

Experiences and Practices  
– Challenges and Opportunities for Value Research

Anu Helkkula  
Hanken School of Economics, Finland  
[anu.helkkula@hanken.fi](mailto:anu.helkkula@hanken.fi)  
and  
Aalto School of Science, Finland  
[anu.helkkula@tkk.fi](mailto:anu.helkkula@tkk.fi)

Carol Kelleher  
Cranfield School of Management, United Kingdom  
[carol.kelleher@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:carol.kelleher@cranfield.ac.uk)  
and  
University College Cork, Ireland  
[carol.kelleher@ucc.ie](mailto:carol.kelleher@ucc.ie)

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This paper addresses how experiences are different from practices and relates this discussion to current developments in relation to value research within Service Dominant (S-D) logic and the broader service domain.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The paper firstly provides a conceptual overview of how experiences and practices are characterised in research, how experiences differ from practice(s) and if, and where, experiences and practices intersect. Secondly, the epistemological and methodological differences are illustrated using a study on narrated experiences and practical observations of car washing practices.

**Findings:** While practices are primarily routinised patterns of behaviour; experiences focus more on individuals' value determinations in different contexts. When value is created in practices, the value experience also encompasses the experience of the practice. Practices also change over time when the collective contested consensus causes practices to break down or evolve in order to improve value outcomes and experiences.

**Research implications:** It is not just the value experience or value creation practices that should be considered, rather the intersubjectivity of social relations should also be acknowledged by value researchers.

**Practical implications:** In order to better facilitate individual experiences and collective practices, service providers need to understand both experiences and practices in order to co-create value with individuals and their networks.

**Originality/value:** To date, limited attention has been paid to the differences and similarities between experiences and practices in current value research. This paper outlines some of the differences between and intersection of experiences and practices, and how they relate to opportunities and challenges in value research.

**Keywords:** experience, practice, value, co-creation

**Paper type:** Conceptual paper

# Experiences and Practices – Challenges and Opportunities for Value Research

## 1. Introduction

Experiences and practices have been used in recent years to describe people's behaviour, choices and preferences. Although there is widespread contemporary agreement on the importance of the concepts of experience and practice, it is apparent that both constructs should be more precisely characterised in relation to each other in order to better inform the current discourse on value within the service domain. In particular, the contemporary value discussion in service-dominant (S-D) logic differentiates between routinised action and event-specific, meaning laden experience, and recognises the importance of both constructs. S-D logic indicates in its foundational premises that value is uniquely and phenomenologically (experientially) determined, while at the same time positing that value co-creation takes place in actor networks (Vargo and Lusch, 2008a). The present paper further contributes to the value discussion by relating value to experiences and practices, and by identifying some opportunities and challenges of conceptualising experiences and practises within contemporary discourse on value.

We first outline how experiences and practices have been characterised in the literature to date, and discuss how such insights can deepen the current emergent understanding of both concepts in contemporary S-D logic discourse. Next, we illustrate the epistemological and methodological differences between experiences and practices using the narrated experiences and practical observations on consumers' car washing practices. The differences and similarities between value experience and value creation practices are then presented. The paper concludes with the contributions to service research and S-D logic, together with suggestions for future research opportunities for value research.

## 2. Characterisation of Experiences and Practices

Due to a lack of critical discussion and understanding of how the concepts of experience and practice have been characterised in contemporary Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), and more broadly in the sociology literature, experiences and practices have been as somewhat overlapping and interchangeable constructs in current service discourse and debates. As both experiences and practices are key concepts in contemporary value research, it is meaningful to discuss their ontological (what experiences / practices are) and epistemological issues (what can be understood as data on them), in order to better appreciate how each construct might be more accurately

conceptualised and operationalised within S-D logic and the broader service domain. We then discuss the similarities and differences between experience and practices in terms of philosophical origins, form of knowing, and evidence in a social context.

## 2.1 Background - Experience and Practice

In order to understand experiences and practices, it is first necessary to examine the background of the both concepts.

### 2.1.1 Experience

In service research, the concept of experience has been characterised in many ways. First, experience has been characterised as process-based, which relates to understanding service as a process consisting of different phases or elements. Second, experience has been characterised as outcome-based as one element in models linking a number of variable or attributes to various outcomes. Third, experience has been characterised as a phenomenological experience, which relates to the value discussion in S-D logic, CCT and interpretative consumer research (Helkkula, 2010). Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 132) characterise experiences as a: “□ primarily subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses and aesthetic criteria”.

This later categorisation of phenomenological experience is topical in S-D logic discourse, as the tenth foundational premise of S-D logic identifies value as being phenomenological (experiential), and meaning laden (Vargo and Lusch, 2008a). The phenomenological value experience does not only focus on externally observable behavior; it also incorporates imagined experience or behaviour (Helkkula, 2011). In their foundational experiences, Vargo and Lusch (2008a) preferred to use the word phenomenological instead of experiential, as experiential has a strong connotation to hedonic experience, e.g. such as white water rafting and amusement parks (Arnould and Price, 1993). More recent research on phenomenological experience has analysed different types of service setting, ranging from everyday service to municipal service (Helkkula, 2010).

### 2.1.2 Practice

Due to the varied and diverse contributors to the development of what can be broadly termed practice theory, this broad church is quite heterogeneous. However, some general points can be made in relation to the broad tenets or characteristics of this rich body of scholarship. Practice theories are a broad category of social culturalist theories that examine the structures and routinised actions which emerge in our ‘everyday’ and ‘life-world’ (Reckwitz, 2002). In our study, we draw

on Reckwitz's (2002) understanding of practice theory as a type of cultural theory, which he relates back to a diverse group of scholarship and scholars including, amongst others, Bourdieu (c.f. 1972; 1997), Giddens (1979; 1984), Wittgenstein (1984 [1952]; 1984 [1969]), Heidegger (1986 [1927]) and Schatzki (1996). Reckwitz (2002) defines a practice as

“a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected with one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge” (p. 249).

It is thus “a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250).

## 2.2 Form of knowing and evidence

Form of knowing affects what can be accepted as evidence on experience and practices. While experiences and practices have different philosophical approaches, it is meaningful to discuss the epistemological aspects, i.e. applicable evidence on experience and practice.

### 2.2.1 Experience

The form of knowing about phenomenological experience involves the interpretation of subjective experiences. This relates to the Husserlian phenomenology (Husserl [1931] 1967; [1936] 1970), which focuses on the individual subjective experience and how people make sense of it (Woodruff Smith, 2007). In phenomenology, the notion of subjectivity and shared meanings is a mental construct of the conscious and unconscious mind (Reckwitz, 2002). Phenomenologists seek to uncover and describe how individuals experience and interpret their world (Reckwitz 2002). When subjectivity is prioritised as a form of knowing, what an individual internally experiences, and how he or she makes sense of it, can be considered as data (Goulding, 2005; Landridge, 2007).

Service research discusses indirect connections, in which the individual has not been in contact with the service provider or used the service (Meyer and Schwager, 2007). As value experiences may sometimes involve indirect encounters with the service, they may be based on imagination (Helkkula, 2011). Even imaginary value experiences are valuable data for value research, as they illuminate individuals' preferences. Accordingly, phenomenological experience may not always be externally observable, and it cannot be considered as a document of what really

happened. Thus, when epistemology is subjective, data does not have to, but can have, an external replica (Valberg, 1992).

Woodruff Smith (2007) characterises various types of first-person experience including, for example, perception, imagination, thought, emotion, desire, volition, and action. As such, these different types of experience provide the range of access to different pathways for interpreting value experiences. Phenomenologists describe different types of methods to study experience, namely describing individual lived experience, interpreting an experience by relating it to its context (hermeneutics), and analysing different types of experience (Woodruff Smith, 2007).

### 2.2.2 Practice

Korkman (2006) notes that practice theory takes an anti-subjective and anti-individualistic stance, whereas Schatzki (1996) posits that practices are coordinated performances, which can be situated somewhere along a sliding continuum between individualist and holist approaches. Warde (2005), for example, acknowledges both the routinised nature of behaviour, as well as the roles of emotion, embodiment, volition etc. For practice theorists, the locus of analysis is not the mind or individual interpretations of practices or behaviours, rather it is on the complex amalgam that is, and off itself, a practice. While practices are learnt routinised bodily behaviours or performances, they also include mental activities and processes (Reckwitz 2002).

While there is a mental component to practices, practices also encompass tacit knowledge, routinised emotion, embodied performance, and ways or ‘frames’ for understanding the world. The mental routines, knowledge or activities encompassed in practice are therefore not seen as characteristics or possessions of the individual him or herself, rather integral to the social practice itself (Reckwitz, 2002). The individual is simply a conduit or subconscious carrier of a practice, and represents a unique intersection of many diverse practices within a cultural or social group (Reckwitz, 2002).

While practices involve both actions, representations and sayings, for practice theorists, language in itself is not recognised as revealing individual sense making, rather is regarded as yet another practice. The carrying out of a practice is recognised and sustained by performance i.e. “a performance presupposes a practice” (Warde 2005, p. 134). According to Reckwitz (2002, p.255),

“language is seen to exist only in its routinised use: in discursive practices the participants ascribe, in a routinized way, certain meanings to certain objects (which thus become signs) to understand other objects, and above all, in order to do something.

### 2.3 Role of the Individual and Social

When we compare experiences and practices, it is necessary to state whether the focus of the research is on individuals' sensemaking of their experiences or individuals' participation in practices.

#### 2.3.1 Experience

Traditional Husserlian phenomenology focuses on the individual subjective experience, and how people make sense of it (Woodruff Smith, 2007). While the primary focus is on individual experience, due to the intersubjective nature of experience, the mind is considered to be influenced by ongoing social interactions (Reckwitz, 2002). Therefore, individual interpretations and sense making in relation to experience are both individually and socially constructed. Pace (2008, p. 214) writes: "completely personal meanings could be considered as close to madness, that is, a monologue not understandable by society".

Individuals make sense of their value experiences in a social context. Even if every individual experiences value in his or her individual way, within a group, a specific type of value experience might become dominant, as people make sense of their experiences in a social context (Helkkula, 2010). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) view individual experience as integral to a multi-stakeholder network, where personalised experiences are unique to each individual "at a specific point in time, in a specific location, in the context of a specific event" (p.10). As an individual reconstructs current and anticipated value experiences based on previous experiences in a social context, an individual never enters the realm of new experience with a totally blank mental canvas. Each person brings his or her own past life experiences to a situation (Webster and Mertova, 2007). On the other hand, every individual experiences specific phenomenon from his or own perspective.

#### 2.3.2 Practice

Barnes (2001) refers to practices as the "shared possession of the collective" (p.25). As previously outlined, the individual is merely a carrier or conduit for a social practice, and practices are not characteristics of any individual in and of themselves. However, while practices are shared, learned, bodily, and mental routines and behaviours at a collective level, they are not always routine at an individual level in all situations and contexts (Barnes, 2001; Warde, 2005). Individuals therefore do not perform practices in an identical way; rather practices are dynamic and internally differentiated, for example between different groups of people, such as experts, novices, professionals, amateurs etc. (Bourdieu, 1997; Warde, 2005). From the individual's perspective, the performance of a particular practice may vary based on factors, such as perceived or actual intrinsic or extrinsic

benefits, level of commitment, previous experience, stock of knowledge etc., all of which impact on the understanding, procedures and engagement involved in carrying out the practice (Warde, 2005).

As noted by Reckwitz (2002), the individual stands at the confluence or intersection of a multiplicity of practices. This is of interest as the engagement or participation in certain practices may affect other practices (Warde, 2005).

## 2.4 Role of Subjects, Objects and Context

The subject is the actor or individual, who either experiences value or participates in value creating practices in relation to the objects involved within the phenomenon. It is also important to notice, that the concept of context varies according to the philosophical approach adopted: in phenomenology, the subject determines the context, while in practice theory the context is the socio-cultural context in which the practice is embedded.

### 2.4.1 Experience

While experience embraces the ‘totality of the human-being-in-the-world’ (Heidegger (1962[1927])), value experience involves inner mental processes and interpretation. Therefore, an individual is always the subject of his own value experience in his lifeworld, not an external observer. Thus, what appears to the individual as an experience is the experience (Landridge, 2007).

Another important concept within phenomenology is the concept of intentionality, originally developed by Edmund Husserl (1849-1938). Individuals intentionally use objects in certain ways in order to achieve certain goals or value-in-use. The concept of intentionality implies that experience always involves consciousness of something in a specific context:

“Human beings are fundamentally related to the contexts in which they live or, more philosophically, that all being is to be understood as “being-in-the-world”. Intention describes one mental state among many; intentionality describes a basic configuration of person and world” (Pollio et al., 1997, p.7).

### 2.4.2 Practice

Objects, in addition to bodily and mental routines, are another integral and often indispensable part of practices (Reckwitz, 2002). Objects are often used in a particular way in particular contexts due to the shared understanding and knowledge of the collective. In practice theory therefore, the know-how required to carry out a practice remains in the background as tacit knowledge, and does not



involve conscious reflection. Carrying out a practice implies a routinised behaviour, as opposed to conscious intentionality, such as wanting to celebrate Christmas or to avoid overspending in the end of season sales.

## 2.5 Temporality

Temporality relates to understanding of time, the longitudinal aspect of value and the recursive nature of practices.

### 2.5.1 Experience

The phenomenological value experience is not restricted to linear time. Research has described phenomenological sense making using the hermeneutic spiral, where current experience is always based on previous experiences (Gummesson, 2000; Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2003). The phenomenological value experience is therefore multi-temporal, as it includes the past, present and future value experiences. There is recognition that past experiences are subject to ongoing reconstruction, and that individuals have imaginary experiences that take place in future time.

### 2.5.2 Practice

Practices are mostly understood as routinised type of behaviour, which take place in a certain social, historical and cultural context. Practices or routinised bodily and mental behaviours imply recursivity and repetition over time as they are socially reproduced again and again (Reckwitz, 2002). Practices therefore have a history, tradition and associated conventions (e.g. Bourdieu's notion of habitus). This does not imply, however, that practices are not subject to change and carry on unchanged and indefinitely. Once collective dissent in relation to the consensus of shared purpose and meaning emerges, for example as a result of particular events, institutions, historical or cultural events, the structure of hitherto accepted practices break down (Reckwitz, 2002). Practices therefore are dynamic and change over time as shared meanings, understanding and conventions are contested, challenged or become inadequate in some way (Warde, 2005). In addition, changes to some practices impact on other practices (Warde, 2005), such as the development of e-readers has changed how and where we read, share and consume literature.

## 3. Illustration of Car Washing Experiences and Practices

In this section, we illustrate how car washing value experiences and value co-creation practices differ and intersect with each other. The aim of the empirical study was to better understand the

phenomenon of car washing, and especially what consumers experienced as critical, either positive or negative, in their car washing practices. The research was conducted in a greater metropolitan area of a Northern European city during winter and spring 2010-2011.

We analysed the phenomenon of car washing using a combination of consumer narratives (Dataset 1) and by observing consumers' car washing behaviour (Dataset 2). Consumers, who got their cars washed either owned the car, it belonged to a family member, or was a company car.

### 3.1 Interpreting Value Experiences of Car Washing with Narratives

#### 3.1.2. Sample and Data collection

The interviews were collected during the winter time, when there was snow on the ground. The stories covered previous experience as well as imaginary future experience and thus included other seasons as well.

Table 1 Summary of the cases and the interview questions

	Dataset on car washing
Service category	Car wash at the petrol station
Total number and gender of respondents	10 consumers, 7 male and 3 female
Time and duration of the interviews	November 2010 – January 2011. Interviews took from 10 to 40 minutes.
Age and profession of respondents	Respondents ranged from 27 to 60 years, all were working professionals involved in a variety of occupations or students.
Preliminary interview questions	Do you get your car washed by yourself? Where? Do you pay for getting your car washed by yourself? / Does your company pay for getting your car washed? Where does your car usually get washed? Your age? Your profession? Do you live in a flat / terraced house / private house? Where do you live?
Metaphor used	A magic wand / should everything be possible without any financial, technical, time related or other restrictions
Interview questions of lived experience and lived critical events and other events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Would you please tell me how you usually get your car washed. How does it all begin?</li> <li>2. Tell about an event that you remember well, either positive or negative.</li> </ol>
Interview questions of imaginary experience	Tell me an imaginary story of how your event would take place if anything was possible. Forget technical restrictions, everything is possible. Now the magic wand will let you do what you want.

The narratives were transcribed and input into NVivo. Both researchers read each the interviews twice, and transcripts were categorised in themes according to what the customers identified being critical, either positive or negative, in their car washing experiences. The consumer narratives in relation to consumers' car washing experiences were analysed and coded in NVivo using Event-Based Narrative Inquiry Technique (EBNIT) (Helkkula and Pihlström, 2010). EBNIT is a targeted narrative technique, which can be used in a structured way (Czarniawska, 2004; Webster and Mertova, 2007) to collect and analyse value experiences regarding a specific service. EBNIT uses metaphors as a projective technique (Boddy, 2004; 2005) to encourage consumers to generate innovative ideas and 'out of box' thinking without limiting the study to technical capabilities or expertise in one specific field of business (Helkkula and Pihlström, 2010). Table 2 shows the EBNIT structure, in which the themes in narratives are categorised into lived experience ('lived critical events', 'other lived events') and imaginary experience ('imaginary events').

Table 2 Definition of ‘lived’ and ‘imaginary experience’ in Event-Based Narrative Inquiry Technique (EBNIT) data collection and analysis (Helkkula and Pihlström, 2010).

Lived experience	Experienced by respondents
Lived critical event	An event was selected by the respondent because of its unique, illustrative and confirmatory nature.
Other lived event	Confirms and repeats the experience of the critical event from the respondents’ perspective.
Imaginary experience	Potentially better use experience according to the respondents’ perspective.
Imaginary event	Event told in an imaginary narrative, which has been created by the respondent with the help of a metaphor. Often transforms critical or like events, i.e. how the respondent would like it to happen.

### 3.2 Observation of Car Washing Practices

#### 3.2.1 Sample and Data Collection

The observational dataset was based on the observations recorded by the service provider representatives and documented in databases. Observations included e.g. the number of people who used the service at different days and times, how many paid with a company credit card etc.) In addition, one of the authors observed and recorded in a logbook details of consumers’ car washing practices at five different washing points in different times of the day between November 2010 and May 2011, for a cumulative period of 20 hours. Thus, the period included time with and without snow on the ground, and when temperatures varied from -20 to +20 C. Each of the five car washing points were located in the same broad residential area, and near working places, in the same geographical region where the interviews were conducted.

#### 3.3 Summary of Findings

The narratives revealed consumers’ sensemaking and subjective value experiences, and are not considered documents of what happened (Goulding, 2005). On the other hand, observational data is able to describe the behaviour observed, but it may not make sense why people perform practices and how they valued them.

Table 3 Narrative extracts and observations of car washing experiences and practices

	Extracts of value experiences	Observations of value-in-use practices
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<p>The individual and social aspects with car washing</p>	<p>“[reason to wash the car]... I get the car washed as I enjoy driving a clean car”</p> <p>”[reason to wash the car] ... , I want to make an impression by having a clean car when I visit somebody and drive my own car, or when some people are driving with me. ”</p> <p>”[when do I get my car washed]...For a long time I have thought that my car needs a wash, because it looks dirty. Then one morning I look at the sky and just experience that today I want to get my car washed.</p> <p>”[when do I get my car washed]... Always when I try to get my car washed, there is a queue. I would wash my car more often, but the car wash is always busy.”</p> <p>”[when do I get my car washed]... I check the queue. If there are over five cars, I will not queue; I feel stymied and return home.”</p>	<p>One of the car washing peak times is just before public holidays (e.g. Christmas, Easter, student examination feast).</p> <p>Other peak times include after a cold period when the temperature gets higher [when it is very cold the windows and doors freeze after washing when wet], and once the sun returns after a period of rain. Most of the time, the car wash could serve a lot more customers.</p> <p>The majority of consumers come to get their car washed alone.</p>
<p>Role of subjects, objects and context with car washing</p>	<p>”[when choosing at the cash point the type of wash] ...I asked the boy at the cash point what the crystal wash is, why it costs 3 euros more than a super wash. He did not really know. I asked him whether the car would be shinier than if I choose the super wash, and he just admitted it might be so. I chose the cheaper wash anyway. I am frustrated with all the different options available as I can't tell how they differ.”</p> <p>”[while being in the car wash]..I don't enjoy getting my car washed but I tolerate it in order to get a clean car.”</p>	<p>Consumers who independently pay for the car wash tend to choose cheaper washing options.</p> <p>Consumers paying with the company credit card typically take the most expensive washing options.</p> <p>Consumers do not tend to interact socially when getting their cars washed. They tend to stay in their own cars while queuing in their cars. While the car is being washed, they wipe the car inside with the paper towel provided, write text messages with their mobile phones or just sit back.</p>
<p>Car washing and its temporal nature</p>	<p>”[while being in the car wash] ...Once I got stuck on the rails as I forgot to take off my hand brake. I had to wait for the staff to come and release my car, and then I had to back to the beginning and start the wash all over again. It was really humiliating for my male self esteem. Every time I get my car washed, I am afraid that something like that might happen again.”</p> <p>”[ when do I get my car washed] ... I choose a day when I do not have any meetings in the morning. Then I drive my car to the car wash next to my work. But I will not join if there is a long queue.”</p> <p>”[ reason to choose a specific car washing point]... I once received very good service here. That's why I tend to come here.”</p>	<p>Very seldom anything extraordinary happens. Sometimes the machine breaks down and the washing service is closed until prepared.</p> <p>The same consumers tend to come during specific times, some in the morning, some after work, some later in the evening.</p> <p>Consumer visiting car wash points near to offices wear more formal clothing than consumers, who visit car wash points in the residential area.</p>
<p>Lived and imaginary perspective with car washing</p>	<p>”[a consumer driving a private car]... I would like the car to become clean without me having to do anything.”</p> <p>”[a consumer driving a private car]... I would want somebody to come, take my keys and return a clean car.”</p>	<p>People, who drive a company car, more often buy the personal washing service. People, who pay privately, use the drive-in car wash.</p>

The narrative extracts and observations of car washing practices show that the datasets intersect with many aspects: when people get their cars washed, whether they pay for the service privately, and that car washing is not considered to be a social action. The differences appear in relation to such car washing value experiences, which are not externally observable. Especially, consumers' sensemaking in relation to a potentially better or imagined use-experience was mostly not externally observable. Consumers mostly disliked queuing to get their car washed. Indeed, consumers would ideally like to have their car washed for the drive-in price without having to take it to car wash. While consumers experienced the car wash as busy, the observations showed that the car washing points had a lot of extra capacity available.

#### 4. Discussion and Implications for Value Research

In this section we summarise our discussion of how experiences differ from practice(s) in Table 4 and discuss the implications for value research. The conceptual discussion, as well as the empirical findings, highlight that the intersection between experiences and practices lies in the individual versus social and the once-off versus routinised aspects of value creation. Value experiences and practices are not mutually exclusive as both are based on previous experiences and practices.

Table 4 Summary of the ontological and epistemological differences underlying the characterization of experience and value.

Characterization	Experience	Practice
Philosophical perspective	Phenomenological (experiential)	Socio cultural
Phenomenon	Phenomena as subjective experiences and how people make sense of them (Woodruff Smith, 2007).	Phenomena as embodied and routinised actions, performances.
Evidence about the phenomenon	Interpretative: individuals' (service consumer(s)') subjective experiences are justified as data. They do not need to be externally observable.	People's observable embodied behaviour in their everyday life is justified as data.
Form of knowing	Sensemaking that is based on iterative and cumulative process of previous and current understanding (the hermeneutic spiral).	Embodied performance and representation (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde 2005). Observation by an external observer (Korkman, Storbacka and Harald, 2010).
Individual versus social perspective	Experiences are both individually (intra-subjective) and socially (inter-subjective) constructed.	Practices are manifested and embodied at the collective level, but can be changed at the individual level.

Lived and imaginary perspective	Includes lived and imaginary value experiences. Incorporates both direct and indirect experiences i.e. the individual service customer can imagine the experience of service in the inner-world without ever having experienced the service in external world.	Focus on externally observable embodied performance, representation or behaviour.  While practices incorporate tacit knowledge or know how, this cannot be observed directly.
Temporal nature	Experiences are based on current, previous and future experiences within and outside the context of the specific service.	Practices are recursive, more or less routinised actions (Korkman, 2006), however they are also dynamic and change or evolve over time (Warde, 2005).
Context	Event specific and justified by the individual in the individual's lifeworld, which is socially constructed. Identifies the world as lived in comparison to the world as construed by an external entity e.g. a service provider.	Embedded and embodied in a socio-cultural context (Korkman et al., 2010).

#### 4.1 Value Experiences and Practices

While phenomenology focuses on individual sensemaking of experience, practice theory focuses on social practices and on the interconnectedness of embodied action or performance, mental activities in relation to shared meaning, understanding and signification and the use of objects (Reckwitz, 2002). However, both approaches have been critiqued. Specifically, phenomenology is often critiqued for preserving the duality of mind and body by focusing on how the conscious subject interprets or makes sense of his or her behaviours and actions, resulting in an 'over-intellectualization' or rationalization of experience and sensemaking. In comparison, practice theories seek to illuminate the more routinised, common sensical everyday, which is often subconscious but potentially powerful nature of routinised behaviour (Reckwitz, 2002). Korkman (2006) states that the experiential/phenomenological approach to studying value is overly individualistic and subjectivist, as excessive focus is placed on the consumer's own immediate experience. The social and cultural context is not actively taken into account (Holt, 1995).

For practice theorists, the dualism and separation between mind and body does not exist. The embodied subject subconsciously acts, or participates in value co-creation practices without the direct active or conscious control of the mind. Warde (2005), however, posits that, at a philosophical level, practice theories may presuppose or overemphasise the degree of shared understanding or consensus of meaning in relation to practices when considering them at an empirical level. Turner (1994) contends that, as we can only come to understand certain practices, including value co-creation through evidence of participation in certain activities, we cannot directly explain how the tacit knowledge implicit in practices might be transferred or shared in practically the same way between groups of people. Barnes (2001), however, rejects Turner's (1994) argument stating "what is required to understand practice [...] is not individuals oriented

primarily by their own habits nor is it individuals oriented by the same collective object; rather it is human beings oriented towards each other” (p. 24). This implies that it is not just the individual experience of value or value creation practices that should be of concern for the researcher, rather that the intersubjectivity of social relations should also be acknowledged and given primacy in value research.

We posit that value experience and value co-creation practices are tied in a gossamer like mesh with each impacting, often subtlety, cumulatively and subconsciously, on each other as value creation practices are embedded in or foreground value experiences and vice versa. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty asserts that “the relation between the individual and society is ‘dialectical’, and reciprocal: individuals shape culture, but culture also shapes individuals, and this reciprocity ultimately depends on the fact that neither individuals nor culture can be totally separated from each other” (Matthews, 2002, p.101). Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) also recognises the “notion of the self embodied within – that is, universally oriented to – an experiential world that is deeply and inevitably informed by its particular cultural environment.” (p.23).

#### 4.2 Relationship between Individual and Social Value Creation

On the one hand, phenomenology gives primacy to the unique nature of individual experience of value, which cannot be understood solely by observable routinised behaviours. On the other hand, the mental interpretations in phenomenology are seen to reveal experience from the individual’s unique perspective. The mental routines, knowledge or activities encompassed in practices are seen as characteristics of the practice, not the individual (Reckwitz, 2002).

In addition, individuals do not appropriate cultural objects and ‘reproduce’ practices when they engage in value creation. At a conscious and unconscious level, we experience ourselves and indeed others partaking and engaging in value co-creation practices. While practice theory seeks to ‘de-centre’ the ‘value experience’ from value co-creation practices, and assumes that groups of people are disposed (or not) to a particular practice, our sensemaking in relation to value experiences from a phenomenological perspective cannot (nor should not) be divorced from the experience of value creation practice itself. Therefore, value co-creation practices (Holttinen, 2010) are part of experience of a value, regardless of the degree to which it can or cannot be verbalised, observed, felt or remember. As Holland et al. (1998) notes that all participants in a practice have a perspective and experience their participation in the practice. Holland et al’s (1998) observation reinforces the importance of intentionality, i.e. the requirement to focus on how things appear to individuals as they consciously focus on such things, or rather when such things come into their consciousness (Landridge, 2007). We therefore need to consider the first hand intentional stance or



situated perspective of the individual when researching and interpreting both value experiences and practices (Pollio et al., 1997).

#### 4.3 Conceptualising value to consider both phenomenological and practice based perspectives

Within S-D logic, Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2008b) have consistently commented on the excessive concentration of value in exchange, and advocated its replacement with value in use and more recently value in context. Penaloza and Venkatesh (2006) argue that Vargo and Lusch's (2008b) proposition of replacing value-in-exchange with value-in-use represents an unnecessarily polarised and polarising position. Baudrillard (1998 [1970]), as cited in Warde (2005), has forcefully argued that an excessive concentration on use value has obscured sign value, which is integral to the practice based perspective, and how they enable the communication of shared meanings in a social context.

This argument becomes more pertinent when we begin to conceptualise value from a practice based as opposed to a phenomenological based perspective. While value-in-exchange can only exist if value-in-use has been created or emerges (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Grönroos, 2006; 2008; 2009), Kelleher and Peppard (2011) note that Penaloza and Venkatesh (2006, p.302) present a convincing argument for conceptualising “value as created in exchange and simultaneously and sequentially in use”. Both exchange value and use value are seen as constituting sign value i.e. systems of social practices and institutionally shared meanings between consumers and organisations (Venkatesh, Penaloza and Firat, 2006). Value, which comprises exchange value, use value and sign value, is therefore seen to emerge from practices and various shared and contested meanings mutually negotiated in the marketplace (Venkatesh et al., 2006). Such a perspective recognises the economic or utilitarian notion of “what” and “what for” in consumption, as well as encompassing the notion of individual and collective subjective experiences and practices of value creation and value-in-use (Kelleher and Peppard, 2011).

Table 5 Possibilities and challenges for future research

			Implications for Value Research	
	Experiences	Practices	Possibility	Challenge
The phenomenon and its temporal nature	Experiences are based on previous, current and future experiences and recursive practices which may change over time.	Practices are recursive, and subject to change over time.	In order to gain a longitudinal understanding of value, value researchers should not only focus on one event as value is based on previous events.	What to focus on when analysing value: e.g. one service event vs. the longitudinal effect of many service events.

Evidence about value	Phenomenology illuminates individual experience by examining how individuals make sense of their experiences at an individual and collective level (Warde, 2005).	Practice theory invites researchers and practitioners to consider the collective culture and conventions, which underpin, govern and frame to varying degrees how individuals conduct and engage with everyday life (Warde, 2005).	To research, make sense and thus facilitate value creating practices and value experiences	Practices may be unconscious and mental and experiences may be imaginary.  Defining the boundary of a practice (Warde, 2005), or indeed the degree to which practices can be bounded give that individuals may be participating in a number of practices at any given point in time.
Individual versus social perspective	Individuals make sense of their value experiences in relation to other individuals in a social context.	Collective value creating practices may be changed at the individual level.	Implies that value creation takes place both individually and in networks. Therefore, value is socially co-created.	People belong to many different networks, which continuously affect each other.  The degree to which the researcher may claim that diverse non-identical individual performances relate to a particular practice (Warde, 2005).
Lived and imaginary perspective	Value experiences based on imaginary experiences may affect how value is experienced or practices are performed.	People may perform practices, but do not consciously consider them to be value experiences.	Implies that with the help of subjective value experiences, researchers may interpret whether individuals consider practices valuable.	Challenge in facilitating value experiences and value creation practices, where the service provider is not directly involved.
Context	Value experiences are context specific. The context is socially constructed but defined by the one who experiences the value.	Value creation practices recur in contested social cultural contexts.	While practices are based on value experiences and value creation practices, they indicate what people consider worth doing.	Implies that value is not a universal concept that would apply to all contexts and situational setting. This creates variety and challenge with generalisable approximates.

## 5. Conclusion

The paper contributes to the value discussion in S-D logic by addressing some of the epistemological and ontological opportunities and challenges presented by developing a deeper understanding of how experience and practice constructs are characterised in the value discourse within S-D logic. While practices are primarily socially constructed, repeated patterns of behaviour, experiences focus more on individual's unique value determinations in different contexts. Service

researchers and providers need to understand both experiences and practices in order to better facilitate people's experiences and practices when co-creating value with individuals and their networks.

Experiences and practices intersect where individuals as social actors merge once-off and routinised events, and value is co-created. Consideration of phenomenological value experiences contributes to value research by revealing subjective preferences making sense of such perceptions, which are not externally observable. Equally, consideration of value co-creation practices contributes to value research by revealing people's behaviour in their lived lives.

This study has been the first systematic attempt in service research to differentiate experiences and practices in relation to value research. The purpose of this study is not to say that experiences and practices are exclusive, they rather complement each other and offer future possibilities for value research. The authors encourage future conceptual and empirical studies in value experiences, value creating practices and co-creation of value.

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