a long-lasting emotional bond between the consumer and the brand. Experience co-creation is a crucial feature of all experiential environments, whether it be a flagship store, an event or a pop-up store. A brand's role is to stage and host a suitable environment in which customers can then create their own personal experiential interpretations. It can be said that the consumer actualizes the potential that the company creates – in other words, they act as a co-producer of the experience (Russo Spina et al. 2012, 24). Therefore, it is important to remember that even if the retail environment is well planned and organized, something in the co-creation process between the customer and the space might affect the perceived experience and its outcomes.

Chapter 4.2 will explain the formation of pop-up experience more thoroughly along the guidelines of the presented framework. Additionally, chapter 4.3 will take a glimpse into the potential research models to be utilized in pop-up store research. Chapter 5 will then tie the ends and summarize the findings.

## 4.2 Formation of the pop-up experience

As discussed in previous chapters, experiential marketing is mainly concerned with creating sensations of “fantasies, feelings and fun” for the customers – in other words, providing hedonic value. Considering pop-up stores' highly experiential nature, factors related to hedonic values are of greater significance in temporary store design as they

influence the consumers' attitudes more (Niehm et al. 2007, 25) and affect their brand experience (Klein et al. 2016). Customers with utilitarian-oriented goals get on well in highly hedonic environments, but on the other hand, customers seeking hedonic value react extremely negatively to highly utilitarian settings (Spence et al. 2014). Still, in order to build a foundation for a long-lasting relationship between the brand and the consumer, it is important not to neglect the traditional product and service aspects either – even if the main focus is on providing exciting experiences (Lowe et al. 2018).

Since experiential environments are highly subjective by nature, different consumers react differently to similar experiential environments. “Layering” different kinds of environmental cues helps to create more personalized experiences for the consumers (Carbone & Haeckel 1994, 15). The more anchoring points the environment has, the more powerful and real the experience feels (Borghini et al. 2009, 372). Moreover, accommodating multiple types of environmental cues help brands to cater both hedonic and utilitarian stimuli for the store visitors. Store atmosphere is known to affect the consumers' brand experience (Klein et al 2016); in other words, atmospheric cues of the store can be seen as experience antecedents.

While atmospheric cues act as an experience antecedent during the actual in-store experience, it is important to note that the experience extends beyond the store environment, taking into account also pre-stage of the visit. The pre-stage of the experience manifests itself as attendee anticipation (Crowther 2011, 74). Taube and Warnaby (2017, 391) pose that a key issue at the pre-pop-up experience is the discovering of the store. According to their study, word-of-mouth and online channels play a central role as a source of initial knowledge. Surchi (2011, 260) similarly highlights the word-of-mouth promotion, stating that the promotion, exclusivity and style of the store can in itself attract the curiosity of passers-by. To help with this, the pop-up store is usually located within high-traffic urban shopping areas. However, in some cases pre-promotion of pop-up stores can be prohibited in order to maintain the novelty and surprise aspect (Lowe et al. 2018, 78).

Post-stage of the experience in turn manifests itself as attendee reflection (Crowther 2011, 74). This stage is of high importance as well, as it can help maintain the brand momentum created by the pop-up store. Online seems to be important for the post-pop-up experience stage as well: consumers find online activities useful for memorization of the experience and for more detailed product information. Additionally, products or souvenirs from the store can act as memorabilia. (Taube & Warnaby 2017, 391).

In the case of pop-up retailing, design of the space is typically always somehow unique or unexpected in order to attract attention from consumers and possibly the media. Eclectic guerrilla marketing tools, exciting limited edition collections and surprising promotions are all examples of means to achieve those sensations. Excitement, novelty and entertainment concerning pop-up stores are all examples of experiential (i.e.



hedonic) value (Niehm et al. 2007, 6). Hedonic shopping value can affect brand experience and further lead to word-of-mouth intentions (Klein et al. 2016).

Another important feature of pop-up stores is their interactivity, which leads to co-creation of value. The interaction between the consumer and the brand ultimately shapes the experience, no matter how well the store setting may be orchestrated. The success of the pop-up store is tied to the presence of consumers who fill the space with their own unique meaning (Russo Spina et al. 2012, 35).

Staging entertaining experiences for the consumers is not easy as experience is a contextually dependent construct. Even if the store atmosphere is good and the environment provides hedonic shopping value for the consumers, there are factors that can affect the formation of the experience and moderate the effect of the antecedents on the pop-up experience. For example, age and gender can influence consumers' pop-up store experiences (Niehm et al. 2007).

Furthermore, store type is known to moderate the effect of store image on brand experience. Store image is created through different cues, such as store environment, personnel and product range. (Dolbec & Chebat 2013). In some cases, store image seems to directly affect brand attitude: if a consumer is overwhelmed or lacking the motivation to evaluate the brand, they may infer evaluation from extrinsic cues (Dolbec & Chebat 2013, 465). However, Zarantonello and Schmitt (2013, 271) found that pop-up store visit does not seem to impact brand attitudes and that brand attitudes in this setting do not contribute to overall brand equity. Although pop-up stores do not necessarily cause changes in brand attitudes, it is worthwhile to still pay attention to experiential cue setting in store design as it has an impact on other constructs such as brand experience (see Klein et al. 2016).

As the importance of multisensory experiences is recognized, pop-up store designers should pay attention to creating experiences that meet the customers' needs across different dimensions. If a retailer manages to orchestrate the experiential cues in each dimension, thus creating a successful customer experience, they can also affect the outcomes of the experience. That in turn allows them to pursue the store's desired objectives in an orderly way.

### **4.3 Evaluation of the pop-up experience**

While research is still lacking a universally agreed measurement approach to evaluating all aspects of customer experience, tried and tested models offer a good starting point (Lemon & Verhoef 2016, 86). This subchapter will review a few promising approaches to pop-up experience evaluation and research.

Klaus & Maklan (2012) have composed a model to measure *customer experience quality* (EXQ). The formation of EXQ happens as follows: antecedents of the customer experience are concrete attributes (aka technical aspects) that trigger perceptual attributes, i.e. the service experience evaluation. Further, the assessment of these attributes leads to a higher level of abstraction and a more holistic valuation of EXQ. In the end, this will lead to behavioral intentions and changes. The most significant outcomes of the service experience quality are customer satisfaction, loyalty and WOM intentions. (Klaus and Maklan 2012, 5, 10, 12).

The EXQ model has not yet been tested in experience store environments to the author's knowledge, but a look into prior research on pop-up stores and retailing reveals that the model could be very well applicable to this context. Niehm et al. (2007, 25) found in their study that if retailers manage to meet the consumers' needs for novel shopping experiences, they have a better chance to affect their long-term intentions, attitudes and even loyalty towards the brand. Well-designed customer experiences can encourage loyalty behaviors not only by delivering functional value, but also by establishing an emotional connection with the consumer through engaging, consistent environment (Pullman & Gross 2004, 553).

As for word-of-mouth intentions, there has been a specific study on how experiences affect WOM in the context of luxury pop-up stores; brand experiences indeed turned out to be an effective mediator for stimulating positive word-of-mouth communication (Klein et al. 2016, 5765). Lastly, hedonic experiences are known to influence customers' satisfaction. Customer satisfaction can be defined as the difference between what the customer expects to get and what the customer perceives he gets (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 78). In fact, positive experience is a key factor to satisfaction (De Lassus & Anido Freire 2014, 62; Srivastava & Kaul 2014, 1029, 1035).

Brakus et al. (2009, 52) studied the concept of *brand experience*, finding that it has direct and indirect effects on both consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Brand experience consists of sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual aspects. Essentially, the scale measures how much each experience dimension is stimulated by a given event. Brand experience is contextual, subjective and co-creative in nature (Tafesse 2016).

The brand experience scale has been widely used in experiential marketing research in both retail and event contexts (see e.g. Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013 for event marketing and Nierobisch et al. 2017 for flagship stores), so it provides a promising base for conducting research on pop-up stores as well. Downside to brand experience scale is that it may not necessarily fully reflect the novelty and interactivity aspects of the event in question (Tafesse 2016, 35).

Klein et al. (2016) utilized the aforementioned brand experience scale in their study on luxury pop-up stores. They found that brand experience mediates the effects of store atmosphere and hedonic shopping value on consumers' word-of mouth intentions. This

is in line with the suggested outcomes for experience quality in the EXQ model and further supports the finding that store atmosphere and hedonic shopping value in pop-up store context specifically could be viewed as antecedents for the pop-up experience. As brand experience scale seems to be suitable for pop-up store research, more in-depth studies on it are encouraged.

Lowe et al. (2018) studied the success of pop-up stores, trying to identify factors that contribute towards it. The identified factors – namely relational touch point, strategic alignment, serendipity and surprise/delight – are considered critical in the creation of successful temporary retail activities. The authors also suggest that pop-up retail activities should be considered as retail exchange events (i.e. moments when the brand is able to develop relationships with consumers through interaction) that seek to generate relationship-driven outcomes. A successful retail exchange encounter can positively affect a consumer's view on the whole brand, thus also increasing loyalty and consumer engagement.

While potential models for pop-up experience evaluation exist, the measurement of it is still not easy due to the complex, co-creative nature of pop-up stores. Future research should build upon tried and tested research models, at the same time taking them into the unique context of pop-up stores. In order to succeed, researchers and marketing practitioners alike must be aware of the unique nature and characteristics of pop-up brand stores.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Discussion on findings

Pine and Gilmore stated already 20 years ago that the concept of selling experiences has spread beyond theme parks and theaters. Today, experiential marketing presents itself in various forms, one of which is temporarily opened pop-up stores. Contemporary consumers may consume environments for their own sake without the intention of making a purchase at all (Foxall et al. 1998, 203) – as a matter of fact, the consumer's initial place experience may be more effective if no purchases are made (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle 2006, 184). Accordingly, pop-up brand stores are not primarily focused on sales but instead operate to achieve brand-related outcomes

While there are different types of temporary stores, the marketing-led pop-up brand stores are generally always built to enforce the host brand. Combining this with the focus on experiences instead of sales, it is safe to say that pop-up stores and flagship stores have a lot in common. On the other hand, pop-up stores' temporal and social dimensions make them quite reminiscent of events. The current study supports the finding that pop-up stores can be seen as a fusion of experience stores and marketing events.

A key feature of pop-up stores is their interactivity. Pop-up experience cannot be readily produced by the brand – the brand can only stage a favorable environment for positive experiences to happen. Consumers play an active role in the formation of the experience. The experience extends far beyond utilitarian shopping, allowing consumers to learn, feel and engage in the branded environment. Therefore, calling people who visit pop-up stores merely “customers” seems misleading; “visitors” or even “participants” would feel more appropriate.

While pop-up stores present themselves as stages for branded consumer experiences, an experience in itself is not the ultimate goal of pop-up stores. Instead, experience works as a mediator between its antecedents and brand-related outcomes. Constantly growing its importance, brand experience is seen as a new frontier for building stronger brand equity (Tafesse 2016, 34). Brand experience is a contextually embedded phenomenon, which needs to be understood against the specific background in question. Hence, in a pop-up store context, the brand experience needs to reflect the typical characteristics and unique features of pop-up stores. This study coined the term *pop-up experience* to describe all the subjective, internal responses that the pop-up store related stimuli evoke in consumers. It draws largely upon the brand experience concept by Brakus et al. (2009), which has been a key model in several experience store and marketing event studies. The measurement of brand experience may prove to be useful when the firm

wants to understand the impact of an event from a branding perspective (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013, 273). Similarly, researchers seeking to understand the pop-up store's impact on the brand should pay attention to the pop-up experience and its different aspects.

Research-wise, pop-up store studies can benefit from the approach of utilizing methods from successful experiential marketing and event marketing studies. In addition to the aforementioned brand experience scale, potentially suitable models for pop-up store research include the EXQ scale by Klaus & Maklan (2012). Both models have been utilized in experiential context and the literature review of this study provided evidence supporting their suitability for pop-up context as well.

In chapter 4.1, an initial framework for pop-up experience was introduced. Based on further discussion on pop-up experience antecedents, outcomes and moderating effects, Figure 5 proposes a revised, more detailed model. The framework will also serve as a base guideline for further research implications.

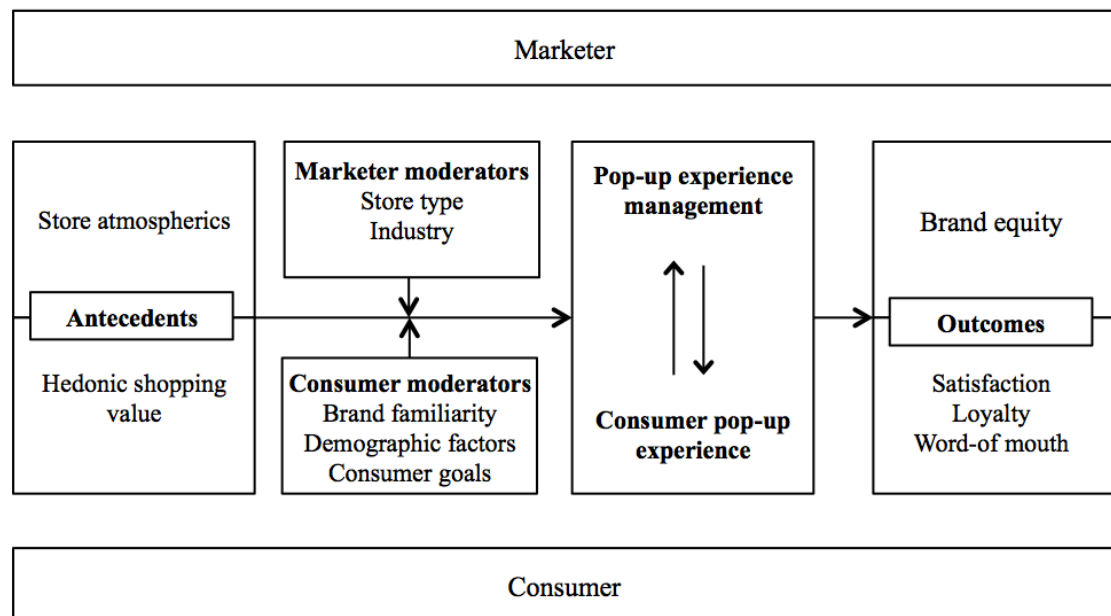


Figure 5 Revised framework of pop-up experience: antecedents, moderators and outcomes<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Note that even though the proposed framework has a shape of a structural equation model (SEM) it obviously does not necessarily mean that the pop-up retail experience should be investigated empirically only by means of the SEM method. SEM is naturally one option, but also other methods and research approaches are equally fine as shown in this study (the adopted research method mainly depends on the interrogative form of the research questions of each study). Thus, the shape of the research framework is not a methodological statement but merely aims at visually presenting the central elements and viewpoints that could be adopted in upcoming pluralistic pop-up retail experience research.

It was found that brands cannot create pop-up experiences for their customers – they can only provide a stage where consumers then co-create their own, subjective experiences *with* the brand. In other words, experiences can not be mass produced or directly delivered to the consumers. To illustrate this interactive character of the pop-up experience, Figure 5 added the moderating factors to the proposed framework. From the marketer's side, potential moderating variables between experience antecedents and the experience itself include store type and the industry in which the brand is operating. From the consumer's side, prior research suggests the factors such as brand familiarity, demographics and hedonic/utilitarian goal orientation could have an impact. Future research should focus on studying and validating these findings.

Like experience stores and marketing events, pop-up stores are characterized by a strong experiential emphasis. They seek to answer the consumers' hedonic needs, still not forgetting the utilitarian aspects either. Different consumers may have different goals, but both utilitarian and hedonic oriented consumers get on well in highly hedonic settings (Spence et al. 2014). Hence, catering the hedonic needs of consumers should be the primary goal of pop-up store experience design.

The impact of brand experience on word-of-mouth intentions is stronger with consumers who are less familiar with the brand (see Klein et al. 2016, 5765). Rural consumers are the least aware of pop-up stores, while suburban consumers are the most exposed to them (Niehm et al. 2007, 24). On the other hand, highly representative location can in itself induce WOM. Therefore, pop-up stores seem to be suitable for different kinds of environments, as long as they provide novel experiences that activate the consumers to communicate about the brand.

While positive, engaging experiences can lead to favorable brand-related outcomes, negative experiences can lead to value co-destruction instead. Ways to prevent negative outcomes include adding an element of surprise and ensuring the alignment of event strategy and design (Crowther & Donlan 2011, 1458; Addis et al. 2018, 190). Three key aspects of strategic alignment are found crucial for successful temporary retail activations: brand alignment, context alignment and location alignment (Lowe et al 2018, 76).

In summary, pop-up stores are characterized by experiential orientation, co-creative nature, temporal transiency and focus on uniqueness and novelty. The phenomenon that started out small has spread to various companies around the world, making pop-up stores a great potential tool for experiential marketing purposes. With the constant growth of the phenomenon, more research is definitely needed. Next, chapter 5.2 will present and discuss ideas for further research.

## 5.2 Agenda for future research

As the trend seems to be towards more and more experiential marketing in the future, further research and a more holistic understanding of the pop-up store phenomenon is definitely needed. This study has revealed several areas that present promising opportunities for further research. Table 11 lists the proposed focus areas and provides ideas for their research.

Table 11 Suggestions for future research

| Focus area                    | Research questions   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Pop-up experience antecedents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the antecedents of the pop-up experience? Do they depend on store type or industry?</li> <li>• How does the co-creative nature of pop-up stores impact the experience formation?</li> </ul>  |
| Pop-up experience outcomes    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the outcomes of (positive or negative) pop-up experience? Do they depend on store type or industry?</li> <li>• How do (positive or negative) emotions impact the pop-up experience and its outcomes?</li> </ul>  |
| Pop-up experience evaluation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can pop-up experiences be measured while taking into account their interactive nature?</li> <li>• Which models from experiential marketing research are suitable for pop-up retail studies?</li> <li>• How can experience quality (EXQ) be measured in a pop-up store environment? What are the dimensions of EXQ in this context?</li> </ul> |

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|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Experience management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can marketing practitioners manage pop-up experiences?</li></ul>   |
| Experience journey    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are experiences formed during pre-, concurrent and post-stages of the pop-up store visit?</li></ul>  |
| Online                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can pop-up stores benefit from utilizing online channels throughout the experience journey?</li><li>• How are experiences formed in temporary online store environments?</li></ul> |

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This study has discussed the importance of recognizing pop-up experience antecedents and outcomes, and presented examples of what they could be based on literature reviews on pop-up stores, experience stores and marketing events. However, the study has also highlighted the contextual nature of the pop-up experience; hence, more research and especially empirical evidence is required in order to validate the propositions. The findings of the current study should not be taken as the absolute truth, but more as a foundation for future research.

Different strategic objectives are known to result in different types of pop-up retail activities. While there are characteristics all pop-up stores share in common, it is important to note that with the continuous growth of the temporary retail phenomenon, diverse new forms of pop-ups (such as restaurants and web companies) are also gaining more and more popularity. (Pomodoro 2013, 350). Although in-store experiences seem to always consist of similar dimensions (Bäckström & Johansson 2006, 428), store type is known to moderate the effect of certain antecedents on brand experience (Verhoef et al. 2009, Dolbec & Chebat 2013). Brand experience is always a contextually embedded phenomenon (Tafesse 2016), and so further research on different pop-up store subtypes is definitely needed.

In addition to store types, another interesting topic for study is pop-up stores from different industries. A great deal of pop-up brand store research has been conducted in the context of fashion, even though pop-up stores from e.g. FMCG brands are getting more and more common. A study by Nierobisch et al. (2017) showed that flagship stores can benefit FMCG brands as well, but the results may vary according to different



industries and categories. Remembering the contextually embedded nature of experiences, more detailed pop-up experience research on different industries is needed as well. From managerial perspective, it is important that the managers master the business models of the industries they enter; this allows them to operate effectively (Kozinets et al. 2002, 28).

Looking from the marketing practitioner's viewpoint, a crucial factor in creating a successful pop-up experience is the management of the experiential setting. Customer experience management can be defined as the strategic management of the customers' entire experience with a company across multiple touch points (Lemon & Verhoef 2016, 82). It is mainly concerned with a systematic design and implementation of experiential cues emitted by the environment and the product/service, therefore distinguishing itself from e.g. service design (Carbone & Haeckel 1994, 10).

Experience management requires a multi-disciplinary approach (Lemon & Verhoef 2016, 84), so marketers should turn to related fields to find best practices also suitable for experiential pop-up retail activities. One of these fields could be project management: firms that operate in creative fields such as entertainment or event industry tend to organize many of their business transactions in projects (Wikström et al. 2010, 832). Furthermore, projects can be considered temporary organizations, and an interactive, dynamic nature is one of their key features (Arto et al. 2008). These similarities with pop-up stores support the suitability of project management practices to pop-up experience management.

Perhaps due to temporality and store environment being the most notable features of pop-up stores, very little attention has been paid to the holistic nature of the pop-up experience in the sense that it also consists of pre- and post-stages of the actual store visitation. However, it is known that the customer experience in a retail setting is affected by store environment and consumer interactions at various points of the experience journey (Srivastava & Kaul 2014, 1030). Crowther (2011, 74) refers to the actual experience as core space, and the pre- and post-stages as augmented spaces. Together, they form a holistic *marketing space*. Marketing space can be described as "time out of time" when the customer gets more acquainted with the brand. Future research should put more emphasis on studying the augmented space as it has been quite neglected in studies thus far.

An interesting frontier in the development of pop-up stores is so called web temporary stores, which result from the fusion of temporary stores and e-commerce (Pomodoro 2013, 350). Temporary online stores combine the strategic advantages of the temporary stores with the communicative benefits of the internet, and they are very easy to implement (Surchi 2011, 262). Future research could focus on these types of stores on their own to learn how the typical characteristics and best practices of pop-up stores can be applied to an online environment.

Online is a useful channel for not only hosting entire pop-up stores, but also for communicating consumers about the upcoming event. Online presents itself as a key channel for consumers to learn about the pop-up store, and also for communicating about the experience afterwards. Online communication can lead to electronic WOM, and WOM in turn leads to more consumers hearing about the happening. Out of electronic channels, social media seems to play the most important role. (Taube & Warnaby 2017). Even though the importance of online channels today is recognized, research is still lacking studies focused on them within the pop-up store context. Further research on the matter is greatly encouraged.

### **5.3 Practical implications**

This study introduces insights on pop-up stores that can be useful to marketing practitioners. Practitioners from different industries can utilize the accumulated knowledge gathered by this study, evaluate it against their own context and apply the most suitable practices to fit their brand and business objectives. Truly understanding the nature of pop-up stores is essential, as inapt application of resources can result in value co-destruction instead of co-creation (Crowther & Donlan 2011).

Pop-up experience acts as an important mediator for the desired outcomes, but managing and measuring it is not easy. First and foremost, the study emphasized that firms should regard themselves as hosts who stage experiences for the consumers. Firms cannot create experiences, but they can create a fruitful environment for experiences to be formed. Ways to enhance consumer engagement and reduce negative emotions were discussed.

As the effectiveness of temporary retail activations cannot always be measured by traditional metrics such as store sales (Klein et al. 2016), measurement of pop-up experience and store effectiveness can be difficult for marketing practitioners. Chapter 4.3 attempted to tackle this issue, providing ideas for potential measurement means.

This study also reviewed the objectives of pop-up stores, noting that different strategic objectives call for different types of temporary retail activities (see Pomodoro 2013). One of the common objectives for pop-up stores is testing new markets. Flagship stores are sometimes used for testing purposes as well (Moore et al. 2010), but they are quite expensive to establish and complicated to run (Kozinets et al. 2002, 27). A pop-up store can carry out a similar kind of testing with lower levels of commitment, so brands considering flagship stores for market entry purposes could greatly benefit from establishing a pop-up brand store in the new market instead.

All in all, pop-up stores provide a new experiential marketing tool for marketers from different industries. It is proposed that the goal of pop-up stores is to help the firm

achieve desired brand-related outcomes through facilitating engaging pop-up experiences. As positive experiences contribute towards greater brand equity, brands who manage to provide captivating in-store experiences may be able to turn this strength into a price premium (Dolbec & Chebat 2013, 464).

#### **5.4 Evaluation of research approach and limitations of the study**

This paper approached pop-up stores through a systematic literature review. With the ease of information access and abundance of articles constantly being published, navigating even the most specialized subjects has become extremely difficult (Booth et al. 2016, 13). As academic research is still lacking a systematic review on pop-up stores to the author's knowledge, the systematic review approach felt appropriate and very much needed.

However, the chosen method does bring some certain limitations with it. Only the articles that were found through using the keywords and chosen electronic databases were included in the systematic literature review, which means that articles that studied the same phenomena using dissimilar terminologies might have been missed. Nevertheless, this approach helped the author to focus on a manageable amount of studies. Further, a systematic approach enabled a transparent display of the findings.

The articles used for the literature reviews were limited to international peer-reviewed journal articles. This approach was chosen in order to get comparable results on the three reviewed topics. In order not to limit the study too much and also to be able to familiarize herself with the subjects before conducting the reviews, the author chose to include an introductory part of the phenomena in the study before the actual review parts. This helps the reader to get a more holistic view of each topic and their backgrounds. All materials used for this study were in English language, mainly due to the author's language skill limitations. This may have excluded some relevant papers from the review as well.

Despite the limitations, this study has brought much needed structure to pop-up store research while also providing new insights and future research suggestions. Temporary retail comes in many different forms, and generalizations on the subject are hard to make. However, one thing is for sure: while the store itself may be temporary, its impact on the brand can be lasting.

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