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Pursuing personal constructs through quality, value, and satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

The theoretical notion of personal constructs implies that the very meaning of things, including activities, ultimately is determined by the extent to which it moves one closer to attaining central ideological states known as terminal personal values. Marketing and consumer research models traditionally approach deeply held personal values as an important, motivational, individual difference characteristic that orients behavior. This research takes a value-based perspective and examines personal values achievement as a climactic result of customer-retailer interaction. Field research across two service contexts provides a test of whether and how key service constructs contribute to the perception of progress toward a preferable state. Results from two studies provide consistent evidence that retail services including shopping and dining can allow customers to incrementally achieve a preferred personal value state through a sequence of quality, experiential (hedonic) value realized and customer satisfaction. Theoretical and managerial implications discuss the process and business implications.

1. Introduction

Marketing and consumer researchers espouse the virtues of value creation and customer satisfaction (Cronin et al., 2000; Gallarza et al., 2011). Customers receive value from retail experiences and are satisfied, to varying degrees, depending on whether the experience addresses specific needs-based motivations. Although motivations often prove difficult to examine directly, shoppers systematically orient motivations toward desirable ends based on a finite number of individual and deeply held personal values (Mowen and Spears, 1999; Rokeach, 1972; Vinson et al., 1977). The question addressed in this research is can everyday interactions with a retailer like a quick restaurant meal or retail shopping bring customers closer to perceiving a more desired existence? Put alternatively, can a shopping trip or dining experience aide customers toward achieving closely held, motivational, personal values, and if so, what can a retailer do to facilitate this process?

Customers unquestionably seek value through their behaviors. Different research streams provide varying perspectives on the idea of value creation (Babin and Attaway, 2000; Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Lusch and Vargo, 2008). Value represents the marketing outcome capturing the worth realized given the resources invested in customers' specific shopping activities (Babin and James, 2010; Gronroos, 2008). An examination of the literature on customer value provides two perspectives. One perspective pertains to value as an outcome of a specific consumption episode (Gallarza et al., 2011), while the other is more abstract and uses the term "personal values" to refer to a basic orientation that links motivation to meaningful distinctions among alternatives (Mowen and Spears, 1999; Schwartz, 2011). Value as an outcome is operationalized using utilitarian value and hedonic value. Utilitarian value seeks to answer the extent to which the customer can complete the shopping task while hedonic value explores the fun and gratification derived from the experience (Babin and Attaway, 2000). Ikea, a Swedish furniture company, utilizes promotions illustrating how the user can easily adjust the table size for an uncertain number of guests. The promotion explicitly demonstrates how shopping at Ikea helps its customers achieve the personal value of warm relationships through the utility of easily accommodating all guests. Marketers have been attempting to appeal to personal values for years through many well-known marketing campaigns (Rolex and sense of accomplishment; U.S. Army and self-fulfillment; Michelin and family security).

The research examines the relative role of quality, value, and satisfaction in helping customers pursue a more desirable end-state as represented by customers' deeply-held personal values (Rokeach, 1972). Theoretically, Personal Construct Theory describes how people

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inductively link all meaning to motivations expressed as the fulfillment of personal values (Kelly, 1955; Neimeyer and Bridges, 2010). We examine the incremental achievement of personal values in a way that is both novel and meaningful for capturing the true value of customer and retailer-controlled interactions. We argue that incremental achievement of personal values appropriately fits as an outcome of retail and services experiences. The results afford an assessment of the relative roles of quality, hedonic value, utilitarian value, and satisfaction in the personal values creation process. Lastly, through testing alternative models across multiple studies, this research assesses whether and how a retailer can help customers move towards achieving personal values through quality, value, and satisfaction.

2. Background

2.1. Personal values background

Kelly (1955) presents Personal Construct Theory, according to which, people act as naive scientists who implicitly create hypotheses, test hypotheses, and revise future theories based on data obtained through common life experiences. Kelly (1955, p. 84) defines a personal construct as "a property attributed to several events by means of which they (the events) can be differentiated into homogeneous groups." Brands, retail services, and unique service events become grouped in this way based on their association with a finite set of ideal states. Personal Construct Theory proves fundamental for cognitive psychology, particularly from the standpoint of understanding how the mind recognizes and categorizes phenomena with experience and distinguishes them from others.

According to Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955), customers distinguish constructs, including retail and service brands, at varying levels of abstraction. The classic Repertory Grid Interview distinguishes personal constructs by identifying a specific set of progressively abstract links. At a concrete level, customers distinguish opposing choices using relatively tangible, objective, attribute-based criteria. For example, Apple computers can be distinguished from competitors based on differences in tangible characteristics such as price, color, memory, and materials. However, at a more abstract level, Apple can also be distinguished by not-so-objective characteristics in the form of perceived benefits. Price serves as a heuristic for quality, memory affects the computer's performance, materials affect durability, and the presence of the Apple logo provides a sense of prestige (Kostelijk, 2017, p. 126). Finally, at the most abstract level, customers distinguish entities at the personal value level. The attribute–benefits–value *means-end chain* culminates in the ability of a competitive choice to bring customers more in harmony with their deeply held personal values (Zeithaml, 1988).

Rokeach (1972), drawing from Personal Construct Theory, envisions two related categories of personal values: terminal and instrumental. Terminal values represent the culmination of construct differentiation as beliefs about desired ends. Instrumental values represent ways of achieving personal values. The value categories are linked; for example, loving and responsible actions are instruments that contribute to the achievement of family security, a terminal value. Functionally, people prioritize and then go about, typically subconsciously, trying to accomplish one of 18 terminal, personal values (Rokeach, 1972). Generally, values are considered stable but are malleable as people make decisions prioritizing one value over another. Thus, instrumental activities shape the achievement of a preferred terminal value state. Put alternatively, instrumental values are modes of conduct while terminal values are the resultant end state. Considerable amounts of marketing and consumer research examine terminal personal values and consumption (Gutman, 1982), the underlying dimensional structure of a terminal value construct space (Johnston, 1995), conceptual validation (Vinson et al., 1977), and individual personal value measurement techniques (Alwin and Krosnick, 1985).

Following from Personal Construct Theory, the notion of a means-end chain suggests that shoppers differentiate between alternatives and make choices based on motivations towards terminal values (Gutman, 1982; Ter Hofstede, Audenaert, Steenkamp, & Wedel, 1998). De Ferran and Grunert (2007) present evidence that French customers who purchase coffee from a specialty store are pursuing the obtainment of the personal value of *respect* more than those who purchase coffee in a grocery store. Thus, the shopper pursues the more desired end-state through shopping. Similarly, a means-end approach to identifying personal constructs addresses voter choice (Phillips et al., 2010) and perfume purchases (Valette-Florence, 1998), among other phenomena. Retail patronage and shopping models recognize relationships between personal values and choice behavior (i.e., Schiffman et al., 2003).

2.2. Operationalizing personal values in marketing literature

Marketing literature offers scales to assess terminal personal values. Perhaps the best-known and most used approach in marketing (see Lee and Trail, 2011) is the list of values (LOV). The LOV approach asks participants to (1) assess the relative importance of nine personal value categories and (2) identify the single most important personal value to the self (Kahle, 1983). The LOV approach proves useful in understanding consumer segments (Kahle and Kennedy, 1988). Ladhari, Pons, Bressolles and Zins (2011) conceptualize personal values as a way of representing an individual culture and operationalize it using the LOV. Their findings suggest a relationship between personal values and consumer assessments of service quality. Echoing these findings, Roberts and Pirog (2004) document a direct effect of personal values on purchase intentions. Research also uses the LOV to segment Internet users based on their primary personal value (Schiffman et al., 2003). Other consumer research argues that the LOV best captures personal values because of a close relationship with life roles like leisure activities, daily consumption, work choice, and even marriage (Kahle et al., 1986).

2.3. Model development and relationships

This section explains the processes through which service providers can assist in the achievement of customers' personal values. We specifically examine a model testing satisfaction as a mediating concept (i.e., the American Customer Satisfaction Index or the ACSI) against an alternative model where satisfaction and utilitarian and hedonic value have direct effects on personal value achievement (i.e., Gallarza et al., 2011), thus circumventing satisfaction.

Fig. 1 represents the primary theoretical model under analysis, Model 1, and relates quality to value, value to satisfaction, and ultimately, all affect the achievement of one's dominant personal value in some way. Theory tests benefit from considering an alternative theoretical process. The alternative theory, or Model 2, involves a process that does not depend on satisfaction as a mediator.

Perceived quality encapsulates the customer's reaction to the performance of the firm's efforts to manage controllable factors that

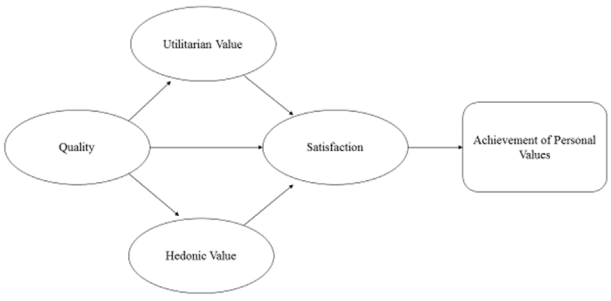

Fig. 1. Conceptual mediated model (Model 1).

contribute to appropriate retail customer experience (Grewal et al., 2009). Summarizing the quality of the retail or services environment, the customer expresses perceptions of excellent performance with value from the specific consumption episode (Zeithaml, 1988). Service quality then serves as a basic building block to utilitarian and hedonic shopping value, which represent the outcome of a shopping experience; together, the two value dimensions shape satisfaction (Gallarza et al., 2011; Brady et al., 2002; Teas and Agarwal, 2000). Therefore, the proposed theoretical model includes quality as an antecedent to hedonic and utilitarian value and to satisfaction, meaning any effect of quality on the achievement of personal values is indirect.

The value model proposed by Gallarza et al. (2011) predicts a close connection between value and satisfaction. Babin, Darden and Griffin's (1994) personal shopping value scale assesses utilitarian and hedonic value using a consumption-experience-value perspective consistent with theoretical underpinnings advanced by Holbrook (1994). This measure breaks service experience outcomes into task accomplishment, "utilitarian value," and the immediate emotional gratification attained through the experience itself, "hedonic value."

Satisfaction, defined as the affective result of appraising an outcome, conceptually facilitates the relationship between value and outcomes (Olsen, 2002; Patterson and Spreng, 1997). In the same theoretical sense, the ACSI treats satisfaction as a mediator connecting quality and value with marketing performance (Anderson et al., 1994; Kesari and Atulkar, 2016). A great deal of conceptual and empirical support places satisfaction as a mediator facilitating relationships between variables like atmosphere, shopping value, hedonic consumption, and repurchase intentions and other focal outcomes like quality of life or business performance (Babin et al., 2005; Zhong and Mitchell, 2010; Terblanche, 2018). Theoretically, following from Personal Construct Theory, and the means-end chain, retailers who provide perceived quality through effective delivery of attributes like merchandise assortment, retail atmosphere, effective pricing, and service technologies (Grewal et al., 2009), create greater net benefits as captured by perceived shopping value. This, in turn, facilitates a satisfying experience. At the end of the means-end chain, the customer realizes advancement toward a preferred personal value state. Thus, theory and literature find support for value and satisfaction playing a mediating role between relatively concrete antecedents, represented here by service quality, and more abstract outcomes. Construal level theory, a derivative of Personal Construct Theory (see Levy et al., 1998), similarly links low-level (tangible) attributes to abstract desires (benefits-values) (Mischel, 2004).

The rationale presented above implies a mediated process. Quality and shopping value do not influence personal value achievement directly; their influence is carried by customer satisfaction as the theoretical valve connecting outcome to source. Consequently, the primary supposition of the theory proposes a mediation sequence, which we test below in two studies. Specifically, the resulting theory leads to an explanatory model:

> Model 1: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationships from quality and both utilitarian and hedonic value with achievement of personal values. As such, the general expectation can be expressed as:
>
> A theoretical model proposing mediation will achieve better fit than a model (alternative theory) proposing direct effects. By-products of this generalization include:
>
> - A significant positive, indirect relationship exists between quality and personal value achievement.
> - A significant positive, indirect relationship exists between utilitarian value and personal value achievement.
> - A significant positive, indirect relationship exists between hedonic value and personal value achievement.

As an alternative theory, some question the role of customer satisfaction as a dominant construct (Jones and Sasser, 1995; Seiders et al., 2005). In this view, perceived value derived from retail interactions captures effects that are not evidenced through customer satisfaction (Gronroos, 2008; Babin and James, 2010; Carpenter and Moore, 2009). Michon and Chebat (2004) argue that shopping is an outlet to pursue personal (terminal) values, a notion echoed by Kahle et al. (1986), and Roberts and Pirog (2004). Research suggests retailers can impact customer well-being, a concept beyond loyalty and satisfaction, by providing a transformative experience (Troebs et al., 2018). Any dispersion on satisfaction could question its facilitating role as depicted in Fig. 1 in favor of Fig. 2. As is prudent in testing over-identified, structural models (Hair et al., 2017), plausible alternative theories should be modeled and compared. Thus, Model 2 represents such a plausible alternative that places a lesser role on customer satisfaction:

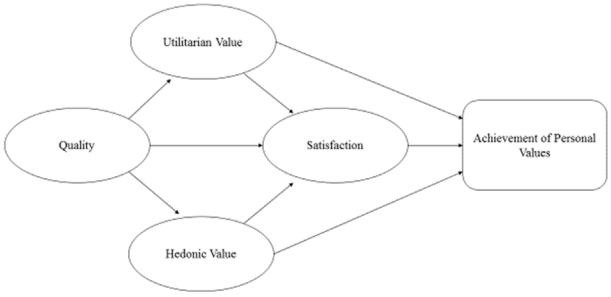

Fig. 2. Conceptual alternative model (model 2).

> Model 2: Perceived shopping value directly influences the achievement of personal values from shopping and services, and as such, any potential mediation by satisfaction is partial at most. Consequently, the key elements are (in addition to any potential indirect effects as described in Model 1):
>
> A model (counterfactual to Model 1) positing direct effects of personal shopping value on personal value achievement will fit better than a model proposing complete mediation. The model relaxes two additional theoretical constraints resulting in the following paths:
>
> - Utilitarian value will directly and positively affect the achievement of a dominant personal value.
> - Hedonic value will directly and positively affect the achievement of a dominant personal value.

3. Study 1

3.1. Methodology

The data include responses from a professionally managed, U.S. consumer household panel, using an online survey methodology (Dillman et al., 2014). Respondents received a cover letter via email identifying the university as the source of the survey, explaining the use of their feedback, and assuring respondent confidentiality. Respondents were then asked if they had shopping experience with one of several discount general merchant or well-known retail chains within a recent period. The list of retailers matched that used by the ACSI to represent "discount general merchants and specialty store" categories.[1]

The survey instrument displayed the name of one of the retailers randomly. Respondents were then asked a screening question about whether they had a recent shopping experience with the retailer. Only those responding in the affirmative were asked to proceed and respond

[1] Retailers include Nordstrom, Kohl's, J.C. Penney, Dollar General, Dillard's, Target, Macy's, Sears, Publix, Whole Foods, Kroger, Winn-Dixie, Safeway, Albertsons, and Walmart.

to the questions related to their shopping experience. If the respondent did not know the retailer or did not feel familiar enough, a second retailer was randomly presented from those remaining. Respondents were presented with up to six retailers before being excused from the survey. Subsequently, the survey asked customers to describe their most recent experience with the randomly assigned retailer. After briefly describing the last experience with an open-ended question, the respondent completed scales relevant to the analysis. The store name of the selected retailer automatically populated into the appropriate fields for survey instructions and answer stems. The survey questions use Likert scales, multiple choice selection, and slider scales to capture respondent feedback. The managing panel organization reported a response rate of 15 percent, and when the survey closed, 434 complete responses were available for analysis.

3.1.1. Scales and measures

Appendix A describes the scales, the various sources, and definitions. Hedonic shopping value represents the immediate gratification derived from the shopping experience itself, whereas utilitarian shopping value represents the ability to efficiently complete the shopping task (Babin et al., 1994). The quality measure assesses the overall quality of the service provider relative to the competition. Perceived satisfaction is an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and experience with a good or service over time, with both the definition and items taken from Anderson et al. (1994).

The LOV scale provides the basis for assessing achievement of one's key personal value (Kahle and Kennedy, 1988). Respondents were shown all nine personal values and asked to prioritize one over the others by choosing the most important personal value to their lives. Table 1 presents results showing the frequency and percentage of chosen personal values (Kahle et al., 1986). After selecting his or her most important value as done in the LOV methodology, the respondent indicates the extent to which the retail experience described led *towards achievement* of the specific chosen personal value. For example, a respondent who shopped at Dillard's and chose warm personal relationships as the most important personal value saw the following question: "To what extent did your entire experience at Dillard's bring you *closer* to achieving warm relationships with others?" The stem for the sliding scale reads "no closer" to "very near" on a scale from 0 to 100. Thus, achievement is not meant in the sense of finality, but in the sense of movement toward that end. In fact, the final achievement of an ideal state is illusory.

3.1.2. Descriptive statistics

Table 2 provides more details about respondents' demographics. The sample is consistent with retail customers for these physical stores. No demographic variables were statistically significant as control variables; thus they are not included in the models. Harman's one-factor test suggests that 53% of the variance among variables is accounted for by the first eigenvalue. This number is below the 70% threshold for bias as suggested by Fuller et al. (2016) as the benchmark for concern about common-methods bias.

Table 1
Study 1 selected personal value frequency.

Personal Value	Frequency	Percentage
Sense of Belonging	18	4.1%
Excitement	11	2.5%
Warm Relationships with Others	110	25.3%
Self-Fulfillment	33	7.6%
Being Well-Respected	21	4.8%
Fun and Enjoyment of Life	76	17.5%
Security	48	11.1%
Self-Respect	55	12.7%
A Sense of Accomplishment	62	14.3%
Total	434	100.00%

Table 2
Study 1 sample demographic profile.

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	216	49.77%
Female	218	50.23%
Age		
Under 21	11	2.53%
21–30	73	16.82%
31–40	44	10.14%
41–50	50	11.52%
51–60	89	20.51%
61–70	109	25.12%
71 and above	58	13.36%
Reported Highest Educational Attainment		
No degree earned	18	4.15%
High school	196	45.16%
Undergraduate degree	166	38.25%
Master's degree	44	10.14%
Doctoral degree	10	2.30%
Reported Household Income		
Under $30, 000	157	36.18%
$30, 000–49,999	116	26.73%
$50, 000–74,999	86	19.82%
$75,000–100,000	42	9.68%
Over $100,000	33	7.60%

3.2. Study 1 results

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) provides an examination of the proposed measurement theory, including the psychometric properties of the multiple-item latent constructs. The constructs included in the CFA were quality, hedonic value, utilitarian value, and customer satisfaction. Table 3 presents CFA results, including standardized factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and reliability estimates.

An initial CFA yields a chi-square value of 389.6 ($df = 113$, $p < 0.01$), a comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.962, and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.075. The t-value for each loading estimate is significant ($p < 0.001$), and each standardized loading estimate exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). A second measure of construct validity is whether the variance

Table 3
Study 1 CFA results: Completely standardized factor loadings for the shopping context.

	Quality	Hedonic Value	Utilitarian Value	Satisfaction
QT1*	0.94			
QT2	0.94			
QT3	0.90			
HV1		0.89		
HV2		0.90		
HV3		0.82		
HV4		0.90		
HV5		0.87		
HV6		0.87		
HV7		0.81		
UV1			0.88	
UV2			0.61	
UV3			0.72	
UV4			0.72	
SAT1				0.89
SAT2				0.93
SAT3				0.95
Variance Extracted	85.9%	75.1%	54.6%	85.3%
Construct Composite Reliability	0.95	0.95	0.83	0.95

*See supplemental appendix for description of items.

extracted exceeds 0.5 for each construct. All constructs' variance extracted estimates exceeded 0.5, ranging from 0.54 to 0.86. Construct composite reliabilities range from 0.83 to 0.95, exceeding the 0.7 threshold. Discriminant validity serves to assess whether a construct shares more variance with itself than with other constructs. All constructs show a higher AVE than the corresponding squared inter-construct correlations. The results support the proposed measurement structure.

Structural models assess the fit of two competing models with a focus on the question of satisfaction as a mediator between quality, the shopping experience outcome (captured with utilitarian and hedonic shopping), and achievement of personal values. The fit of models proposing mediation provides prima-facia evidence of the support for the theory. OLS based approaches can estimate individual relationships, but they do not provide omnibus nor comparative fits of theory. Further, the structural models include bias-corrected, bootstrapped confidence intervals for the indirect effects in consideration of, the inherent endogeneity associated with mediation models (Hair et al., 2019).

Comparing Model 1 and Model 2. The first analyses test the fit of Model 1 versus Model 2. Fit statistics for the conceptual mediation theory (Fig. 1, Model 1) produce a chi-square value of 483.5 ($df = 130$, $p < 0.01$), a CFI of 0.953, and RMSEA of 0.079. The alternative model (Fig. 2, Model 2) allows direct relationships between utilitarian and hedonic shopping value and achievement of personal value. The model comparison also implies an examination of the efficacy of satisfaction as a mediator. The alternative model yields a chi-square value of 407.1 ($df = 128$, $p < 0.01$), a CFI of 0.963, and RMSEA of 0.071. The chi-square difference between the two is 76.41 with 2 degrees of freedom ($p = 0.001$), indicating that the mediated model (Model 1) does not fit the observed covariance matrix as well as the alternative model (Model 2). Both the CFI and RMSEA results also indicate a worse fit for the mediated model than the alternative model (ΔCFI = 0.010, ΔRMSEA = −0.008). Thus, the results do not support Model 1 and instead favor Model 2.

Table 4 presents the standardized estimates, t-values, and model fit indices for both models. We note that the difference in R^2 for personal values achievement increases from 0.366 to 0.468 from the mediated to the alternative model, also supporting Model 2 over Model 1. Additionally, rather than pointing out every parameter estimate in the table (the reader is left to peruse the table for details), the discussion that follows focuses primarily on parameter estimates relevant to Model 2 and the extent of mediation.

Table 4, given the potential for endogeneity bias in mediated effects (Hair et al., 2017), displays the bias-corrected bootstrapped (500 samples) confidence intervals ($CI_{0.95}$) and effect sizes for the indirect effects of quality and both value dimensions on the achievement of personal values. In Model 2, the indirect effect of quality on personal value achievement is 0.556 ($CI_{0.95}$: 0.487: 0.613), for utilitarian value on personal value achievement is 0.023 ($CI_{0.95}$: 0.001: 0.061), and for hedonic value on personal value achievement is 0.034 ($CI_{0.95}$: 0.011: 0.074). In no case is 0 in the confidence interval, suggesting significant indirect effects as predicted for mediation. However, in contrast to a theory of complete mediation, both utilitarian ($\beta = 0.140$, $p = 0.005$) and hedonic ($\beta = 0.426$, $p < 0.001$) shopping value exhibit significant direct effects (larger than the indirect effects), suggesting that value dimensions lead to the achievement of one's core personal values directly.[2] Also, the satisfaction to achievement of personal values drops from $\beta = 0.605$ ($p < 0.001$) in Model 1 to $\beta = 0.239$ ($p < 0.001$) in Model 2. All results favor Model 2, which provides a relatively limited role for customer satisfaction relative to value.

Post-hoc test for bias. A post-hoc analysis addressed the potential shared variance between utilitarian and hedonic value. The full model was rerun in allowing the error variances for utilitarian and hedonic value to correlate. Doing so relaxes the constraint of 0 correlation between the two shopping value dimensions and addresses any endogeneity concern as a consequence of unspecified correlation (see Pounders et al., 2015). The relaxed constraint failed to improve fit as indicated by a chi-squared difference of 0.4 with one 1 degree of freedom (ns). The resulting standardized parameter estimate ($\psi_{uv\text{-}hv}$) is −0.044 is not significant p-value (p = 0.548), further verifying independence in the two value dimensions in the retail sector.[3] Consistently, the greatest change in any of the structural parameter estimates displayed in Table 4 is |0.001|. Thus, no bias results due to the constraint imposed in the previous models.

Table 4
Study 1 shopping context SEM results and individual relationship estimates (standardized FIML estimates).

	Model 1		Model 2	
Relationship	Estimate	T-Value	Estimate	T-Value
Quality → UV	0.582	12.33	0.582	12.35
Quality → HV	0.627	14.27	0.627	14.27
Quality → SAT	0.714	15.46	0.727	15.47
UV → SAT	0.102	2.80	0.096	2.59
HV → SAT	0.160	4.49	0.140	3.87
SAT → APV	0.605	14.36	0.239	4.21
UV → APV			0.140	2.87
HV → APV			0.426	8.64
Indirect Effects	Estimate	Bootstrapped CI (95%)	Estimate	Bootstrapped CI (95%)
UV → APV	0.062	[0.004; 0.123]	0.023	[0.001; 0.061]
Quality → APV	0.529	[0.458; 0.593]	0.556	[0.487; 0.613]
HV → APV	0.097	[0.045; 0.159]	0.034	[0.0110 .074]
	$\chi^2 = 483.50$, *df = 130*		$\chi^2 = 407.09$, *df = 128*	
	CFI = 0.953		CFI = 0.963	
	RMSEA = 0.079		RMSEA = 0.071	

Notes. UV = utilitarian value, HV = hedonic value, SAT = satisfaction, APV = achievement of personal values; FIML = Full Information Maximum Likelihood; Confidence Intervals (CI) displayed as bias-corrected 95% likelihood of estimate between [lower limit; upper limit].
R^2 estimates for Model 1: UV = 0.34, HV = 0.39, SAT = 0.79, APV = .37.
R^2 estimates for Model 2: UV = 0.34, HV = 0.39, SAT = 0.79, APV = .47.

4. Discussion

Researchers theorize the achievement of personal values through experience as an important latent concept (Schwartz, 2011; Zeithaml, 1988). Returning to the means-end value chain, we find that functional product aspects through quality influence both value and satisfaction which is analogous to service performance appraisals. Pivoting to feelings and emotions, the current findings present evidence that both hedonic and utilitarian value, lead to perceived achievement of personal values through a consumption activity such as shopping. The strong relative role of hedonic value leading to the achievement of personal values suggests that this experiential dimension engages customers to a point beyond customer satisfaction. The findings suggest that by shopping and receiving the value proposition of hedonic value, customers can have their personal values affected (towards achievement) via the operant resources that the firm provides (i.e., the hedonic value in the experience shaped by atmospheric elements). The

[2] Among total effects, hedonic value is 0.459 (meaning its effect almost entirely is direct), satisfaction is second at 0.239, followed by utilitarian value at 0.162 (almost entirely direct). The total effect of quality through value and satisfaction is 0.556.

[3] The result is consistent with theoretical and empirical evidence suggesting that utilitarian and hedonic value are independent and that any correlation between the two is expected to be positive and modest (Babin et al., 1994; Babin and James, 2010).

theoretical notion that personal constructs are reinforced and supported is seen in that quality, derived from attributes, influences utilitarian and hedonic value, allowing customers to inch toward a more ideal end state of being. Here, hedonic value plays a prominent role that does not depend on satisfaction.

Some research indicates that context such as the type of retailer may alter the types of processes found in Study 1 (Chiou and Droge, 2006). Study 2 examines boundary conditions testing the same model in a different service context assessing customer experiences with quick-service restaurants (QSR's) used in the ACSI survey.[4]

5. Study 2

5.1. Methodology

Study 2 uses the same procedures as Study 1. Minor modifications to the survey were made to enhance face validity given the contextual differences. Table 5 presents results showing the frequency and percentage of chosen personal values for Study 2.

The survey responses come from 454 consumer panel respondents, and the panel reported a response rate of 18 percent. The sample demographics skewed slightly younger, more affluent, and more educated on average than did the previous sample (see Table 6). Harman's one-factor test suggests that 51% of the variance is captured by a single eigenvalue. Once again, the common variance portion is below the 70% threshold as suggested by Fuller et al. (2016).

6. Results

Table 7 presents CFA results, including standardized factor loadings, AVEs, and reliability estimates. One utilitarian value item performed poorly based on a loading below 0.5 on the UV factor and is not included in the reported analyses. After removing the item, CFA yields a chi-square value of 335.0 ($df = 98$, $p < 0.01$), a CFI of 0.96, and an RMSEA of 0.073. All standard loadings exceed the 0.50 threshold, all factors exceed the 0.5 AVE threshold, and reliability estimates all exceed 0.70. Results also suggest adequate discriminant validity as all factors exhibit higher AVEs than the corresponding interconstruct correlations squared. Like in Study 1, the results support the measurement theory sufficiently to move forward with structural analysis.

Table 8 presents the standardized estimates, t-values, and model fit indices for both Model 1 and Model 2. Fit statistics for the Model 1 yield a chi-square value of 422 ($df = 114$, $p < 0.01$), a CFI of 0.960, and an RMSEA of 0.077. Model 2, allowing direct relationships from utilitarian and hedonic value to achievement of personal value, produces a chi-square value of 361 ($df = 112$, $p < 0.01$), a CFI of 0.963, and an RMSEA of 0.070. The chi-square difference of 61 with 2 degrees of freedom is significant ($p = 0.001$; $\Delta CFI = 0.003$ and $\Delta RMSEA = -0.007$), indicating a relatively worse fit for the complete mediation model, a result supporting Model 2 over Model 1. The personal values achievement R^2 also increases from 0.393 to 0.471 in Model 2.

Like for Study 1, the reader is left to peruse the details Table details as the discussion focuses on the most relevant indirect and direct effects from Model 2. Looking at Model 2, utilitarian value plays little direct role ($\beta = 0.013$, ns), but hedonic value positively and directly drives the achievement of personal values ($\beta = 0.463$, $p < 0.001$). Table 8 displays the bootstrap, bias-corrected (500 bootstrap samples) confidence intervals for the indirect effects of perceived service value and quality on personal values achievement. In Model 2, the indirect effect of quality on personal value achievement is 0.555 ($CI_{0.95}$: 0.484: 0.618),

[4] The QSR's include Papa John's, Domino's Pizza, Little Caesar's Pizza, Wendy's, Subway, Pizza Hut, Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, KFC, Taco Bell, McDonalds, and Burger King.

Table 5
Study 2 selected personal value priority frequency (QSR).

Personal Value	Frequency	Percentage
Sense of Belonging	18	4%
Excitement	10	2.2%
Warm Relationships with Others	108	23.7%
Self-Fulfillment	56	12.3%
Being Well-Respected	21	4.6%
Fun and Enjoyment of Life	84	18.5%
Security	61	13.4%
Self-Respect	53	11.6%
A Sense of Accomplishment	43	9.5%
Total	454	100.00%

Table 6
Study 2 sample demographic profile.

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	215	47.4%
Female	239	52.6%
Age		
Under 21	2	0.4%
21–30	56	12.3%
31–40	89	19.6%
41–50	105	23.1%
51–60	153	33.6%
61–70	48	10.5%
71 and above	1	0.2%
Education		
No degree earned	6	1.3%
High school	165	36.3%
Undergraduate degree	206	45.3%
Master's degree	65	14.1%
Doctoral degree	13	2.9%
Household Income		
Under $30, 000	100	22%
$30, 000–49,999	100	22%
$50, 000–74,999	122	26.8%
$75,000–100,000	59	13%
Over $100,000	73	16%

Table 7
Study 2 CFA: Completely standardized factor loadings for QSR context.

	Quality	Hedonic Value	Utilitarian Value	Satisfaction
QT1	0.96			
QT2	0.95			
QT3	0.95			
HV1		0.85		
HV2		0.83		
HV3		0.78		
HV4		0.75		
HV5		0.78		
HV6		0.78		
HV7		0.75		
UV1			0.93	
UV2			0.72	
UV3			0.51	
SAT1				0.89
SAT2				0.94
SAT3				0.92
Variance Extracted	90.90%	62.30%	54.80%	84.10%
Construct Composite Reliability	0.97	0.92	0.77	0.94

Table 8
Study 2 (QSR experience) SEM results and individual standardized FIML relationship estimates.

Relationship	Model 1		Model 2	
	Estimate	T-Value	Estimate	T-Value
Quality → UV	0.527	11.5	0.527	11.5
Quality → HV	0.674	15.6	0.677	15.7
Quality → SAT	0.620	15.3	0.631	15.3
UV → SAT	0.177	5.6	0.183	5.6
HV → SAT	0.254	7.2	0.228	6.4
SAT → APV	0.627	15.4	0.267	3.95
UV → APV			0.013	.25
HV → APV			0.463	7.9
Indirect Effects	Estimate	Bootstrapped CI (95%)	Estimate	Bootstrapped CI (95%)
UV → APV	0.111	[0.071; 0.160]	0.049	[0.019; 0.087]
Quality → APV	0.554	[0.486; 0.617]	0.555	[0.484; 0.618]
HV → APV	0.077	[0.100; 0.211]	0.061	[0.025; 0.106]
	χ^2 = 422, *df = 114*		χ^2 = 361 *df = 112*	
	CFI = 0.960		CFI = 0.963	
	RMSEA = 0.077		RMSEA = 0.070	

Notes. UV = utilitarian value, HV = hedonic value, SAT = satisfaction, APV = achievement of personal values; FMIL = Full Information Maximum Likelihood; Confidence Intervals (CI) displayed as bias-corrected 95% likelihood of estimate between [lower limit; upper limit].
R^2 estimates for Model 1: UV = 0.28, HV = 0.46, SAT = 0.84, APV = .39.
R^2 estimates for Model 2: UV = 0.28, HV = 0.46, SAT = 0.83, APV = .47.

utilitarian value on personal value achievement is 0.049 ($CI_{0.95}$: 0.019: 0.087), and hedonic value on personal value achievement is 0.061 ($CI_{0.95}$: 0.025: 0.106).[5] For both utilitarian and hedonic value, the indirect effects, although statistically significant, are relatively small, particularly compared to the direct effect of hedonic value on achievement of personal value (β = 0.463). Thus, the effect of value on personal value achievement does not depend greatly on customer satisfaction, particularly with respect to hedonic value. Like in the retail context, Model 2 is supported over Model 1 with hedonic value as the central catalyst.

Post-hoc test for bias. As in Study 1, a post-hoc analysis addresses any potential bias associated with the over-identifying constraint implying a lack of shared variance between utilitarian and hedonic value. In the QSR context, we see a slight fit improvement when the constraint is relaxed (chi-square difference compared to the full model = 5.6, 1 df, $p < 0.05$). The corresponding standardized parameter estimate ($\psi_{uv\text{-}hv}$) is 0.135 ($p < 0.05$). More to the point, the greatest change to any of the structural parameter estimates displayed in Table 8 is |0.008|. Thus, no bias results due to the constraint imposed in the previous models.

7. General discussion

The question that motivates this study is to ascertain whether retail interactions can lead to an outcome consistent with the pursuit of the desired end-state in the form of one's preeminent personal value, and if so, what is the process by which this happens? Customers seek value from consumption activities, and retailers provide value by offering quality service along with hedonic and utilitarian value propositions. Unique to this research is the examination of personal value states achieved through the customer-retailer interaction. We next discuss theoretical and managerial implications derived from our findings.

[5] Although not specifically predicted, the indirect effect of quality on personal value achievement, through both value dimensions and satisfaction, is 0.555 ($CI_{.95}$: 0.484, 0.618). The substantial indirect effect works through hedonic value and satisfaction (with no direct effect of quality). Additionally, the total effects of quality, hedonic value, utilitarian value, and satisfaction on personal value achievement are 0.555, 0.523, 0.061, and 0.267, respectively.

7.1. Theoretical implications

Across two studies we find support for the theoretical notion that personal constructs are reinforced and supported. Quality influences utilitarian and hedonic value, allowing customers to inch toward a more ideal end state of being, at least temporarily. Hedonic value plays a prominent role in that process; a role not dependent upon customer satisfaction.

Previous research conceptualizes the traditional role of personal values as a guiding force that orients shoppers to specific consumption experiences (Rokeach, 1972; Vinson et al., 1977). This may include brand, product, retailer, location, and channel selection, all aiding in defining what the overall experience will be like for the customer. However, this clustering approach does not allow the customer to reflect on the outcome of the actual retailer interaction as reflective of the personal values he or she holds. This research adds to the Personal Construct Theory literature by examining consumer shopping and QSR experiences and demonstrates how common experiences lead towards achieving personal values. The findings likewise support Kahle, (1983) and the supposition that individuals' personal value levels are not static. Customers' valuable everyday interactions with retailers reinforce one's personal values, effectively providing a means-end connection from the value proposition offered by retailers to the actual achievement of a more desired end state.

Retail theory often emphasizes customer satisfaction as an imperative. Results here do not strongly support a mediating theory linking shopping outcomes (utilitarian/hedonic) to the achievement of personal values through satisfaction. As discussed above, considerable literature suggests that satisfaction serves as a mediator between customer value and other outcomes. When it comes to personal value achievement, satisfaction is relatively unimportant compared to perceived shopping value. Service providers rely on satisfaction as the key indicator of performance success or failure; consequently, the promise of a satisfaction guarantee has become commonplace. Relying on satisfaction as an indicator for achievement of personal values would prove faulty without understanding the role of value. One explanation is the strong connection between hedonic value and the achievement of personal values in both contexts. This finding is consistent with recent research suggesting supermarket shopping environments cause positive emotions (Terblanche, 2018).

In a shopping context, we observe both utilitarian value and hedonic value influencing personal values, while in the QSR context only hedonic value influences achievement of personal value. Considering shopping, utility may aid the time-crunched shopper in accomplishing the shopping task, thus allowing the customer to spend time enjoying other life activities. Considering QSR's, the experience alone acts as the driver for customers to achieve personal values. This is operationalized by providing value propositions that enhance the customer experience. Additionally, the highly competitive QSR service providers may offer relatively consistent utilitarian value propositions (drive-thru service, delivery, the speed of order, etc.). If all providers have food fast service at relatively low prices, then the lack of a relationship may be because of a lack of variance among the ACSI QSR competitors. Marketing that emphasizes retail mixes that provide relatively high hedonic value (while maintaining equal footing with competitors on utilitarian value) can influence customer's lives well beyond simple satisfaction. We suggest that future research address the role of utilitarian and hedonic value in differentiating retail and service brands. Potentially, competitors can more easily duplicate utilitarian rather than hedonic value propositions.

7.2. Managerial implications

The results of these study offer managers a deeper understanding of the relationship between personal shopping value and personal values of consumers. Managers can benefit by understanding which are the

more commonly held personal values held by their target market so that the attributes and benefits offered as well as the servicescape design provide the hedonic value important to shoppers. In Studies 1 and 2, the personal values listed most frequently were warm relationships with others (25.3% and 23.7%) and fun and enjoyment of life (17.5% and 18.5%).

The top-rated value, warm relationships with others, suggests that for many consumers, the shopping or dining experience is an opportunity for a social experience which offers an opportunity for both shopping retailers and QSR providers an opportunity for differentiation. For example, grocery chains offer free wine tasting events. For those who value warm relationships with others, the wine tasting can be enjoyed with a co-shopping companion. This can also appeal to the shopper who is alone. Due to the nature of the interaction with the employee who is pouring the wine and discussing the attributes, a busy parent who is shopping alone might take the time to relax, taste the wine, and enjoy a conversation with the employee leading to the customer becoming a "regular." Thus, with the offering of one special customer experience, a retailer can provide hedonic value and help achieve the personal value of warm relationships with others for both those who shop alone and those who co-shop. Shopping retailers can also offer experiences for families such as craft classes offered by Michael's where parents pay a small fee to have a special craft time lead by an employee. This is another way to provide hedonic value that supports the personal values of the parents as they spend quality time with their children during the shopping experience. Rather than just creating experiences, organizations should incorporate this into their mission as well as the culture. A practical industry example where hedonic value drives personal values achievement is seen in Starbuck's mission statement stating the organization's goal to inspire and nurture the human spirit one person and one cup at a time.

Providing a servicescape that contributes to maintaining warm relationships can also be another way retailers, and QSR's can provide hedonic value. Thus, whether customers are lingering in a coffee shop, dining with a friend or family member, or watching children play in a McDonald's play area, they are seeking an outcome that takes them closer to a desired personal value state through the interaction with the QSR provider. Managers should look for opportunities to create an environment in which they can appeal to important customers' personal values.

The personal value of fun and enjoyment of life was the second most important personal value in this study. Hedonic value items such as "I felt the excitement of the hunt," "this shopping trip truly felt like an escape," and "I was able to act on the 'spur of the moment," suggest that retailers and QSR's should create experiences that make shopping feel like a leisure activity. While not all shopping retailers and QSR's can provide 'retailtainment' all the time, managers should attempt to create events that appeal to the fun and enjoyment of life. Ikea had a drawing that allowed 100 fans to have a sleepover in an IKEA store. Tom's (a shoe brand that donates a pair of shoes with each pair sold) brought in Virtual Reality equipment that allowed customers to take a trip to visit a poor village in Peru to see the impact that their shoe purchase has on the people who receive donated shoes (Storefront Magazine, 2017). Bass Pro Shop is known for its servicescapes with large fish tanks and other special features which vary by location. For example, in some locations, Bass Pro Shop keeps live alligators in an enclosed area with a man-made pond that sits right outside the store entrance. This servicescape creates a sense of adventure for shoppers.

QSR's have not been as proactive about creating fun experiences which provide hedonic value within their restaurants. One exception is Chick-fil-A with their family-friendly such as Daddy-Daughter Night and Cow Appreciation Day which celebrates cows by giving free chicken to people who visit wearing a cow costume or mask to celebrate. One way that management of QSR's can create a competitive advantage is to create an atmosphere that is fun in their restaurants. Décor and music alone are not likely to develop this advantage. As retailtainment grows, consumers will expect to find experiences that are fun and entertaining even at QSR's Retailers such as QSR's that do not understand the personal values of their target markets and what they wish to achieve in a dining experience will fail to personally connect. Consumers expect to receive utilitarian value at any QSR that they visit; thus, hedonic value will become the differentiator.

7.3. Limitations and further research

While the studies provide results in two consumption contexts, they lack control for several variables. Customer temporal orientations are not considered. Is the customer shopping (dining) alone or with family (see Page et al., 2018) and/or friends? Factors such as these may activate other non-primary personal values and change the type of attributes that provide value to the customer.

Another important element to explore is the role of engagement in the value realized to values achieved relationship. The finding that satisfaction may not play a dominant role opens a window into an intriguing new research area that may offer more insight into the relationship. Another stream of research could examine the involvement level associated with retailers and QSRs. Controlling for high versus low involvement may help understand the role of satisfaction in these relationships.

A final note addresses the difference in age between respondents in Study 1 and Study 2. Study 1 has a larger majority of older respondents while study two includes a broader and more diverse age range. The age range for study one was an additional motivation for corroborating results across contexts. We find similar results between studies despite this age difference. The younger sample for Study 2 along with the contextual difference could explain why utilitarian value was less of a factor in study two than in study one. However, the two most common personal values being achieved through hedonic value rather than satisfaction is consistent across samples with only slight variations occurring among the personal values that ranked lower, and age was insignificant as a control variable.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.05.021.

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