Escape, Entitlement, and Experience: Liminoid motivators within commercial hospitality
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Abstract

Purpose
Enhancing consumer experience is of clear interest to industry professionals. A theoretical gap exists in the hospitality management literature, regarding the relationships between consumer motivations, their interactions with hospitality spaces, and experiential outcomes. This quantitative study explores the impact of escapism and entitlement to leisure upon involvement in liminoid consumptions spaces, thereby contributing a theory of liminoid motivators within commercial hospitality.

Design/methodology/approach
Adopts a quantitative methodology, using a survey of a sample of student night-clubbers in the UK. Data are analysed through Partial Least Squares.

Findings
Hospitality consumers are positively affected by the feelings of increased involvement experienced in consumption spaces that exhibit liminoid characteristics.

Research limitations
Surveys involve potential for error regarding respondents’ ability to agree with questionnaire statements. Data collection conducted in Scotland, so results may not be generalised to other commercial hospitality spaces outside of Scotland.

Practical implications
Hospitality consumers become more involved, and thereby more satisfied, in liminoid consumption spaces when motivated by escapism and entitlement to leisure. Attending to the liminoid motivators that drive consumers away from work and domesticity, and towards commercial hospitality spaces, will go some way towards creating the desired consumer experience.

Originality/value
First quantitative study to investigate consumer motivations to escape and entitlement to leisure as antecedents of involvement in a commercial hospitality context. Develops a theory of hospitality consumption using the liminoid anthropological concept.

Key Words
Consumption experience, consumer motivations, commercial spaces, experiential marketing, liminoid.
Escape, Entitlement, and Experience: Liminoid motivators within commercial hospitality

Introduction

Hospitality consumers are well-informed and demanding, with expectations of engaging and immersive consumption experiences (Bharwani and Jauhari, 2013, Gillespie and Morrison, 2001, Hemmington, 2007, Kubacki, 2008). Experiential marketing literature emphasises environmental and atmospheric elements of service offerings, through which core features and benefits are delivered (Schmitt, 1999, 2003). This is widely acknowledged within contemporary hospitality management research (Countryman and Jang, 2006, Kincaid et al., 2010, Skinner et al., 2005, So and King, 2010). Experiential involvement is heightened when consumers feel immersed in the consumption environment and the activity or core service (Alba and Williams, 2013, Carù and Cova, 2007). By conceptualising hospitality spaces as liminoid, this study explores the impact of motivations to escape and leisure entitlement upon the consumer experience. Using constructs drawn from consumer research, psychology, and sociology literatures it explores the holistic consumption experience in a hospitality service encounter.

The theoretical contribution of this study is to explore the impact of what we call liminoid motivators upon consumer involvement in commercial hospitality spaces. A better understanding of what drives consumers towards a more immersive experience allows for more nuanced attention to generating corresponding stimuli. The context for this study is nightclubs which, like other hospitality services, must continually find ways to increase consumer satisfaction and repeat custom. Since 2000, the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers reports that nearly 50% of UK nightclubs have closed (C Banks 2015, pers. comm., 30 Sept., Connolly, 2015) with the cumulative effect being annual decreases in revenue of around 5% (Roberts, 2006). By harnessing the liminoid characteristics of hospitality spaces, and attending to the factors which motivate consumers to seek them out, we suggest that nightclubs can increase consumer satisfaction, supporting both repeat custom and consumer recommendations.

In order to theorise the impact of motivations upon experiential involvement, this study borrows from Turner’s (1969, 1974, 1982, 1992) discussions of liminality and, particularly, the liminoid. An anthropological concept (liminoid) is thus employed to contribute a theory and model of process (consumer experience), thereby addressing the gap in understanding regarding the motivations of consumers entering commercial hospitality spaces, their interaction with the space, and the impact upon involvement and overall satisfaction. While existing literature theorises relationships between hospitality and space (Cuthill, 2007, Di Domenico and Lynch, 2007, Laurier and Philo, 2006, Lugosi, 2014), and describes commercial hospitality spaces and experiences in relation to the liminal and liminoid (Getz and Page, 2015, Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010, Meier et al., 2014, Rief, 2011, St John, 2008), to our best knowledge, this is the first quantitative study to explore and implicate consumer motivations in the liminoid consumption experience, so offering practical suggestions for industry professionals. Based on data collected from young night-clubbers in the UK, the aim of this study is to investigate whether leisure-oriented motivation is linked to satisfaction through liminoid
consumption spaces. By assessing these relationships, this paper fills a gap in the commercial hospitality management literature. The nightclub setting is a fitting context for the theorisation of liminoid consumption spaces, and due to currently decreasing annual revenues in this industry, research offering practical ways to improve consumer experience is deemed timely and necessary (Hammersley and Ditton, 2005, Seaman and Ikegwuonu, 2010, Wells et al., 2009).

Understanding the characteristics and associated impact of liminoid motivators enables managers to make better decisions regarding services, marketing, and use of commercial space. Our practical suggestions for managers are supported by theoretical concepts established across disciplines, linking the study of people and places to the study of commercial spaces.

The paper now divides into four sections. The first section presents the anthropological theory that underpins this research, before introducing our conceptual model of liminoid consumption spaces. The constructs illustrated by this model are then discussed, along with the literature by which they are established, in order to develop our hypotheses. Data collection methods and measures, followed by the empirical results which support our hypotheses are then presented and discussed. The concluding section offers theoretical and practical implications, and discusses the limitations of the research.

**Literature review and hypothesis development**

*Liminal and liminoid*

Based on van Gennep’s (1960) work on rites of passage, which classified three stages of transformative ritual – separation (pre-liminal), transition (liminal), and incorporation (post-liminal) – Turner (1969, 1974, 1979, 1982, 1992) investigates the theoretical, historical, and spatial aspects of liminality. For Turner, a liminal experience is the process of crossing a metaphorical (though possibly also physical) boundary; the subject is obliged to abandon one status of being before achieving another. Liminal spaces are the areas in which this transition occurs, often characterised by intangibility, elusiveness and obscurity.

The liminoid is similar to the liminal in being anti-structural, that is, removed from the central economic and social processes of everyday life, but distinct in being produced through profane, post-industrial leisure rather than the sacred, pre-industrial ritual of the liminal: “one *works at* the liminal, one *plays with* the liminoid” (Turner, 1974, p. 86). Liminoid spaces reflect this distinction, retaining some of the marginality and experimentation of liminal space, while also incorporating the notions of leisure, escapism, and (potentially commercial) consumption. Liminoid spaces are typically subject to fewer social restrictions than the home or workplace, and may present the chance for individual experimentation and expression (Huang and Xiao, 2000, Kozinets et al., 2004, Ziakas and Boukas, 2013).

Turner’s liminoid provides a useful way of characterising commercial hospitality environments, given their experiential nature and capacity for escapism and playful interaction (Pine and Gilmore, 1998, 2011). Berdychewsky, Poria, and Uriely (2013), Roberts (2015) and Selänniemi (2003) examine commercial hospitality spaces, tourist experiences, and other experiential event offerings with reference to the liminoid. While St John (2008) questions the division between liminal and liminoid...

Using Turner’s discussion of the liminoid alongside literature drawn from experiential consumption and psychology, Figure 1 provides a graphical presentation of the main causal relationships proposed in this research. The attributes we understand as characterising liminoid motivators and consumption spaces are detailed below; broadly, we explore Turner’s (1974, p.86) notion of “permanent ‘liminoid’ settings and spaces. . .bars, pubs, some cafés, social clubs” as distinct areas which consumers freely enter and engage with to escape their everyday work and home lives. In discussing liminality and liminoid spaces as offering opportunities for reconciliation between disparate groups, Chalip (2006, p. 111) describes liminoid experiences as “symbolic explorations of the social order... in which event attendees probe, test, and cultivate their identity with reference to their social context.” We thus examine the specific components that characterise contemporary hospitality spaces and motivations to enter them as liminoid. The conceptual model illustrates the impact of two main components of pre-liminoid consumption space (the feelings of motivation to escape and entitlement to leisure), through the liminoid consumption space (characterised as one of play and experiential involvement, with an atmosphere distinguishing it from its surroundings), upon positive effect (consumer happiness, satisfaction, and enjoyment).

**Motivation to escape**

Harnessing research into the experience economy by Pine and Gilmore (1998, 2011), this construct (a liminoid motivator) measures the extent to which consumers enter commercial hospitality spaces to seek an escape from their everyday existence. Several studies highlight the importance of escapist motivations for seeking hospitality (Müller, 2001, Sigala, 2004). In this context “escapist activities... involve both active participation and immersion in the activities environment, and are clearly a central feature of much of tourism and hospitality” (Williams, 2006, p. 488). Turner’s (1979, p. 493) conceptualisation of the anti-structural liminoid experience as subverting “quotidian and prestigious structures” of post-industrial society suggests that entrance into the liminoid experience is motivated by a desire to escape these socio-economic structural constraints. Pielichaty (2015) suggests liminal spaces remove inequalities and social demands of everyday life, with Blocker and Barrios (2015) arguing there is a temporary dissolving of the individual’s social world during within a liminal space. Similarly, McKercher and Lui (2014) suggest liminal spaces and experiences allow individuals to set aside conventional standards amidst relative anonymity and freedom. This aligns with escapist motivations for entering instances of experiential consumption asserted by several studies (Jafari et al., 2013, Lee et al., 2006, Slater and Armstrong, 2010, Wohlfeil and Whelan, 2006).
Play

Play, and its distinction in post-industrial societies from work, is a central component of Turner’s (1979) anti-structural liminoid, and is characterised elsewhere as liberation from modern societal structures and expectations (Deegan, 1998, Rao, 1999). Also central to experiential consumption, play is composed of three constructs, used collectively here: ecstasy, flow, and communitas (McGinnis and Gentry, 2004, McGinnis et al., 2008, McGinnis et al., 2012). Ecstasy is an almost transcendental level of immersion and enjoyment, leading individuals to feel that they are standing outside of themselves. This temporary postponement or realignment of the parameters that delineate the self (Rao, 1999) is reminiscent of the anti-structure so central to liminoid experience, and has been strongly linked to group experience (Belk et al., 1989, Fillis and Mackay, 2014, Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). Flow is defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1988, 1990) as an autotelic experience, in which consciousness becomes harmonious and ordered, and has been explored in various contexts (Rufi et al., 2015). Flow often occurs when an individual believes they are performing at a high, self-controlled level (Belk et al., 1989), which Turner (1974) outlines as central to one’s ability to transcend social structural constraints. Finally, communitas refers to a rudimentarily structured collection of people who develop a “generalized social bond” during a “moment in and out of time,” with the potential to foster individual reflection, social subversion and interaction with environments (Turner, 1969, p.96). These distinctly liminoid characteristics suggest play as a central component of the liminoid experience. Given that work is one of the structures that individuals escape towards an experience of play, we expect a positive link between motivation to escape and play.

Experiential involvement

Within consumer research and psychology, involvement construct raises significant debate, with several variants identified, including ego; product; enduring; situational; and response involvement: all accepted to be both cognitive and sensory (Mizerski et al., 1988, O’Cass, 1996, Pucely et al., 1988). As such, there is debate over the measures of different forms of involvement (Mitchell, 1979, Mittal, 1989). The cognitive and sensory basis of involvement have led to its use in relation to experiential and hedonic forms of consumption, which are seen as providing the opportunity for all-consuming and overwhelming involvement in an activity (Alba and Williams, 2013, Hausman, 2011, Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Previous studies recognise involvement as complicated by many theoretical and operational problems (Laaksonen, 1994). The main problem in defining the involvement construct is that numerous antecedents, consequences and varieties of involvement have been confused with involvement per se. Nonetheless, the debate on the conceptualisation of involvement focuses on three distinct categories (Bloch and Bruce, 1984, Decloe et al., 2009, O’Cass, 1996, 2000, Pucely et al., 1988): the origin of involvement (i.e., occurring as a result of practical or role-related needs), the nature of involvement (i.e., continuous or dichotomous variable), and the object of involvement (e.g., product, person, particular message stimuli or situations). Pucely et al., (1988) discuss ‘experiential involvement’ as a perspective that concentrates on experiential features of consumption. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) argue that viewing consumption as experiential highlights symbolic, hedonic, emotional and aesthetic aspects. As a result, experiential involvement
should focus on consumers’ subjective conscious experiences that surround hedonic consumption such as nightclubbing.

Here the construct ‘experiential involvement’ is harnessed to understand the consumer experience within commercial hospitality spaces that are interactive, playful and often hedonic. Experiential involvement refers to a consumer’s disengagement from much of their everyday experience towards a role in the enactment of a service experience (Edvardsson et al., 2005, Hausman, 2011), with escapist consumer experiences more likely to induce immersion and involvement (Getz and Page, 2015, Kacprzak et al., 2015). Experiential involvement is thus suggested as a component of the liminoid experience due to its corresponding anti-structural and immersive characteristics. Experiential involvement is measured here through the extent to which consumers feel absorbed and immersed within an experience. Given this move to disengage from quotidian experience, we expect a positive link between motivation to escape and experiential involvement. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H1: Motivation to escape relates positively to (a) play and (b) experiential involvement.

Leisure entitlement

Leisure, as distinct from work, plays a key role in Turner’s (1974) discussion of the liminoid. We harness the optionality so central to his distinction between the liminal and liminoid in our analysis of the extent to which people feel entitled to leisure. Leisure entitlement has been usefully conceptualised by McGinnis (2002) in the context of experiential consumer research, and here the extent to which people feel entitled to leisure – amidst interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural constraints – is measured. As with motivation to escape, we expect that those expressing entitlement to leisure will more fully engage in play and experiential involvement, so a positive link is expected between leisure entitlement and these constructs. Given the transcendent characteristics of play, we expect a positive link between play and experiential involvement. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H2: Leisure entitlement relates positively to (a) play and (b) experiential involvement.

H3: Play relates positively to experiential involvement.

Atmosphere

Atmosphere is central to consumers’ enjoyment of experiential consumption (Baker et al., 1994, Baker et al., 2002, Bitner, 1992), and plays an important role in perceived service quality (Brady and Cronin Jr, 2001). This is widely acknowledged within hospitality management research and is addressed here through use of an atmosphere scale, developed from Dagger and Danaher (2014). This measures the impact of the physical surroundings, aesthetics, music, and lighting of the consumption space upon consumers’ experiential involvement. Just as liminoid phenomena are defined by Turner (1974, p. 85) as developing “apart from the central economic and political processes, along the margins, in the interfaces and interstices,” so we understand atmosphere as
demarcating the experiential consumption space as distinct from the everyday spaces of work and home life. Thus we find the aforementioned “permanent ‘liminoid’ settings and spaces. . .bars, pubs, some cafés, social clubs” (1974, p. 86) that maintain an atmosphere of simultaneous social inclusion and social subversion. Crucially, atmosphere is an aspect of experiential consumption that can be manipulated by industry professionals. We expect a positive link between experiential involvement and atmosphere, as the consumers’ immersion in the consumption experience will assist in the establishment of an atmosphere distinct from external structures and processes: a liminoid consumption space. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H4: Experiential involvement relates positively to atmosphere.

**Positive Effect**

Positive effect measures the overall impact of the hospitality service encounter and experience upon the consumer. Rooted in product consumption literature, it refers to the level of satisfaction with a product and the purchase experience (Churchill Jr and Surprenant, 1982, Fornell, 1992, Hightower et al., 2002, Oliver, 2010, Tse and Wilton, 1988). Here the positive effect with a hospitality service experience is measured in terms of the reported happiness, satisfaction and enjoyment of the consumer (Hightower et al., 2002, Oliver and Swan, 1989). It is closely related to a number of intervening constructs relating to product and service value, and in the context of this study we expect it to be strongly related to both the atmospheric impact of the hospitality space and the level of experiential involvement of consumers (Hightower et al., 2002). Maximising and sustaining positive effect, here achieved through enhancing the hedonic quality and value of the consumer experience, is central to securing competitive advantage for service providers, given the close relationship it shares with positive behavioural outcomes such as consumer loyalty, positive word of mouth, and product repurchase or service reengagement intentions (Alonso-Almeida et al, 2014, Fornell et al., 1996, Zeithaml et al., 1996, Wu et al, 2015). Hightower et al. (2002) note that little controversy surrounds the notion of cultivating positive effect and its importance, though also highlight the need to better understand the interrelationships that govern this complex and volatile process, particularly in hedonic service environments. Here an attempt to illustrate the impact of environment upon play and experiential involvement in securing positive effect in consumers is a significant contribution to our understanding of hospitality service consumption. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H5: Play relates positively to positive effect.

H6: Experiential involvement relates positively to positive effect.

H7: Atmosphere relates positively to positive effect.

H8: There is an indirect relationship between motivation to escape and positive effect, mediated by liminoid hospitality spaces.

H9: There is an indirect relationship between leisure entitlement and positive effect, mediated by liminoid hospitality spaces.
Methodology

Data collection and measures

Convenience sampling was employed to collect a sample of students at a major Scottish university (Calder et al., 1981). Student sampling is supported in theory-building research by the homogenous demographic and behavioural characteristics of students (Wyllie et al., 2014). The questionnaire was pilot tested with 50 respondents (not included in the actual survey) over 14 days. Some items and questions were altered and restructured after the pilot test, to clarify the phrasing of questions. A final sample of 1045 undergraduate students from a variety of courses was collected, with respondents asked to answer a number of questions related to their recent nightclub experiences. Students received a paper-and-pencil questionnaire at the end of their classes, which took them approximately 10 minutes to complete during first semester in 2013 (i.e., self-administered survey). They voluntarily filled out the questionnaires in the classroom. Prior to distributing the survey, students were asked not to provide any information which could link them to their responses. All completed questionnaires, of which more than 9 in 10 respondents (94.5%) were aged 18-24 years old with 45.3% female and 54.7% male respondents, were used in the final analysis.

The constructs for this research were drawn from previous studies and relied on seven-point Likert scales (1 = “strongly disagree” and 7 = “strongly agree”). We adapted the multiple-item scales based on previous works including motivation to escape (Lee et al., 2006), leisure entitlement (McGinnis and Gentry, 2004, McGinnis et al., 2012), play (McGinnis and Gentry, 2004, McGinnis et al., 2012), experiential involvement (Hausman, 2011), positive effect (Hightower et al., 2002, Oliver and Swan, 1989) and atmosphere (Dagger and Danaher, 2014). Table 1 presents the measurement list.

Common method variance (CMV)

As with all self-reported data, there is a hazard of CMV caused by multiple sources (Liang et al., 2007, Podsakoff et al., 2003). To avoid this, we adopted a number of procedural remedies: first, participants were informed that their responses were anonymous to minimise social desirability bias; second, participants were not informed about the research purpose to decrease response bias; and third, the Harman single-factor test was used to check CMV by entering all the principal constructs into an exploratory factor analysis. The findings indicated the existence of a multi-factor structure with the first factor accounting for 27 percent of the total variance showing that CMV is not a likely contaminant of our results. Finally, a common method factor was introduced to the structural model (Liang et al., 2007). The average variance of explained by indicators was 62%, while the average method-based variance was 1.2%, yielding a ratio of 51:1. Therefore, CMV is not a concern for the study.

Results

Partial Least Squares (PLS) was chosen as the method of analysis for this study. PLS suits predictive applications, exploratory research and theory-building as well as adding new constructs that have
not received empirical attention previously (Ashill and Jobber, 2014, Bryce et al., 2015, Hair et al., 2014, Liang et al., 2007). It is gaining popularity in hospitality and marketing research (Berezina et al., 2012, Fraj et al., 2015, Riley et al., 2015, Wilden and Gudergan, 2014). Finally, PLS is more suitable “where theoretical knowledge is not as strong as that demanded by covariance-based approaches such as LISREL, AMOS and EQS, and can be used to suggest where relationships might or might not exist” (Ashill and Jobber, 2014, p.277), and also where the structural model has large numbers of indicators (Hair et al., 2014). SmartPLS 3.0 software was used to analyse the data (Ringle et al., 2014) and 5000 sub-samples were randomly generated.

**Measurement model**

We followed procedures outlined by Hair et al. (2014), Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Henseler et al. (2015) for assessing construct validity and reliability. To assess convergent validity, we tested Cronbach’s alpha, average variance extracted (AVE), factor loadings, and composite reliability (CR). Cronbach’s alpha and CR statistics indicated high reliability for all the items, exceeding the threshold of 0.7 for both of them (Hair et al., 2010). The factor loadings are higher than 0.7 and significant (Hair et al., 2014). The AVE surpassed the threshold of 0.5 for all constructs (see Table 1).

To test whether constructs differed sufficiently, we conducted two approaches. First, we used Fornell and Larcker’s (1981) criterion, which requires a construct’s AVE to be larger than the square of its largest correlation with any constructs (Table 2). All of our constructs met this requirement. Second, we employed Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt’s (2015) heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) approach (i.e., average heterotrait-heteromethod correlations relative to the average monotrait-heteromethod correlations). Their study suggests that the HTMT approach shows superior performance, by means of a Monte Carlo simulation study, compared with Fornell and Larcker’s criterion. If the HTMT value is below 0.85, discriminant validity should be established between constructs. Here, HTMT values of the constructs ranged from 0.271 to 0.762. Finally, we tested HTMT$^{\text{inference}}$ criterion using bootstrapping in order to check whether HTMT is significantly different from 1. HTMT$^{\text{inference}}$ indicates that all HTMT values are significantly different from 1 (ranged from 0.361 to 0.701), therefore the discriminate validity is established. All appeared to support the reliability and validity of the scales.

| Table 1. Assessment of the measurement model |
| Table 2. Latent variables correlation matrix (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) |

**The structural model and hypotheses testing**

We employed blindfolding procedure to assess cross validation commonality and redundancy indices in order to test the quality of the structural model (Hair et al., 2014). All values of the $Q^2$ are positive and similar across omission distances which confirm the model’s predictive relevance as well as
stability of model estimates (Hair et al., 2014). We used omission distances of 8 and 12. The results showed that the estimates are stable (see Table 3). Following Wetzels, Odekerken-Schröder, and van Oppen’s (2009) procedure, we tested Goodness of Fit (GoF) index. This index was judged against the GoF criterion for small (0.10), medium (0.25) and large (0.36) effect sizes based on Cohen’s (1988) cut-off criteria. The GoF was 0.492 which indicates an excellent model fit. The explanatory power of the model is reasonably high, with $R^2$ values for play = 0.741, atmosphere = 0.175, positive effect = 0.420 and experiential involvement = 0.441. $R^2$ values are greater than the recommended 0.10 value (Hair et al., 2010). Table 4 shows decomposition of effects (i.e., direct, indirect and total effects).

Table 3. Blindfolding results

Table 4. Results of hypothesis testing

The findings from the PLS are summarized in Table 4. Our results indicated that motivation to escape directly influences play ($\beta = 0.151, p < 0.01$) and experiential involvement ($\beta = 0.221, p < 0.001$). Therefore, H1a and H1b were supported. The results show that leisure entitlement impacts on play ($\beta = 0.693, p < 0.001$) and experiential involvement ($\beta = 0.378, p < 0.001$) supporting H2a and H2b. Play also influences positively on experiential involvement ($\beta = 0.432, p < 0.001$) and experiential involvement impacts positively on atmosphere ($\beta = 0.230, p < 0.001$). Thus, H3 and H4 were supported. Play ($\beta = 0.392, p < 0.001$), experiential involvement ($\beta = 0.122, p < 0.01$) and atmosphere ($\beta = 0.224, p < 0.001$) influence positively on positive effect supporting H5, H6 and H7. Finally, Zhao, Lynch and Chen (2010, p.200) note that “the one and only requirement to demonstrate mediation is a significant indirect effect”. In order to examine the magnitude of the mediation, we computed the variance accounted for (VAF) value which indicates the ratio of the indirect effect on the total effect. VAF is considered suitable in PLS structural modelling as it uses the standardised path coefficients for testing rather than commonly used Sobel test which employees non-scandalised path coefficients (Hair et al., 2014, Riley et al., 2015). VAF scores larger than 80% signify full mediation and scores between 20% and 80% denote partial mediation (see Table 4). Here, H8 stated the fully mediating role of liminoid consumption space on the relationship between motivation to escape and positive effect ($\beta = 0.278, p < 0.001$), and H9 also stated the fully mediating role of liminoid consumption space on the relationship between leisure entitlement and positive effect ($\beta = 0.281, p < 0.001$), supporting H8 and H9.

Discussion and conclusions

Conclusions

While previous (qualitative) studies have explored consumer experiences of commercial hospitality spaces in liminal or liminoid terms (Jaimangal-Jones et al. 2010; Meier et al., 2014; Rief, 2011; St John, 2008), this quantitative study focusses more closely on the specific demarcations between everyday environments and Turner’s (1974) anti-structural liminoid space. From here, we have sought to understand that which motivates consumers to cross this experiential border, between
the quotidian and the hedonic, and to become sufficiently involved within the commercial hospitality space that they wish to return. Detailed implications for theory and practice follow, yet overall this research finds that consumers are positively affected by commercial hospitality spaces representing escapism from the everyday and satisfying their sense of entitlement to leisure time; these we call liminoid motivators.

**Theoretical Implications**

Our contribution to the study of commercial hospitality spaces and consumer experience is threefold. First, this paper contributes to research into commercial hospitality management by addressing a theoretical gap relating to the impact of motivations upon consumer experience. By exploring the clubbing experience in relation to Turner (1969, 1974, 1982, 1992), this paper contributes a theory of liminoid motivators; namely, that consumers are positively affected by commercial hospitality spaces that attend to their anti-structural motivations. While previous studies have looked at these individually, e.g. escapism (Müller, 2001; Pine and Gilmore, 1998, 2011; Sigala, 2004), leisure entitlement (McGinnis, 2002), and experiential involvement (Edvardsson et al., 2005, Hausman, 2011), to the best of our knowledge this is the first quantitative study to explore, model, and theorise consumer motivations to enter the liminoid space. A conceptual model is developed illustrating the relationships between antecedents of the liminoid experience, the central components of the liminoid space, and short-term responses to it. We find significant relationships among constructs, from which we derive theoretical implications. Specifically, we find consumers are positively affected by consumption spaces that exhibit the anti-structural characteristics of Turner’s (1974) liminoid. As such, we suggest hospitality spaces which accommodate (or are modified to accommodate) liminoid motivators (motivation to escape and entitlement to leisure) will more fully involve and produce positive effects in consumers, leading to repeat visits. The research suggests that a desirable commercial hospitality space is one that goes beyond the mere provision of a physical space to accommodate bodies and activity, by understanding and taking steps to attend to the psychological stresses, strains, and needs of hard-working consumers, who desire temporary liberation from their relationships to work and domesticity.

Our second contribution is to theories of experiential marketing. The broader theoretical implications are that it is vitally important to understand the sociological motivations of consumers in order to more thoroughly involve them in the experiential process of consumption, and that spatial aspects of the consumption experience play a significant role in consumer involvement. Whilst the positive impact of an immersive consumption experience has been asserted elsewhere (Bharwani and Jauhari, 2013; Gillespie and Morrison, 2001; Hemmington, 2007; Kubacki, 2008), the way in which that experience reflects or responds to the domestic or work space is hitherto underexplored. The study thus suggests consumption spaces may be modified to align with or respond to consumer motivations, thereby improving the consumption experience, with practical suggestions below.

Our third contribution is to assert the continued utility of interdisciplinary approaches to consumer behaviour and hospitality management. In this case, anthropological theory is brought to bear on an anthropological process, and we propose that theoretical scholarship on people and the way they behave should be more fully incorporated into the study of management, marketing, and consumption. Our readings of Turner (1969, 1974, 1979, 1982, 1992) broadened our considerations
of experiential marketing to include consumer motivations, thereby compelling us to take a more holistic approach.

**Practical implications**

The practical application of this theory of liminoid consumption spaces requires an attentive understanding of liminoid anti-structure in contemporary contexts. The nightclub setting of this study provides a clear example of a space that people might freely enter in order to escape their daily responsibilities and temporarily lose themselves to play. Discerning other commercial hospitality spaces that may benefit from characterisation and configuration as liminoid involves some practical considerations, although it is likely that hedonic spaces may function as liminoid consumption spaces. As mentioned by Turner (1974), bars, pubs, cafés, and clubs are candidates for having their anti-structural liminoid potential explored, as are restaurants, festivals, concerts, galleries, museums and sporting events, where it is likely consumers wish to escape everyday constraints.

Understanding consumer motivations to enter a particular space is crucial to providing an adequate commercial response. Managers and marketers in the nightclub industry (and in the broader experience economy) can enhance the liminoid characteristics of their consumption spaces by encouraging a sense of escapism and leisure time well-spent, and creating an atmosphere that distinguishes the space as one away from everyday life. Marketing the space as one of social subversion and freedom from the constraints of work and domesticity will go some way towards creating a liminoid space. Management should also acknowledge the role of consumers in the altering and creating the space with which they interact, and this engagement should be encouraged through layout and design features, e.g. semi-labyrinthine structures leading to various thematically or physically delineated spaces would emphasise both freedom from a social order and the feeling of being part of a spontaneous yet select group.

One recent trend in hospitality that practically embodies this notion of creating a liminoid space disconnected from the everyday spheres of work and domesticity is the removal of free Wi-Fi and the banning of laptops from independent cafes (Holpuch, 2014). Although the financial benefits of this practice for the business have been established in individual cases, with increased sales accompanying the increased availability of tables (Russell, 2014), consumer comments asserting the more positive atmosphere and sense of community afforded by this unusual break from otherwise perpetual connectivity suggest significant experiential benefits (Sawyer, 2015). These appear to tie in with our liminoid motivators, and (again dependent on context) hospitality managers may find value in reconsidering the ways in which apparently positive aspects of their business in fact serve to inhibit feelings of escapism and entitlement to time away from work. For instance, while multiple power outlets may be convenient for some consumers, reducing their number or placing charging points all in one secure location would allow a similar sense of freedom from the everyday responsibilities often represented by mobile technologies. Managers of liminoid hospitality spaces should be mindful of the potential alteration in atmosphere when decisions made with the intention of meeting customer demands serve to reconnect consumers with work or domesticity.

Following Chalip’s (2006) study of sporting events as liminoid, we suggest the incorporation of opportunities within the commercial hospitality space that both bring disparate individuals together and encourage them to express and celebrate personal and social identities, e.g. language cafés
(where consumers learn languages through conversation or games), video-gaming nights, consumer-generated music playlists, or bad-taste fashion events, depending on the business. It is hoped the positive impact of liminoid consumption spaces, i.e. repeat business, will enhance consumption of and in other experiential hospitality contexts.

**Limitations and future research**

Several limitations must be noted. First, the results, as with most derived from surveys, should be interpreted with caution, as although the method is reliable and valid, it involves some error of measurement with regard to the degree to which respondents are able to report their concurrence with the questionnaire. Second, data collection was conducted in Scotland, so results may not be generalised to other nightclubs or hedonic contexts elsewhere. Nonetheless, the findings of our model provided preliminary support for relationships between different stages of the model. The sampling of younger respondents excludes older consumers; this could be mitigated by testing in different contexts. Further sample segmentation could also garner insights. For example, this study did not discriminate between frequent and infrequent night-clubbers, and levels of consumer familiarity with liminoid spaces may affect their consumption. Although this study focusses on hedonic consumption, motivations for utilitarian consumption should also be studied, alongside spatial aspects. Finally, qualitative approaches should also be employed in studying liminoid consumption spaces and motivators, in order to more fully explore this theory.
References:


Gennep, A. v. (1960), The Rites of Passage, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.


Wells, S., Graham, K. and Purcell, J. (2009), "Policy implications of the widespread practice of ‘pre-drinking’or ‘pre-gaming’before going to public drinking establishments—are current prevention strategies backfiring?", Addiction, Vol. 104 No. 1, pp. 4-9.


Tables and Figures

Figure 2: Conceptual model

Table 1. Assessment of the measurement model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct items</th>
<th>Loading*</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation to escape</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To escape from routine life</td>
<td>0.769</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To alleviate boredom</td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To escape from responsibility</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To release tension</td>
<td>0.782</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leisure entitlement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure takes priority in my life</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure time for me occurs out of accident</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually have several hours for leisure each week</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobody sets restrictions upon my leisure time</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure time is something to which I believe I am entitled</td>
<td>0.721</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My leisure time is closely monitored</td>
<td>0.784</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that I am deserving of my leisure time</td>
<td>0.722</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I go out to nightclubs, I feel a sense of belonging with others at the club</td>
<td>0.739</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I go out to nightclubs, I feel a sense of harmony with the others</td>
<td>0.759</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often lose control when I club due to extreme excitement</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often lose control when I club due to extreme excitement</td>
<td>0.778</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When I go out to nightclubs, I often become spiritually uplifted 0.740
When I go out to nightclubs, I often lose my mind in rapture 0.785
When I go out to nightclubs, I get caught in a state of euphoria 0.742
When I go out to nightclubs, I easily become ecstatic 0.730
When I go out to nightclubs, I often experience a joy that is beyond measure 0.751
When I go out to nightclubs, I often become elated 0.744
Clubbing is an enjoyable release from the everyday grind 0.703
Clubbing is the best way to relieve my stress 0.737
When I go out to nightclubs, I am surprised to find I have lost track of time 0.722
When I go out to nightclubs, time seems to rush by quickly 0.755

**Experiential Involvement**

I was really “into” the music and dancing, almost as though I went into a trance 0.778
Listening to music and dancing easily affects my emotional state 0.706
When I’m at a club, I tend to forget my everyday concerns and just “dance” 0.769
I listen to music and dance to escape from the world 0.713
I’m fanatical about music and dancing 0.700
I spend a lot of time listening to music and dancing 0.741

**Atmosphere**

In general, the atmosphere at nightclubs is pleasing 0.834
In general, nightclubs have an appealing atmosphere 0.715
The level of noise at nightclubs are appropriate for their setting 0.807
The lighting in nightclubs is appropriate for their setting 0.794
The types and variety of music played in nightclubs are appropriate 0.791

**Positive effect**

I am happy with the experience I have had at nightclubs 0.779
I have been satisfied with my experiences at nightclubs 0.819
I truly enjoy going to nightclubs 0.735
I am elated with the experiences I have had at nightclubs 0.851

**Notes:** * *t*-values for the item loadings to two-tailed test: *t* > 3.29 at *p* < .001.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Atmosphere</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Motivation to Escape</td>
<td>0.529</td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Experiential Involvement</td>
<td>0.276</td>
<td>0.444</td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Leisure entitlement</td>
<td>0.353</td>
<td>0.377</td>
<td>0.537</td>
<td>0.738</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Positive effect</td>
<td>0.386</td>
<td>0.344</td>
<td>0.377</td>
<td>0.423</td>
<td>0.719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Blindfolding results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Communality Omission distance = 8</th>
<th>Redundancy Omission distance = 8</th>
<th>Communality Omission distance = 12</th>
<th>Redundancy Omission distance = 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to Escape</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.202</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Entitlement</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.276</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.274</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>0.741</td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td>0.294</td>
<td>0.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere</td>
<td>0.175</td>
<td>0.255</td>
<td>0.151</td>
<td>0.270</td>
<td>0.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Involvement</td>
<td>0.441</td>
<td>0.358</td>
<td>0.131</td>
<td>0.388</td>
<td>0.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive effect</td>
<td>0.420</td>
<td>0.365</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>0.365</td>
<td>0.149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: n/a = not applicable

Table 4. Results of hypothesis testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path (Hypothesis)</th>
<th>Standardised coefficients (t-values)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to Escape → Play (H1a)</td>
<td>0.151*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to Escape → Experiential Involvement (H1b)</td>
<td>0.221**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure entitlement → Play (H2a)</td>
<td>0.693**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure entitlement → Experiential Involvement (H2b)</td>
<td>0.378**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play → Experiential Involvement (H3)</td>
<td>0.432**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Involvement → Atmosphere (H4)</td>
<td>0.230**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play → Positive effect (H5)</td>
<td>0.392**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Involvement → Positive effect (H6)</td>
<td>0.122*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere → Positive effect (H7)</td>
<td>0.224**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to Escape → Positive effect (H8)</td>
<td>0.278**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure entitlement → Positive effect (H9)</td>
<td>0.281**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: $t$-values for the item loadings to two-tailed test: *$t > 2.57$ at $p < 0.01$, **$t > 3.29$ at $p < 0.001$. 

Notes: Diagonal: Square root of AVE.