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# **Roll Camera, Roll Sound, Roll the Experience!**

*The consumer perspective on live shopping as an  
experience*

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**Title**

Roll Camera, Roll Sound, Roll the Experience

*The consumer perspective on live shopping as an experience*

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**Abstract**

Live shopping is a relatively new phenomenon that combines live streaming with online shopping. Past research has explored live shopping as a functional marketing tool, used to increase sales and purchase intention. The purpose of this study was to explore consumers' perspectives on live shopping as an experience, with the experience economy theory as a lens. Furthermore, this study utilized the four realms of an experience and five principles of design to analyze and explain the collected data. The empirical data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with respondents aged 18-27. The findings showed that consumers perceive the live shopping experience as mostly educational in conjunction with aspects of entertainment. Escapist and esthetic aspects are considered complementary and can strengthen the experience. This study contributes to an increased understanding of the live shopping experience from consumers' perspectives. In addition, the theory of experience economy has not been previously applied to live shopping. In turn, this study has contributed to an increased use of experience economy theory in areas other than tourism and hospitality.

**Keywords**

Live shopping, Experience economy, Social shopping, Live stream shopping, Four realms of an experience, Five principles of design, Consumer experience

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# 1. Introduction

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In today's market, online shopping has grown to be a substantial part of our consumption habits. It is easier than ever to find the desired products and just as easy to order them, never having to leave the comfort of one's bed. Online shopping has also made consumers more knowledgeable regarding their buying decisions since the information available has greatly increased (Rohm & Swaminathan, 2004). Consumers also have the ability to exchange their acquired knowledge with each other through sites such as Facebook and Twitter (Fu et al., 2020). This higher level of knowledge has made consumers more aware of what they specifically want to purchase when entering a store. Subsequently, the increased knowledge has lessened the overall importance of salespeople in terms of their expertise (Reinartz & Imschloss, 2017).

Consumers today not only value products based on physical attributes, but also intangible factors such as the overall experience provided, and the quality of the relationship that is formed at the time of purchase (Itani & Inyang, 2015). This has increased the need for some companies to customize their products to contain valuable experiences rather than to purely offer commoditized goods and services (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Furthermore, online shopping has created an opportunity to implement social aspects in the shopping experience (Li & Ku, 2018). One of these social aspects can be seen in the way consumers share their knowledge with like-minded individuals (Alba et al., 1997). Subsequently, companies have innovated online shopping to include these aspects and created a phenomenon known as social shopping (A. Chen et al., 2017).

Social shopping revolves around the implementation of social aspects found in social media into the online shopping experience (Li & Ku, 2018). The social media experience often provides an increase in consumer knowledge, which significantly influences the decision-making process (Pagani & Mirabello, 2011). An example of this would be the possibility to discuss products hands-on with a salesperson. Consumers often look for reviews of the product in question, and also strive to discuss the product with like-minded peers (A. Chen et al., 2017; Rohm & Swaminathan, 2004). The increasing popularity of social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter has made retailers more aware of the trend regarding social shopping and the

possibilities associated with it (Liang et al., 2011). By engaging with consumers through social media, companies can ensure to maintain a more intimate communication with their customers (Wang & Lee, 2020).

The current state of online shopping is characterized with the emergence of tools that provide new ways to interact with knowledgeable customers. Companies need to be aware of the importance to implement new trends as a form of mass customization to their offerings (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Mass customization consists of an environmental architecture that incorporates a design tool and a designed interaction. The purpose of the design tool is to match the needs of the consumer with the capabilities of the company. The purpose of the designed interaction is to stage the experience between the consumers and the company (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Subsequently, social shopping has allowed companies to replicate the designed interaction found in the physical store experience. However, it is difficult for companies to replicate the physical store attributes in an online format using social shopping alone (Rohm & Swaminathan, 2004). Therefore, companies can utilize *live shopping* to further overcome these difficulties (Zhang et al., 2020).

Live shopping is a new platform that enables companies to connect with their audience by presenting different products in a live-streamed video (Cheng, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). The platform allows participants to see the product as well as ask the host questions and gain answers in an instant. These features implement the characteristics of social shopping into the online shopping experience (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020). Consequently, live shopping provides companies with the ability to interact with, educate and guide consumers in their purchase decision while also replicating the physical store experience (Bambuser, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). In addition, live shopping allows the viewer to purchase the presented product within the live stream itself, which further mimics the physical store experience. All in all, live shopping has proved to be a powerful way to interact with consumers and its results are clearly seen in the increased conversion rates (Bambuser, 2021).



## 1.1 Problematization

The novelty of live shopping can partly be explained by the COVID-19 pandemic that has restricted consumers from physical shopping (Allhorn, 2020). As a result, businesses in Sweden have increasingly incorporated live shopping into their strategy to reach consumers. In addition, live-streamed videos, compared to pre-recorded ones, are more effective in increasing the viewer's intention to purchase (Ang et al., 2018). Due to the novelty of live shopping, there is a lack of research and most studies have focused on the Chinese market as this is the origin of the phenomenon (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). Thus, it is interesting and relevant to explore live shopping in the Swedish market to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon.

Consumers often make decisions emotionally and subjectively, rather than strictly rationally (Shim et al., 2017). Since live shopping already offers a functional presentation of products, it would be appropriate to perceive live shopping as an experience. The implementation of a staged experience has been shown to encourage consumers to realize purchases that were not originally planned for (Williams, 2006). Pine and Gilmore (2011) introduced a new economic value called the experience economy. This value emphasizes competitiveness through strategies that offer unique experiences to consumers, rather than low prices. One example is coffee drinkers that often accept higher prices in Starbucks and Costa Coffee, since a strong experience is tied with the purchase and consumption of these brands (Branco & Kobakova, 2018). It is both easier and cheaper to make coffee at home, but the consumer would then miss out on the experience provided at the coffee shop. Experience economy has been utilized by many researchers in the tourism and hospitality industry (Andersson, 2007; Fernandes & Cruz, 2016; Oh et al., 2007), since this sector is inherently based on offering experiences and memories. However, the use of experience economy theory in industries other than tourism and hospitality is lacking. Therefore, live shopping is an interesting subject to explore within the experience economy theory.

Furthermore, live shopping is often researched as a marketing tool that is used to provide information and increase purchase intention (Cheng, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). Results are then measured by the number of sales made from the livestream. In addition, suggestions of future research tend to focus on factors that mainly increase sales. As customers tend to leave the livestream after 30 minutes, Wongkitrungrueng et al. (2020) advised the hosts of live-streamed

videos to specify at what time specific products are shown. This suggestion depicts a functional and tool-like view of live shopping where the viewer is only interested in the product and not the live stream itself. Another example of live shopping as a tool was discussed by Zhang et al. (2020) who suggested that an increase in information regarding coupons and promotions would deepen the interaction. These suggestions assume that consumers have utilitarian motivations when participating in live shopping, implying that consumers mainly use live shopping as an aid in their decision making (Cai et al., 2018).

Consumers with hedonic motivations participate in live shopping for entertainment purposes, where the experience and interaction are of significant value. The social interaction found in livestreams, and the novelty of the phenomenon are two reasons why consumers prefer live shopping over regular online shopping (Cai et al. 2018). Zhang et al. (2020) suggested that the hosts of live shopping should strive to create a deeper interaction to fulfill the psychological well-being of the viewers. However, as mentioned before, Zhang et al. (2020) proposed utilitarian methods, such as coupons and promotions. In contrast, Ang et al. (2018) argued that the more an interaction resembles a face-face interaction, the more authentic it is. In turn, live-streamed videos contain a great potential to convey authentic and valuable experiences due to the inclusion of social activity. Ko and Chen (2020) confirmed the previous results and suggested that para-social factors are the main incentive for viewers to participate in live shopping. Studies have shown that live shopping includes interactive and experiential functions despite that researchers perceived the phenomenon as a functional marketing tool. Consequently, live shopping has the potential to offer something more than only marketing through functional product demonstrations.

In sum, the previously mentioned research has shown a need to expand on the idea that live shopping can also be used as a hedonic experience rather than a utilitarian tool. Researchers that have categorized live shopping as a utilitarian tool have often received results that suggest improvement of aspects found in consumers' experience, such as the experiential value. The higher levels of social interaction found in live shopping creates a greater authenticity in the experience. In addition, external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic have pushed companies to make further use of live shopping in order to engage with their customers. Since the concept of experience economy focuses on the experience as the main product, it is interesting to use this theory to study live shopping as an experience.

## **1.2 Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to explore live shopping as an experience, through the perspective of consumers. In addition, the theory of Experience economy will function as the study's lens. This study may contribute to an increased knowledge surrounding the consumers perspective on live shopping as an experience. In addition, this study will contribute to an increase in the use of Experience economy theory.

## **1.3 Research Question**

How do consumers perceive live shopping as an experience?

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## 2. Theoretical Framework

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*The aim of this paper is to investigate consumers' perspective of live shopping as an experience. This chapter will present the theory that was used to understand the collected data. Furthermore, a conceptual model based on the experience economy theory will be presented.*

### 2.1 What is an Experience?

An experience has to be defined in order to create clarity and allow for an analysis of live shopping as an experience. In general, research lacks a common definition of what an experience is and there are several types of experiences that have been studied, for example: brand experience, consumer experience, and product experience (Carù & Cova, 2003; Chevtchouk et al., 2021). In addition, researchers agree that the theoretical concept of an experience requires further development (Chevtchouk et al., 2021). The ability to define an experience is important since a clear definition is required to perform meaningful research (Teas & Palan, 1997).

#### 2.1.1 Definition of an Experience

Carbone and Haeckel (1994) investigated how certain context- and performance-based clues help shape and construct an experience. The performance clues symbolize the performance of the product or service, while context clues resemble the sensory information such as sound and scent. These clues can be used to craft the desired consumer perception. Carbone and Haeckel (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994) pointed out that an experience is based on a perception that is produced from context and performance clues in the shape of consolidated sensory information. The authors stated that "*By 'experience', we mean the 'takeaway' impression formed by people's encounters with products, services, and businesses — a perception produced when humans consolidate sensory information*" (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994, p. 1).

According to Poulsson (2014), experience offerings revolve around a promise of fun, flow and magic moments, with a premise of time and presence, while being a process of co-creation. Poulsson (2014) proposed a definition of an experience offering based on the level of experiential value provided and the staged characteristics of the offering itself:

*Experience offerings provide access to staged stimuli, intended to evoke sensations and emotions that interact with consumers and their subjective membranes to co-create experiential value in the form of Fun, Flow and Magic Moments (Poulsson, 2014, p.117).*

Furthermore, Pine and Gilmore (2013) have argued that an experience occurs when services are used as a stage with products as props, in order to create a memorable event for the consumer. The authors define experiences as "*inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level*" (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p. 3). The English vocabulary has a broad perspective regarding the definition of an experience compared to many other languages that describe an experience with two words. For example, the Swedish language translates the word experience to both '*erfarenhet*' and '*upplevelse*' which means two types of experience instead of one (Pine & Gilmore, 2013).

The previously mentioned definitions agree that experiences are subjective and individual occurrences that alter a person's senses. However, the researchers define experiences from different standpoints and emphasize certain traits. Carbone and Haeckel (1994) define an experience from a product- and service-centered standpoint based on the provided performance and sensory information. Poulsson (2014) defines an experience using three frameworks based on fun, flow, and magic moments in conjunction with co-creation. In contrast, Pine and Gilmore (2011) define an experience mainly from a theatrical standpoint, where the goal is consumer engagement and the creation of a memorable event.

For this study, a clear definition was needed since it aimed to investigate the experiences of consumers. For the purpose of this study, Pine and Gilmore's (2011) definition of an experience was used as their definition is broad and this study was also based on their theory of experience economy. Compared to the other definitions, Pine and Gilmore's definition is more open for interpretation which is appropriate in an explorative study of live shopping. Their definition

builds on a level of subjectivity that allows for many traits to be seen as contributors to the overall experience. In addition, the conceptual model in this study is based on the theoretical frameworks found in the experience economy theory. These frameworks also consider experiences as memorable and engaging, which is emphasized in Pine and Gilmore's (2011) definition.

## **2.2 Hedonic and Utilitarian Consumer Motivations**

In order to study and focus on live shopping from a consumer's perspective, a distinction has to be made between two motivations in consumers' behavior. Towards the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, a greater extent of research emerged that described two dimensions found in buying attitudes of different consumers (Batra & Ahtola, 1991). These two dimensions were distinguished from each other based on hedonic and utilitarian values.

The hedonic evaluation is characterized by a higher focus on sensory attributes, such as the provided experiential value (Batra & Ahtola, 1990). Hedonic features provide a positive experience for the consumer, which is related to the creation of pleasure-seeking emotions (Chitturi et al., 2008). Hedonic features are often valued as more important compared to utilitarian ones (Kakar, 2017). In terms of a car, the hedonic value would revolve around the consumer's perceived feeling when driving it (Batra & Ahtola, 1990). In order for a product or service to be classified as hedonic, the majority of its properties would need to be valued as hedonic. This evaluation is performed by the consumer who evaluates the product based on the provided benefits. Hence, the consumer would need to value the product with a greater emphasis on the hedonic features rather than the instrumental value. However, different consumers will value products differently depending on the perceived strength of the products' hedonic attributes (Batra & Ahtola, 1990).

The utilitarian evaluation considers the non-sensory attributes such as the usefulness of a product (Batra & Ahtola, 1990). Products with a high level of utilitarian value mainly provide consumers with practical benefits, such as a car's safety or gas mileage (Chitturi et al., 2008). In addition, consumers tend to choose utilitarian products over hedonic ones, despite the previously mentioned aspect that consumers prefer hedonic features. This can be explained by

the fact that consumers find it easier to justify the utilitarian attributes, following a rational problem-solving strategy (Kakar, 2017).

As mentioned in chapter 1.1, previous research has focused on live shopping from a utilitarian perspective, where consumers participate in order to gain increased knowledge about a product. In contrast, this study aimed to explore consumers' perspectives of live shopping as an experience, which incorporates hedonic attributes.

## **2.3 Theatrics of an Experience**

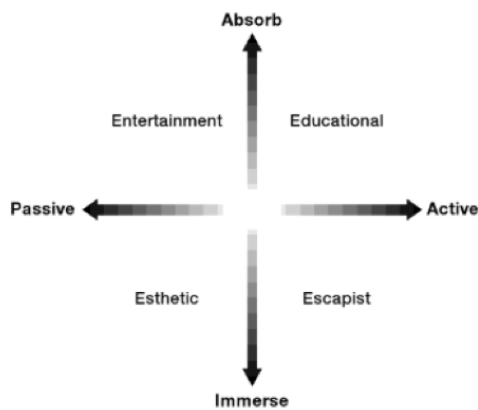
Theatrics help to frame an experience as the main offering of a company. In his book "*The presentation of self in everyday life*", Goffman (1959) has described how people interact with each other, much like actors do in a theater. People alter their behavior in interactions with others to control the inflicted impressions. Pine and Gilmore (2011) have argued that an organization is equal to a theater, where Goffman's metaphor becomes a reality. Business and theaters share a lot of terminology, for example: performance, production, method, role, and scenario. When employees encounter customers, they tend to follow a set of guidelines issued by the company. These guidelines can be to ask if customers need any help, to always smile, and/or never argue with customers. In turn, the employee acts in a certain way within a prepared environment, like actors behave on-stage. What happens in the personnel room is obscured from the customers' view. Similarly, the backstage in a theater is obscured from the viewer. Like a theater, a company in the experience economy has to create an experience that is staged by actors, in this case employees, in front of an audience. In addition, the actor has to engage the viewer in the experience through a convincing performance that provokes certain feelings (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

## 2.4 Four Realms of an Experience

In order to gain further clarity surrounding the question of what constitutes an experience, a model called the four realms of an experience can be utilized (Figure 1). This model is based on two main spectrums and four realms that are thought to contribute to the very foundation of an experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). The two spectrums are: the environmental relationship which is placed vertically, and the level of guest participation which is placed horizontally (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

**Figure 1**

The four realms of an experience



*Note - Reprinted from Welcome to the Experience Economy (p.46), by B. Joseph Pine II & James H. Gilmore, 2011. Harvard Business Review Press. Copyright 2011 by B. Joseph Pine II & James H. Gilmore.*

The spectrum of environmental relationship describes how the experience is brought to the mind of the consumers and is measured in terms of a mix between absorption and immersion. Absorption revolves around the consumer absorbing the experience from a distance, such as when watching a movie. Immersion focuses on providing the consumer with a greater physical and psychological experience. A high level of absorption is found when a consumer watches TV. A high level of immersion is instead when a consumer visits the cinema.

The spectrum of guest participation describes the level of passive versus active participation. Active participation is achieved when the consumer is actively participating in shaping the provided experience (Dieck et al., 2018). In contrast, passive participation is achieved when the consumer is not actively participating in shaping the experience. Hence, the level of active



participation is greater when a consumer is participating in a product trial, while passive participation would be more prevalent when the consumer is passively watching a product demonstration (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). These two spectra have allowed for the creation of the four following realms: entertainment, education, escapist and esthetic. The entertainment realm revolves around sensing while the educational realm focuses on learning (Williams, 2006). The realm of escapism emphasizes doing, while the esthetic realm highlights the importance of being there. The middle of the model is called the sweet spot and constitutes the most optimal experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). It is a blend of all realms that together create the most engaging and memorable experience. The four realms will be explained in greater detail below.

#### *2.4.1 Entertainment*

The *entertainment realm* is the most primal realm and makes up the most common types of experiences, often engaging the consumer by the use of amusement (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). The placement of the entertainment realm in the model makes it based on passive participation and absorption. The higher level of absorption arises from the consumers' higher valuation of the attractive factors found in the performance (Hwang & Lee, 2019). This makes entertainment a realm that builds on its ability to catch and occupy consumers' attention (Oh et al., 2007). Music, jokes, and visual spectacles are common types of entertainment and the level of guest participation, in this case, is considered to be passive (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020). A further example of the entertainment aspect would be the viewers' received level of amusement provided by the hosts of a live stream (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020). However, it is important to note that the basis for a good experience contains more aspects than just the entertainment factor itself. Therefore, marketers need to provide a deeper experience using the additional realms explained henceforth (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

#### *2.4.2 Education*

The *education realm* is based on active participation and an absorptive environment (Oh et al., 2007). The active participation is further distinguished as a two-way interaction where both employees and consumers are considered to be interactive learners, that is, they learn from each other. A simple example of this two-way education would be an employee engaging a

consumer by simply asking: what is your opinion regarding these types of products? This question allows for a two-way education where the consumer educates the employee by sharing their thoughts, and subsequently, the employee educates the consumer through knowledge sharing (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). In addition, the consumer's gained knowledge from the employee creates a sense of reliability in terms of the employee's expertise (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020). This knowledge exchange also helps the consumers in their evaluation of their desired products (Ko & Chen, 2020). In addition, the entertainment and education realm can be combined into edutainment, where a consumer is educated and entertained at the same time (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

### 2.4.3 *Escapism*

The *escapism* realm is referred to as a mental diversion where the consumers occupy themselves with a chosen activity that provides deep immersion, which then functions as a mental escape from their daily lives (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). This realm revolves around the principles of active participation coupled with immersion. In contrast to the other realms, the realm of escapism is characterized by having the highest level of participation and immersion (Musa et al., 2017). The Internet has provided consumers with further possibilities to immerse themselves into the subject of their liking. At the same time, it is also known that many companies do not recognize the value of escapism in the context of online browsing, and that many consumers actively look for online escapist experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). An example of an online escapist experience would be a viewer who feels less lonely when watching a live stream (C.-Y. Chen & Chang, 2019; Sjöblom & Hamari, 2017). To immerse the consumers into an experience, companies also have to supply the right visual circumstances, that is, the *esthetic* factor (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

### 2.4.4 *Esthetic*

The esthetic realm revolves around immersing consumers, while the consumers themselves have no effect on the experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Esthetics is, like escapism, based on immersion. However, unlike escapism, esthetics is constituted of passive participation. The value in esthetic experiences arises from the act of staying in the moment, simply enjoying the view and the sensation at hand. The esthetic experience would be greater at a cafe located in

the near proximity of the Eiffel tower, than one located further away. However, when an aesthetic experience is staged, it is important that the experience stays true to itself in order to avoid inauthentic portrayal (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). This can occur when the esthetics of an experience tries to mimic a certain environment, such as a Swedish cafe that tries to resemble a typical French-style interior.

With the help of the four realms of an experience, companies can assure that the experience allows for consumer engagement. In addition to the four realms of an experience, companies need to make use of the correct design elements when trying to create an experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Simple design features such as the lighting, colors, and background design can be crucial in terms of attracting and retaining consumers (Wongkitrungrueng et al. 2020). By following the five principles of design, the company can gain greater control of the experience content in order to provoke certain mental responses (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

## **2.5 Five Principles of Design**

In order to stage a memorable experience, Pine and Gilmore (2011) created a framework that consists of five principles that constitute the design of an experience. Each design principle works together to create and strengthen the overall theme of the experience. The five principles are: theme creation, inclusion of positive cues, elimination of negative cues, memorabilia and stimulation of the five senses.

### *2.5.1 Creation of a Theme*

The first principle is the creation of a theme, which is the foundation of the experience. All other principles support the theme throughout the experience in order to create coherence. When explaining the theme of an experience, Pine and Gilmore (1998; 2011) used restaurant names as examples to depict the function of the theme. Restaurants like Hard Rock Cafe, 52 Seasons, or Rainforest Café all provide a clear name that also constitutes the theme to which consumers can tie their experiences. However, the theme does not necessarily have to be depicted through the name of the store but can also be expressed through the idea itself. Kristianstad University, for example, depicts its theme through green details around the campus, and this green color also represents the University's logo. Another example is the company Barnes & Noble that included a cafe and changed its bookstores' architecture as well

as behavior of salespeople. These changes were made because customers actually visited the store for its social experience rather than for its products. In turn, the changes made clarified a social experience for consumers who could connect all impressions to the new theme. Consequently, Barnes & Noble was able to stay competitive when Amazon took over the book industry by undercutting the market with low prices. In addition to a clear theme, it is also important to ensure a harmony of positive cues and an elimination of negative ones (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

### *2.5.2 Harmony through Positive Cues*

Through the use of positive cues, the consumer can gain specific impressions that amplify the theme of the experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Subsequently, the company has to choose impressions based on what the company wants the consumer to think as a takeaway. When Disneyland was planned, the creator did not wish for associations to “rowdy” carnivals or torn-down amusement parks. Instead, Disneyland set cleanliness as the desired impression which was portrayed through employees that continuously cleaned the park from trash, whilst always smiling at bypassing visitors which gave the impression of happiness. The positive cues are placed in the environment as well as in the behavior of employees through codes of conduct. Therefore, in order for a company to clearly present a theme, it has to incorporate positive cues that create the desired impression. In turn, the consumer will have a greater potential to remember and understand the theme and also the experience in general (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

### *2.5.3 Elimination of Negative Cues*

In contrast, negative cues can disturb the experience through inconsistency with the theme (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). In order for an experience to be positively remembered, all negative impressions have to be eliminated. According to Donald Norman, posted instruction signs often present negative cues, as they are unnecessary and are often a result of poor design. Pine and Gilmore used Disney’s staff as an example, pointing out that they never break character when wearing the clothes of the characters that they represent. Since the employee cannot break character, a negative cue is eliminated because the audience is separated from the front- and backstage. Another example is restaurants that use theme oriented greeting lines. The use of

standardized lines could run the risk of mediating a normal meal instead of a special experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

The elimination of negative cues is an implementation of company-specific standards (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). In addition, a company can create a negative impression through the use of too many spontaneous cues that are not tied to the theme. An example of such spontaneous cues is exaggerated service in hotels. The room is filled with advertisement cards while staff intrudes on the privacy through bad timed cleaning service. Each cue can seem good at first as it strives to improve one's stay. Instead, combined, the cues create a negative impression. As a result, a luxury hotel becomes less attractive than a chartered home because of its simplicity (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

#### *2.5.4 Memorabilia*

All cues form the overall impression the consumer experiences. If planned and executed correctly, the experience will be remembered positively with the possibility for repeated participation (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). In addition, consumers that have a positive experience, often want to remember it within a tangible form. This is one explanation for why consumers often purchase overpriced souvenirs or keep tickets and receipts to remind themselves about the experience. Consequently, there are different ways to incorporate memorabilia into the design of an experience. It can either be done by selling souvenirs, giving items away that are a part of the experience, or even letting the consumer use the memorabilia as a prop in the experience itself. The latter one has a greater potential to tie a stronger memory to the tangible memorabilia. Williams (2006) pointed out how people buy memorabilia from airlines like Virgin but not from Ryanair or Easyjet and explains that this is due to a difference in the experiential offering. Therefore, if the staged experience creates positive reactions, memorabilia can be used to extend the memorability of the experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2013).

Pine and Gilmore (2011) measure the quality of experiences using memorability. If the experience is not memorable, then it is considered bad. Thus, memorabilia is dependent on memorability since an experience that is not memorable does not provide any value to the memorabilia. However, an experience can be memorable without the existence of memorabilia, but not vice versa.

### *2.5.5 Stimulation of Five Senses*

In order to further increase the memorability of the experience, the experience can be altered through the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Williams (2006) found that the ability to experience a product through the five senses is highly valued by consumers. An experience becomes more memorable if more senses are stimulated (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). The atmospherics that can be found in stores are known to have a great impact on the consumer experience (Spence et al., 2014). One prevalent example is Rainforest Café. Inside the restaurant, there is a mist that can be both seen and heard. The mist provides guests with a cool sensation on the skin, and a tropical smell. The rainforest theme does not provide a direct stimulation of taste. However, Pine and Gilmore (2011) pointed out that taste can be “imagined” with the help of the other senses. Thus, Rainforest Café stimulates all five senses which makes the restaurant’s theme and experience more memorable.

Some experiences can indirectly create a sensation by the use of imagination (Berger, 2016). The consumer can see a product’s texture and imagine the touch, or smell food and then imagine the taste. However, senses can also be counterproductive. An example is the monotone voice in airplane communication that interrupts one’s reading or sleeping. One sense interrupts another and creates a negative impression. Consequently, an experience should stimulate the five senses coherently, to increase the quality of the experience (Carù & Cova, 2003).

## **2.6 Conceptual Model**

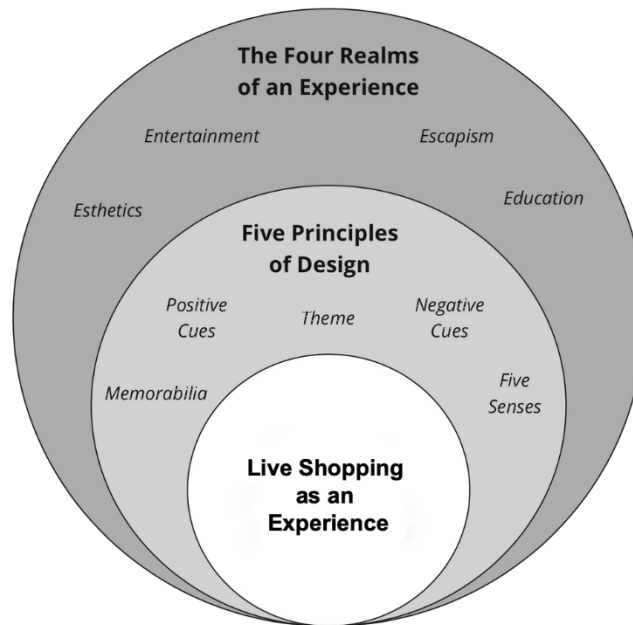
Based on the previous theoretical discussion, a conceptual model has been created to help depict and analyze an experience from the consumer’s perspective. The model is based on two outer layers that together explain the core: live shopping as an experience (Figure 2). The outer layer depicts the experience generally through the four realms of an experience: the esthetic, educational, entertaining and escapist realms. These realms can then be broken down to a more detailed depiction through the five principles of design. The two outer shells together represent the core which is the experience itself. Each part of the model is based on consumers’ perspective. The best way to provide a thorough explanation of the conceptual model is through an example where the two frameworks can be integrated.

Pine and Gilmore (2011) mentioned British Airways that mainly offers an esthetic experience, where the passenger is immersed in the journey and flight. Subsequently, the CEO of the company wanted to blur the lines between two realms and offer both an esthetic and entertaining experience. The CEO wanted to convert long-haul transport systems into entertainment systems through, for example, the integration of movies in-flight. The flight experience would cover both the esthetic and entertainment realm.

This example helps to explain the connection between the four realms of an experience and the five principles of design. The general theme of the experience can be considered as the combination of esthetic and entertainment. However, the specific theme of the experience is *flight as an entertainment system*. The positive cues revolve around how the passengers are served with drinks and onboard entertainment. This eliminates the negative cues of a long flight that can make passengers feel bored and tired. The positive and negative cues support the specific theme of flight as an entertainment system through an esthetic or entertaining character.

In addition, there is memorabilia such as the physical ticket and the onboard sales. This memorabilia is able to later remind the consumer of the esthetic and entertaining experience. Finally, it is also possible to stimulate all five senses. Sight is stimulated through the onboard entertainment and outside views, whereas the smell and taste by the served food. Hearing is stimulated by the movie and onboard communication system, while the touch is stimulated by the physical sensation of the takeoff and landing. In turn, the general theme is broken down where all principles tie into the specific theme and depict the experience in a detailed manner.

**Figure 2**  
The conceptual model



*Note – Adapted from Welcome to the Experience Economy (p.46, pp.65-91), by B. Joseph Pine II & James H. Gilmore, 2011. Harvard Business Review Press. Copyright 2011 by B. Joseph Pine*



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## 3. Method

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*This chapter will present the method that was used to collect and analyze the data. The following subchapters will explain the research philosophy, research approach, and choice of theory. Furthermore, the collection of empirical data, participant selection, and data analysis will be presented. Lastly, the study's trustworthiness, and ethical considerations will be discussed.*

### 3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy describes the epistemological approach to thought and knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The philosophy functions as the attitude towards how data is collected and further analyzed. There are three types of research philosophy: *realism*, *positivism* and *interpretivism*. Interpretivism builds on the will to understand the different perspectives that are held by people (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Lind, 2014). In addition, this philosophy investigates a phenomenon through the eyes of others. Interpretivism strives to answer questions of “how” and “why” in the context of human behavior. This study focused on exploring live shopping through the perspective of consumers, which is based on subjective experiences. In turn, interpretivism was most suitable to fulfill the research purpose of this paper.

### 3.2 Research Approach

This study used a qualitative method to explore consumers' perspectives on live shopping. A qualitative method focuses more on the analysis of words rather than on a quantification of the collected answers. The aim of qualitative research is to explain and describe a certain phenomenon using the gathered and interpreted opinions of respondents (Denscombe, 2014). This method allows researchers to understand a phenomenon through deep and detailed descriptions. The qualitative method has often been described as everything that deviates from a quantitative method (Bell & Bryman, 2011). In turn, the qualitative method lacks a clear definition, and has to be further specified.

There are three specific types of approaches that researchers can utilize in order to study a phenomenon from a certain standpoint: *inductive*, *deductive* and *abductive* (Bell & Bryman, 2011). The inductive approach starts in observations that leads to generalizable conclusions which in turn form a new theory. In contrast, the deductive approach begins in theory and later tests hypotheses through collected data. The abductive approach, however, combines the two previous approaches and ties into the interpretivist research philosophy, which allows for alternation between collected data and theory. In turn, abductivity allows for the ability to modify theories based on the acquired results of the research (Alvehus, 2013; Lind, 2014).

Since this study used the theory of experience economy as a lens and a tool for analysis, the abductive approach was the most suitable. It can be seen as an interpretive inference where the data provides evidence for an explanatory hypothesis (Josephson & Josephson, 1994). This approach allows for greater flexibility between theory and data which can help to understand consumers' perspective on live shopping as an experience. In turn, the abductive approach ties into the interpretive qualitative method and creates a more specific depiction of the qualitative research that was done.

### **3.3 Choice of Theory**

There are many theories that focus on experiences, but one successful and prominent in business administration is the experience economy theory by Pine and Gilmore (2011). This theory has laid a foundation for studies in consumer experiences and was therefore the main theory to frame our collected data in a holistic perspective. The experience economy theory includes a model called the four realms of an experience, which was used in the analysis. Five principles of design is an additional concept from the experience economy theory that was also included in the analysis. Together, the two models constituted the conceptual model which was used to help explain consumers' perspective of live shopping as an experience. However, it is also important to remain critical to the used theory in order to ensure ethical and reliable research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Since the theory of experience economy is widely used in the field of experience research, it has naturally been subject to criticism.

The definition of an experience is the first form of critique due to the widespread definition of an experience. This created the need for this paper to explain how the term ‘‘experience’’ would be used (as done in chapter 2.1). One of the other main critiques revolves around the organization-based standpoint that is argued to neglect the perspectives of individuals (Snel, 2011). Pine and Gilmore (2013) have responded to this critique, arguing that there is a level of individualization in certain sub-areas of the theory (e.g., mass customization) which subsequently focuses on the individuals. In addition, Pine and Gilmore (2013) encouraged researchers to explore the theory through an inclusion of the individual’s perspective.

Furthermore, the experience economy theory has received criticism for not emphasizing the importance of value co-creation when experiences are staged (Prahala & Rasmuswamy, 2004). Pine and Gilmore (2013) have explained that an issue in terms of co-creation is the intentionality of the company that stages the experience and the level of adaptability for the viewer. They encourage greater excellence in these two dimensions.

The last form of valid critique is the focus on experiences as memorable events (Snel, 2011). Pine and Gilmore (2013) have explained that their focus on experiences as memorable events stems from the significance of memorability in most experiences. They further pointed out that any form of enjoyment found in an experience usually makes the experience more memorable. They conclude that memorability is not required for every experience but has emphasized that increased memorability translates into more value created (Pine & Gilmore, 2013).

### **3.4 Collection of Empirical Data**

The primary source of data consisted of semi-structured interviews as listed in Table 1. Eight interviews provided the research with in-depth answers that could later be analyzed in relation to the study’s conceptual model. It was possible to identify similar answers after eight interviews as a saturation had been reached. The respondents were provided with an invitation with instructions to ensure that the respondents were well-prepared.

**Table 1**  
*List of respondents*

<b>Interviews</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Alexander	22	Male
Gustav	18	Male
Kajsa	24	Female
Karin	24	Female
Maria	27	Female
Matilda	27	Female
Max	22	Male
Simon	18	Male

In the invitations, the respondents were asked to participate in live shopping to create their own perception of the phenomenon and its complementary functions. The respondents were encouraged to find live shopping streams on their own but were also offered examples of companies that host live shopping. In turn, the respondents were given guidance in case that they would have difficulties finding live shopping on their own. Specifically, four companies were provided to offer a broad selection that could possibly suit the respondents' interest. These companies were a mall, a tech retailer, a fashion retailer, and a beauty retailer.

The semi-structured interviews were used to give the respondents opportunities to elaborate their answers within the topic (Bell & Bryman, 2011). Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was held in Swedish, the native language of the respondents. The interview guide was used to provide a structure for the main questions, while the interviewer retained the ability to ask follow-up questions (Bell & Bryman, 2011). The interview guide was structured according to the conceptual model to help answer the research purpose (appendix 1). The interviews were conducted digitally, as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic encourages social distancing. In order to resemble a face-to-face interview, the respondents were asked to use web cameras. This gave the authors an opportunity to notice facial expressions of the respondents. In turn, the possible discomfort, confusion, or puzzlement of the respondents could be noticed (Bell & Bryman, 2011). However, the body language was lost at times, due to the angle of the camera. The placement of the camera relative to the screen could also impact the level of eye-contact at times. This could be beneficial for people that are uncomfortable with eye-contact, but also function as a drawback for those who prefer eye-contact. An additional disadvantage of digital interviews is that a poor internet connection can disrupt the flow in questions and answers and the person then has to repeat what they said.

### 3.5 Selection of Participants

The respondents were selected through a snowball sampling technique based on the authors' social network. This means that a person was asked to participate in an interview, and later the same person referred to an associate who was also invited to an interview (Denscombe, 2018). This sampling technique was suitable due to its convenience and the smaller scale of the research project. The respondents were aged 18-27. The reason for the choice of younger respondents is that adults aged 18-28 use technology more than older adults do (Olson et al., 2011). Since live shopping is a new online phenomenon, younger adults were considered more suitable for the interviews (Olson et al., 2011).

### 3.6 Data Analysis

It is first when the data is analyzed that it can be significant to one's research (Bell and Bryman, 2011). The first step of data analysis was to transcribe the interviews, which took 20 hours and resulted in approximately 80 pages of data. The transcriptions were then thoroughly read to create a general understanding. Further, what someone said is not interesting just because it was said, but rather because it has been analyzed in relation to a theory. In turn, the next step was to code the data into categories and sub-categories (Bell and Bryman, 2011).

The collected data was coded in accordance with the conceptual model which helped to analyze the respondents' answers. At times, qualitative data can lose its context as it becomes fragmented, and this can lead to a false analysis (Bell & Bryman, 2011). To counter this problem, we included whole sentences and notes to depict the context of the data. The categories of the respondents' answers were based on the four realms of an experience. When an answer was first placed under a category, it was then given a sub-category in relation to the five principles of design.

Furthermore, a third code layer was used. We identified recurring topics under each category, which showed in greater detail what the respondents focused on from their experiences. For example, the respondents could mention different traits of the host that made live shopping entertaining. In turn, these aspects had the category of *entertainment*, the sub-category of *positive cues* and a topic related to the *host*. At times, some design principles did not contain a

broad selection of data. Consequently, some data was not given a topic, but only a category and a sub-category. The category and sub-category were coded deductively, whilst the topic was coded inductively. This combination ties into the abductive approach that allows for flexibility in qualitative research.

We coded each category separately and highlighted all answers that were considered relevant. The answers were highlighted with a color that represented one of the five design principles. For example, we used a green color for answers that were positive and could be tied to something specific from the respondent's experience. In contrast, red was used for negative experiences. Pink color represented memorabilia whilst blue represented the five senses. Lastly, the yellow color was used for answers that consisted of general opinions and suggestions to live shopping that the respondent would like to see. Consequently, we tried to cover all aspects from the perspective of our respondents.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness**

The qualitative nature of this study could not utilize the same trustworthiness criteria found in quantitative research such as reliability and validity (Bell & Bryman, 2011). Instead, four main criteria have been used to provide the research with trustworthiness: *credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability*.

*Credibility* describes the level of validity and accuracy of the collected data (Denscombe, 2018). Respondent validation was utilized to provide the study with credibility. The interviewees were contacted after the data had been collected, to verify that the interpretations corresponded to the respondents' opinions. Thus, the respondents were given an opportunity to either approve or disapprove the authors' interpretation of data (Bell & Bryman, 2011). In addition to respondent validation, the study used investigator triangulation. This triangulation created further credibility since it allowed two researchers to discuss the collected data, which reduces the risk of interpretation error (Bell & Bryman, 2011).

*Transferability* describes the extent to which the findings can be applied within other studies (Bell & Bryman, 2011). This study's transferability is compromised by the different live shopping streams that the respondents saw. The focus of each live shopping is slightly different.

Thus, the results of this study are difficult to replicate. Furthermore, thick descriptions have been provided throughout the analysis to increase the level of transferability. Thick descriptions decrease superficiality by describing the gathered data through deep and subjective interpretations. Consequently, the meticulousness of thick descriptions grants the analysis with meaningfulness for other researchers (Bell & Bryman, 2011).

*Dependability* is achieved through secure storage of gathered data, to allow other researchers access the transcripts, recordings, and data analysis for future reference (Bell & Bryman, 2011). The transcribed data of this study has been stored on the authors' devices in unison with a cloud service to ensure safe storage for the future. However, the recordings were deleted after the study's completion to fulfill the respondents' consent agreement.

*Confirmability* is the final criteria and revolves around the objectivity of the research (Bell & Bryman, 2011). The confirmability of this study was ensured by the authors not allowing personal values to affect the research.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

To ensure a satisfactory level of ethicality regarding the performed research, four main areas of ethical principles were followed (Bell & Bryman, 2011). These four areas involve participant safety, informed consent, invasion of privacy, and deception. The participants' safety was assured through a consent form and their privacy was protected through anonymity. Anonymity was achieved through the use of fictional names that replaced the participants' real names in this study. The collected data was treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), ensuring confidentiality in the processing of personal data.

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## 4. Findings and Analysis

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*This chapter will present the empirical data according to the conceptual model. Each realm is addressed separately through the five principles of design to provide a detailed review of consumers' perspective on live shopping as an experience. The data is also analyzed according to the theoretical framework. Some principles were only found in certain realms, and therefore those principles were not included.*

### 4.1 Entertainment

The realm of entertainment was considered very important by the respondents. This realm consists of absorption and passive participation (Pine and Gilmore 2011). The following sections focus on data that contain any aspects of amusement, fun, or entertainment (Table 2).

#### 4.1.1 Theme

The respondents believed that the theme was central in the live shopping experience. To clarify, this study proposes that the theme consists of two layers as mentioned in chapter 2.6. The general theme in this case is entertainment, whilst the specific theme is decided by the main content of the live shopping. In the example of Rainforest Café, Pine and Gilmore (2011) depict how the theme is specifically about rainforests, but how the general theme is esthetic by immersing the consumer. Since the respondents have seen different live shopping streams, the specific theme varies but can still be tied to the general theme.

Matilda said, *"You choose what [type of live shopping] you think is fun"*. Kajsa mentioned that she would be likely to watch if a store would present a specific clothing collection. In turn, the collection functions as the specific theme for the live shopping. Gustav thought that the specific theme *"helps one to understand what the live shopping is about"*. Linnea added that *"I think it attracts you more when it's a special theme"*. Martin believed that the theme gives consumers expectations for what will be shown in the live shopping. In turn, the theme sets the stage for the experience, preparing the consumer for what is to come (Pine and Gilmore, 2011).



Karin explained that she prefers to watch live shopping with a celebrity as a host because she is already familiar with the person. She added, *“It would be entertaining to see what the person has to say, you’re more interested in that person”*. A famous figure would draw consumers to the experience for entertainment purposes. Likewise, Kajsa stated, *“I would be willing to pay if, for example, X would sing as a complement to testing products”*. If a live shopping is presented with a celebrity in focus, then the celebrity would become a part of the specific theme. Thus, the specific theme would become celebrity focused, whilst the general theme would be entertainment. Similarly, consumers often prefer movies that feature famous actors, compared to unknown ones.

#### 4.1.2 Positive Cues

The positive cues within the realm of entertainment were related to the following topics: the *host* and the *environment*. The host’s ability to amuse consumers was a factor emphasized by the respondents. Many respondents mentioned that the hosts were funny, which made them more amusing to watch. Alexander pointed out that a funny host makes him *“more committed and attracted to the live shopping”*. Matilda enjoyed the live shopping streams where the host was very active. She said, *“If the host is committed, the live shopping becomes much more fun to watch”*. These personality traits are part of the host’s overall character, which is an important aspect that encourages engagement from the viewers' side (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020).

Another aspect considered important was the ability of hosts to portray themselves as easygoing and approachable. Simple things, such as the host's ability to make the viewers laugh, were aspects frequently mentioned by the respondents. Karin said, *“The hosts joked about their accents which made me laugh which felt like the hosts were more approachable”*. Laughter is considered one of the most fundamental entertaining aspects and it is hard, if not impossible, to exclude laughter from any type of entertainment (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). On a question regarding two hosts compared to one, Matilda answered that *“Two hosts were entertaining to watch due to their interaction with each other. It is more fun to watch two people that know one another and interact accordingly”*. This interaction allows consumers to pick up certain information from the conversation between the two hosts. In addition, the consumer can relate to the shared opinions which strengthens the relationship between the hosts and consumers (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the physical environment in the live shopping experience was another important factor that provided the consumers with entertainment. The main positive cue was the ability of live shopping to stage a bright, colorful, and dynamic environment. According to Simon, the experience is positively affected by a bright and colorful environment. He said, “*A bright environment is more fun to watch*”. In addition, Matilda considered live shopping to be fun when the host visited different stores. She explained, “*It was more dynamic and pleasing to the eye*”. These entertaining factors are related to the physical environment which should not be foregone since it is an important aspect that provides basic support for the overall experience (Oh et al., 2007).

#### 4.1.3 Negative Cues

However, the respondents expressed many negative cues related to entertainment. Four topics were found: *uneventfulness*, *long-spun*, *host*, and *environment*. There was a wide variety of opinions. Some contradicted the opinions that were deemed positive. For example, Maria did not enjoy watching two hosts as she thought that they shifted the focus from her interests. She explained, “*I prefer the live shopping to be concise, without too much dialogue. The interaction needed between two hosts is too much for my taste*”. Further, if the live shopping took place in an environment that was boring to watch, the respondents were more likely to leave. For example, Karin explained that the environment of live shopping can negatively impact the entertainment factor. She said, “*The room in which the hosts sit can be boring due to the scene and environment*”. This further underlines the importance of staging the live shopping experience in an environment that is entertaining and pleasing for the eye (Oh et al., 2007).

Furthermore, some negative cues could be related to a boring host. Simon said, “*It is really boring to watch someone who looks like a post compared to someone with good body language*”. Therefore, the appearance of the host could be a source of boredom, which is an important consideration since the host is a big part of the visual impact in the live shopping experience (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020). In addition, many respondents complained that certain live shopping streams were long-spun and uneventful. Alexander believed that he loses his positive attitude when live shopping takes too long. Moreover, Gustav said, “*Simply walking around in a store while showing products is really boring to watch because nothing happens*”. Similarly, Kajsa pointed out that certain live shopping streams were too stiff and that they should instead focus on providing more of a show. The emphasis on having a show

was agreed upon by many respondents. However, Maria insisted that the live shopping should not include too much entertainment. She believed that *“If it is too much of a show, the live shopping loses its purpose [education]”*. Similarly, Gustav and Simon believed that live shopping is no longer live shopping if the focus transitions from products to entertainment. In turn, the respondents believe that the purpose of the live shopping experience revolves around the presented products and not only a show. Some consumers demand entertainment in the live shopping experience, but too much of a show can function as a deviation from the purpose.

#### 4.1.4 Five Senses

Within the realm of entertainment, some respondents complained about the visuals. This was related to boring scenery that did not stimulate the respondents' sight in a satisfactory way. Karin said, *“I might as well listen to a podcast since there is not much fun to watch”*. Pine and Gilmore (2011) argue that the more senses stimulated, the better the experience. The live shopping that Karin viewed did not stimulate her sight, which made her less interested. Instead, she could only listen, which worsened the live shopping experience.

Live shopping is an online phenomenon, which implies that the experience strongly relies on sight and hearing. In this study, the respondents only expected sight and hearing to be stimulated. Most respondents did not believe that touch, smell, and taste were or could be stimulated. Karin expected her sight to be stimulated, but to her surprise, it was not. This made her disappointed and less inclined to stay for the full duration of the live shopping. Thus, the live shopping experience requires sight and hearing to be stimulated as the whole experience is based on these two senses. The other three senses are unexpected and instead function as bonuses that enrich the experience. Similarly, a restaurant is required to stimulate taste and smell, whilst the other three senses enrich the overall experience. Pine and Gilmore's (2011) example of Rainforest Café stimulated all senses; however, it was only required to stimulate the taste and smell. If taste and smell were not stimulated, the experience would be worse.

#### 4.1.5 Memorabilia

Pine and Gilmore (2011) describe memorabilia as tangible objects found in the experience, for example, tickets, photos, or souvenirs. In addition, Pine and Gilmore (1998) measure the value of experiences based on how memorable they are. Therefore, memorabilia has great value in the five principles of design. However, it is important to separate memorability and memorabilia. If an experience is memorable, then the consumer will most likely remember it. In contrast, memorabilia is the specific object that the memory is tied to. Memorabilia is dependent on memorability, but not vice versa.

Many respondents did not consider live shopping as a memorable experience because they were only there for the moment. For example, Max said, *“You are only there momentarily. When you’re done, you move on. It’s just a fun moment”*. Gustav said, *“I have no strong memories from the live shopping. There was nothing that stood out. More or less, it was the same thing over and over again”*. Evidently, it is difficult to identify memorabilia in live shopping since the phenomenon is digital and not considered memorable. There are no physical objects for the consumers to keep, other than the products that are bought. Thus, live shopping only allows for the purchased product to act as memorabilia.

The previous paragraph perceives memorabilia only as tangible objects found in the experience, much like Pine and Gilmore (2011) does. However, this study suggests that memorabilia can be more complex. Maria said, *“I specifically remember Z since they were so boring to watch”*. Consequently, Maria’s experience was memorable but in a negative way. Similarly, Karin decided to leave a live shopping in advance because it was too bad. She explained, *“It was so bad it almost left a mark in my head, I can still see the models in my mind”*. In turn, these were the moments when Maria and Karin formed negative memories of their live shopping experience that are directly associated with the company. Pine and Gilmore (2011) only cover positive memorability of an experience. However, as seen in this study, Karin and Maria formed bad memories of the experience. From now on, when they see the brand, they can refer back to the bad experience of live shopping.

When Karin was asked if her memory is tied to the store, she answered *“I will probably think that the company had a really bad live shopping [...] it was disappointing, I don’t think that the models represented the fashion of the company”*. In turn, Maria’s and Karin’s negative

memories from live shopping allow for memorabilia to be created. This memorabilia is the brand's logo and products since these can ignite the memories associated with the previous live shopping experience. If consumers instead positively remember a live shopping experience, memorabilia can be created in the same manner, but with a positive purpose.

**Table 2**  
Coding of Entertainment

<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Example</b>	
<b>Entertainment</b>	Theme		<i><b>Karin:</b> I prefer to watch the famous person because I already know who it is. It's more entertaining to see what the person has to say.</i>	
		Positive cues	<i><b>Matilda:</b> Two hosts were entertaining to watch due to their interaction with each other. It is more fun to watch two people that each other and interact accordingly.</i>	
			<i>Environment</i>	<i><b>Karin:</b> One live shopping was more worth to watch because it had a varying environment.</i>
	Negative cues		<i>Uneventful</i>	<i><b>Gustav:</b> Simply walking around in a store while showing products is really boring to watch because nothing is happening.</i>
			<i>Long-spun</i>	<i><b>Alexander:</b> When live shopping takes too long, you lose your positive attitude</i>
			<i>Host</i>	<i><b>Kajsa:</b> I didn't know who the people were, so it was like: I don't care.</i>
			<i>Environment</i>	<i><b>Maria:</b> Some of the backgrounds were really boring. Like, it was only a white wall.</i>
	Five senses			<i><b>Max:</b> The physical feeling is a bit lacking.</i>
				<i><b>Karin:</b> I might as well listen to a podcast because there is nothing interesting to watch.</i>
		Memorabilia		<i><b>Max:</b> You're there for the moment, when you're done, you move on. It's only a fun moment.</i>

## 4.2 Education

In this chapter, findings related to educational aspects of the live shopping experience were accounted for. The educational realm is tied to active participation and absorption. The analyzed data in the following sections focuses on aspects of two-way interactions such as learning, teaching, and sharing information (Table 3).

### 4.2.1 Theme

The respondents showed that the live shopping experience was mostly in a general theme of education. This high level of attention can be partially linked to information-seeking which is a great factor to why consumers utilize online mediums (Chen & Chang, 2019). For example, Matilda believed that the live shopping experience taught her about different substances and what better suits different skin types. Consequently, the specific theme was skincare, but with a general theme of education. Further, Kajsa said, “*You can get make-up advice and advice about clothes*”. Once again, the general theme is educational, where the specific theme focuses on what the host has planned, for example clothes or make-up. As it was mentioned in the entertainment realm, the theme prepares and attracts the consumer for what is to come. Karin mentioned a live shopping that presented “*experts with skincare routines*” which caught her interest since it was a theme that she was interested in.

This study found that the respondents mostly describe live shopping in an educational manner, even if the live shopping was specifically themed after make-up, skincare, clothing, or electronics. The live shopping experience can include the general theme of entertainment as proposed in chapter 4.1.1, but in this study, the respondents only mentioned educational aspects of the specific theme.

### 4.2.2 Positive Cues

The positive cues within the realm of education were related to the *chat function, reviews, information, inspiration, and demonstration*. Many respondents argued that the chat was essential to the overall experience. The chat function provided viewers with the ability to ask questions and see other viewers’ opinions and reviews of certain products. For example, Max said, “*The people in the chat function can educate me in case they have a different perception*”

*of a product that is reviewed by the host*". Moreover, Karin explained that *"Someone asked the host how to apply eyeshadow in the correct way to avoid having it fall beneath the eye. It is thanks to that question that I received useful info"*. This provided usefulness is a contributor to the host's perceived reliability in the eyes of the consumers (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020).

The respondents were also encouraged by the hosts to write their thoughts and ideas in the chat. This gave room for a two-way interaction to take place since the host could answer questions and learn from consumers' opinions. The interaction contributes to the consumers' level of personal involvement within live shopping (Ko & Chen, 2020). This type of active conversing is stated as an important value within the experience economy theory regarding online mediums, which also strengthens the relationship between the viewers and the host (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Itani & Inyang, 2015). In addition, if the host provides consumers with sought-after knowledge, the chance of them revisiting the live shopping increases (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020).

The hosts are considered experts in live shopping where viewers attach credibility and reliability to the information provided by the hosts (Ko & Chen, 2020). The hosts are of great importance for educational purposes. The ability to interact with the viewers in an educational way was appreciated by the respondents. Max explained that the host provides a lot of background information as to why some clothing is good for a specific purpose. He said, *"You get a better understanding of it all"*. The host could also provide inspiration by talking about new trends: Kevin stated, *"I like to see what the store staff thinks is modern or similar"*. It was also important that the live shopping utilized all opportunities to demonstrate products since it is considered a key benefit not found in regular online shopping. Kajsa said, *"I can see the products in a more detailed way compared to just having a photo"*. In addition, Simon felt that he could be sure of the way a product is meant to be used since the salesman is the one who demonstrates the product. This form of trust is linked to the consumers' evaluation of the host's overall salesmanship (Itani & Inyang, 2015), which is an important aspect regarding the authenticity of the host's acting (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

### 4.2.3 Negative Cues

The negative cues can also be linked to the chat function and the host, especially the topics: *not replying, unnecessary content, stationary and insincere*. Many respondents complained that the hosts tend to miss many questions in the chat. Maria said, *“They should really try to be faster with answering the questions. Some of the questions remain unanswered, and that's a shame”*. Karin felt that the host's invitations to comment and interact were pointless since the host never reads the chat. This lack of interaction worsens the overall experience since it negatively impacts the two-way interaction between the host and viewers (Ko & Chen, 2020; Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020). The two-way interaction in the chat is constituted by consumers who share their emotions and feelings. However, some comments were considered unnecessary. Karin pointed out that *“On many occasions, they comment on things that are unnecessary such as that the host is cute”*.

Another aspect put forward was that the hosts seemed insincere. Matilda pointed out that she felt like the hosts only said positive things about products to encourage buying behavior. The chat gave her a similar experience: *“Since the majority of comments are positive about a specific brand like X, I feel like it is false marketing”*. Maria also found the host's level of dedication to be a source of insincerity. She said, *“It didn't seem like he was interested in the topic at all”*. This lack of dedication can also be seen as poor acting by the host, which portrays a false feeling towards the audience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). The visual look of the host, such as clothing, needs to align with the specific theme and consumers' visual expectations. Failure to do so can make the experience less psychologically stimulated (Spence et al., 2014). Furthermore, some respondents pointed out that live shopping sometimes becomes stationary. Max said, *“Sometimes I can feel like things are too long-spun, for example when there is too much nagging about a certain product”*. The time consumers spend on the experience is a great personal sacrifice of theirs. Therefore, it is necessary to compensate for the time spent by providing an experience that is worth the time spent (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).



#### 4.2.4 *Five Senses*

In the educational realm, the five senses mostly depended on the host's ability to describe the products. Most respondents believed that hosts could provide a sense of touch and smell through nuanced descriptions. Gustav said, "It is always possible to ask the host questions relating to the feel. You can ask what material the blanket is made of and how it feels". However, Gustav also mentioned a potential downside to such descriptions: "All people have different ways of describing such things, so I would not trust them fully. I would still have liked to get a feel for the products myself". Thus, Gustav believes that the senses can be stimulated, but he does not expect live shopping to do so. Similar to the analysis in chapter 4.1.4, an experience is required to stimulate certain senses, where additional senses enrich the experience (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

#### 4.2.5 *Memorabilia*

In the chapter 4.1.5 it was suggested that memorabilia is more complex, and this section follows the same idea. In the educational realm, Karin recalled a live shopping where she learned to apply make-up in a more efficient way. The question to the method was brought up by another viewer which shows a consumer's active participation in the education realm. Absorption can be seen by Karin who paid great attention to the tutorial as she was interested in the subject. From now on, she will most probably replicate the method on her own. Every time she uses the same method, she will refer back to the live shopping experience as it was the moment she learned the new method. In turn, Karin's new knowledge can be used to create memorabilia every time she uses the method that she once learned when watching live shopping. The applied make-up itself acts as memorabilia because it was done through the tutorial that the consumer remembers from the live shopping.

Further, the respondents often mentioned that live shopping could provide inspiration and knowledge about new trends. Even if no products were bought in live shopping, consumers could bring their acquired knowledge and inspiration into future shopping. For example, if consumers purchase clothing according to the new trend, they will associate the clothing with live shopping, since this is where they received inspiration. Thus, the piece of clothing becomes memorabilia from the previously experienced live shopping. Consequently, this study suggests that knowledge and inspiration provided in live shopping, can be remembered, and later transferred into memorabilia whenever the knowledge or inspiration is utilized.

**Table 3**  
Coding of education

<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Example</b>	
<b>Education</b>	Theme		<b>Kajsa:</b> You can get make-up advice and advice about clothes.	
		Positive cues	<i>Information and inspiration</i>	<b>Karin:</b> It was also a bit instructive; you get updated on what's trending. <b>Max:</b> There was a lot of sport clothes, what is best for certain weathers, what the different materials do to the body.
			<i>Reviews</i>	<b>Gustav:</b> I am also a bit interested in what the person that I watch thinks about things.
			<i>Chat</i>	<b>Alexander:</b> I think it is a vital function (chat), it's essential, otherwise the experience wouldn't be any good.
			<i>Demonstration</i>	<b>Maria:</b> You get to see things in motion and get inspired. They combine an outfit for you.
		Negative cues	<i>Not replying</i>	<b>Karin:</b> I think it sucks because most of them(hosts) do not watch what people write. It's like they talk but don't actually answer the comments.
			<i>Unnecessary content</i>	<b>Kajsa:</b> People can write anything, negative things that don't belong
			<i>Stationary</i>	<b>Max:</b> If it becomes long-spun, if there is too much nagging about a single product (incentive to leave).
			<i>Incinsere</i>	<b>Maria:</b> It didn't look like he (host) was interested by it at all (the subject).
			Five senses	<b>Simon:</b> It's hard to stimulate the smell and sense sensation over the internet. <b>Kajsa:</b> The advantage is that you can see the product better than if it only was a photo.
		Memorabilia	<b>Karin:</b> Someone asked what their best tips are for eye shadow not to fall under the eye. Thanks to that question, I can get some good information.	

## 4.3 Escapism

Escapism is signified by a high level of immersion and active participation since the realm builds on mental voyages, such as an escape from reality. In the following sections, the analyzed data focuses on aspects where the respondents were immersed and imagined themselves in different circumstances (Table 4).

### 4.3.1 Positive Cues

The positive cues within escapism revolved around the *host*, the *physical store replication*, and *a sense of community*. Escapist experiences tend to be different from educational ones since a high level of immersion is incorporated (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). This higher level of immersion was seen in the respondents' imaginative reflections. For example, many respondents said that live shopping allowed them to feel like they were in the physical store along with the host. Karin said, *“The hosts talked to the people and involved you, so it felt like you were there and then”*. When the host loosened up, the respondents felt that the experience became more real and genuine, similar to a conversation. In addition to a host that allowed for an escapist experience, Max pointed out the ability for live shopping to replicate the physical store experience. He said, *“The hosts were standing with the store's products lined up behind them. This was nice since it gave the viewer a sensation of being in the physical store”*. Gustav thought that live shopping gave people the possibility to go back mentally before the pandemic started. The respondents also pointed out that the live shopping experience could function as a stress relief, where consumers can forget about their everyday lives for a moment. This escape from reality and mental voyage to a specific place is a core aspect of the escapism realm (Chen & Chang, 2019; Pine and Gilmore, 2011).

Furthermore, the creation of communities is a common attribute in online mediums (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Some respondents felt a sense of community when they experienced live shopping. Kajsa said, *“In live shopping, you are not shopping alone. If the people in the chat or the host respond to you, you feel like you are part of a community”*. Max argued that this sense of community was the goal of live shopping, and Matilda thought it was even possible to gain new friends. The sense of community was created by comments in the chat in conjunction with a host that encourages an active discussion. Furthermore, Max mentioned a moment of interaction in a live shopping where he could relate to the host and create a social connection.

He said, “*In the live shopping they were talking about videogames and the host asked the viewers what games they usually played. It was very interactive*”. When the consumers observe an interaction between other viewers and the host, the overall social presence within the live shopping is strengthened (Ko & Chen, 2020).

#### 4.3.2 Negative Cues

The negative cues within the realm of escapism were associated with the *physical store replication* and a *lack of existence* which hindered an escapist experience. Max believed that the lack of physical contact was a limitation to live shopping. Simon said that it is different in a physical store because one can speak face-to-face which ties to the limitations of live shopping. In addition, Gustav pointed out that the mental escape to the physical store was negatively affected if the live shopping were to follow a schedule. He said, “*In the mall, they already had a plan regarding what products to review. This worsened the feeling of being in the store myself where I am able to choose what products to look at*”. This opinion has a hedonic nature since a utilitarian person would appreciate a concise and informed structure. However, some live shopping streams utilize schedules to prevent boredom and to help the viewers set valid expectations (Wongkitrungrueng *et al.*, 2020). Most respondents also understood the reason for a schedule but wished to experience more spontaneity.

Furthermore, when the host failed to answer questions in the chat, the respondents felt excluded from the community. For example, Matilda thought that hosts made the viewer feel like one in the crowd. In addition, Karin said that “*It didn't feel like they talked to me as a live viewer, that I'm there as well, taking part in the live shopping*”. Naturally, this has a negative effect on the escapist experience of live shopping because it places the viewer back into reality. Consumers strive to foster a relationship with the host, but if the host fails to answer questions in the chat, then consumers are less inclined to bond with the host (Ko & Chen, 2020).

### 4.3.3 Five Senses

The realm of escapism provided the respondents with an imaginary stimulation of smell and taste. Since the sensation has to be imagined, the consumer is required to actively participate (Pine and Gilmore, 2011). Alexander described a certain live shopping where the host visited a café and tasted some coffee. He said, “*That experience made it possible for me to imagine the smell of the coffee*”. He further added “*The host was very charismatic, lighthearted and happy. It really felt as if I was at the cafe with her*”. In turn, the host stimulated Alexander’s hearing and sight in a way that allowed for the taste and smell to be imagined (Berger, 2016). Further, these senses made it possible for Alexander to escape from reality and imagine himself in the café. Alexander’s comment provides an example of how sensations that are not required, enrich the experience (Pine and Gilmore, 2011). The senses of smell and taste were not expected in the live shopping, so when they were included it surprised Alexander and enriched the overall live shopping experience.

Since all respondents watched different live shopping streams, some respondents did not believe that their five senses were truly stimulated, and never could be. For example, Gustav pointed out that “*Normally, you can try clothes out, sit on a couch or squeeze a pillow to get an idea for the feel of these products. This simply cannot be done in live shopping*”. Likewise, Simon said, “*It is really hard to provide a sense of smell and touch through the internet*”. However, Max believed that more senses would be stimulated if he was given something to eat during the live stream. Similarly, Kajsa said, “*I was not given anything to eat or smell*”. This shows that there is a possibility for live shopping to directly stimulate smell, taste, and touch without imagination. However, such stimulation would be dependent on the consumer eating, drinking, or smelling something behind the screen.

**Table 4**  
Coding of Escapism

<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Escapism</b>	Positive cues	<i>Host</i>	<b>Max:</b> <i>Early on, they talked about computer games and the host asked what games others played. It was very interactive.</i>
		<i>Physical store replication</i>	<b>Simon:</b> <i>It's like you participate in a testing of a product, but without actually being there.</i>
		<i>Sense of community</i>	<b>Simon:</b> <i>It's based on that; you get a social contact with those that comment, but also with the person that presents the product.</i>
	Negative cues	<i>Physical store replication</i>	<b>Alexander:</b> <i>In a physical store, I can walk around and look through the whole assortment, whilst live shopping doesn't have the same choice possibilities.</i>
		<i>Lack of existence</i>	<b>Karin:</b> <i>Sometimes they behave like you don't exist.</i>
	Five senses		<b>Alexander:</b> <i>During the dead-time, she went to a café and tasted some coffee. The experience made it so that you could smell the coffee.</i> <b>Karin:</b> <i>I only hear people, there is no music.</i>

## 4.4 Esthetic

Esthetic experiences revolve around passively immersing the viewers through certain stage characteristics (Pine and Gilmore). The consumer is immersed in the experience but cannot actively influence it. The analyzed data focused on aspects where consumers were affected by the environment of live shopping (Table 5).

### 4.4.1 Positive Cues

The realm of esthetics received the least attention from the respondents. Esthetic experiences revolve around passively immersing the viewers through certain stage characteristics (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). The positive cues found in the esthetic realm of live shopping revolved around an *easy format* and a *dynamic environment*. The visuals surrounding the host were deemed as important by many respondents, with emphasis on the dynamics. Simon described a live shopping that divided the live stream into different themes that repeatedly changed the backgrounds. He said, “[...] *it provided me with something new to look at. It had a positive effect on the overall visual impression*”.

Many of the positive and negative cues related to the esthetics were directly tied to the realm of entertainment. This crossover is known as *entersthetics* (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). For example, a colorful background (esthetics) was also fun to watch (entertainment). In addition, a poorly dressed host (esthetics) was often boring to watch (entertainment). However, the respondents also expressed their thoughts on the format and visual layout of the website used to broadcast live shopping. For example, Matilda positively said, “*You could easily see the names and prices of the products, it was a very simple format*”. In addition, Simon pointed out that “*I like the accessibility. When they are demonstrating a sweater, I can simply click and buy it instantaneously*”. The simplicity acts as a positive cue since it eliminates confusion (Pine and Gilmore, 2011). Even if the format only provides simple functions, these are crucial to attract and retain consumers (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020).

#### 4.4.2 Negative Cues

The negative cues were related to *boring scenery* and an *unconvincing host*. The respondents agreed that a colorful environment is better than a dark or generic one. For example, Maria said, “*I watched X’s live shopping, but their background was very boring. It consisted purely of a white wall*”. Karin explained that one live shopping contained a boring room where the hosts looked tired and nervous. She said, “*I couldn’t stand to watch them*”. These opinions emphasize the importance of basic esthetic factors such as the design of the stage in live shopping. Furthermore, these esthetic factors are known to have a heavy influence on the attraction and retention of viewers (Wongkitruenrueng et al., 2020). Some respondents also emphasized the importance of a convincing host. Maria said, “*in X’s live shopping, the host talked about health and fitness and it didn’t look like he was interested in the subject. His clothing did not match what he was talking about at all*”.

**Table 5**  
Coding of Esthetics

<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Esthetic</b>	Positive cues	<i>Easy format</i>	<b>Simon:</b> <i>I like the accessibility; they show a shirt, and you can click and purchase it right away.</i>
		<i>Dynamic environment</i>	<b>Matilda:</b> <i>It was fun to watch x really because it was so dynamic, and they walked around in different stores.</i>
	Negative cues	<i>Unconvincing host</i>	<b>Karin:</b> <i>This girl in one live shopping, she was really tired, and the models were also really tired.</i>
		<i>Boring scenery</i>	<b>Maria:</b> <i>Some of their backgrounds were boring, it was only a white wall kind of.</i>



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## 5. Discussion

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*In this chapter, the findings will be further interpreted. The structure begins with an analysis of why consumers differ in their valuation of the content found in live shopping. Further, a discussion of consumers' overall experience will be provided which will tie together all mentioned aspects of the live shopping experience.*

### 5.1 Utilitarian and Hedonic Motivations within Live Shopping

During the study, a question emerged; how will the consumers differ in terms of their preferences and why? This created a necessity to include consumer purchase motivations in greater detail. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, hedonism and utilitarianism resemble the two main consumer purchase motivations. The extent to which these motivations are used or interchanged differs between the consumers based on personal preference (Batra & Ahtola, 1991). This study's respondents had both similar and differing opinions regarding the things they liked and did not like in terms of live shopping.

#### 5.1.1 Utilitarian Motivations

The respondents who expressed utilitarian motivations valued the informational aspects of live shopping in great regard. The ability of the host to provide concise information regarding products in addition to maintaining relevance for the live shopping topic were considered important factors. This conciseness and relevancy can be seen as a means of providing security for the utilitarian consumer, who mainly seeks to evaluate the products' practical benefits (Chitturi et al., 2008). Furthermore, the respondents who expressed utilitarian motivations were more hesitant towards the entertainment factors of live shopping. Live shopping streams with a greater emphasis on entertainment factors was frowned upon since they were often associated with less information provided for the evaluation of products. Overall, hedonic attributes can be hard to justify for utilitarian consumers (Kakar, 2017).

### 5.1.2 Hedonic Motivations

The respondents with hedonic motivations were very positive towards factors that went above and beyond the informatics and practicality of live shopping. As mentioned, these kinds of consumers are pleasure-seeking, prioritizing their fantasies, feelings, and having fun (Kakar, 2017). The fantasies of hedonic consumers were stimulated through the sensation of being in the physical store when watching live shopping. In contrast to utilitarian consumers, the hedonic consumers were amused when the hosts talked about things that were not related to the products. Furthermore, many respondents expressed a positive attitude towards an esthetically pleasing and colorful environment. These opinions of color and esthetic appeal are examples of typical hedonic attributes (Chitturi *et al.*, 2008). Dynamic live shopping streams were also favored by certain respondents. These dynamics can be linked to hedonic consumers' preference for 'the unexpected' (Kakar, 2017). Thus, the hedonic consumers were amused by not knowing what the host of the live shopping was going to do next.

### 5.1.3 A Mix of Motivations

The most interesting aspect of the consumers' different buying motivations was that they overlapped to a great extent. Consumers with utilitarian preferences pointed out things such as the host's clothes and that live shopping provided them with a temporary escape from reality. Many respondents described themselves as hedonic consumers who enjoy shopping because it made them happy. Despite this, some hedonic consumers viewed live shopping in a utilitarian way. They emphasized the utilitarian aspects of live shopping such as seeing the host demonstrate products and provide in-depth knowledge. A possible reason for this is that hedonic consumers tend to establish a basic level of functionality before seeking pleasure fulfillment (Chitturi *et al.*, 2008). According to Kakar (2017), consumers wish to make rational decisions and hedonic attributes are harder to justify when compared to utilitarian ones.

Another contributor to the overlap of consumer motivations within live shopping is the amount of *hybrid features* that can be found. Hybrid features resemble a mix of hedonic and utilitarian features (Kakar, 2017). One example of a hybrid feature within live shopping is the user interface. All respondents expressed positive thoughts about how simple it was to add products to their shopping cart within the live stream itself. This functionality provided the respondents with enjoyment, which is an emotion known to cross-load on both hedonic and utilitarian scales

of value. Thus, the user interface of live shopping can promote utilitarian values in hedonic consumers since it reduces the perceived effort of certain actions (Kakar, 2017).

## **5.2 Live Shopping as an Experience**

Based on the findings, live shopping is an experience that leans towards the realms of education and entertainment. The host is seen as the core of the experience, able to both educate and entertain the consumer. The host and physical environment were the most mentioned aspects of live shopping. A host that is enthusiastic and active makes live shopping more interesting to watch. A host that is genuine and down-to-earth is relatable which connects the viewer to the host. Lastly, a host that is knowledgeable and relatable is also considered trustworthy. Just like an actor, the host has to convince the viewers by utilizing these characteristics. However, if they are overdone, the viewer will be able to see through the acting. Consumers notice such bad performance through several sources. When the chat is too positive, it seems spurious instead of trustworthy. When products from only one brand are presented, the host seems to falsely advertise rather than provide genuine opinions. In turn, the host fails to act convincingly, which doubts the audience and worsens the experience. Just like in a theater, if the actor does not perform convincingly, the audience loses interest. Further, the chat allowed for a two-way interaction where reviews, questions, and general remarks about products could be shared by consumers. However, if the live shopping is too focused on educational aspects, consumers might get bored and leave.

Consumers want live shopping to include more of a show so that the experience is more active. In turn, the entertainment realm is required to retain the consumer. Some respondents exemplified with a host that changed the environment by walking around in a mall, which made the live shopping more fun to look at. In addition, the host had a very positive attitude combined with a lot of energy. The respondents said that these things made them want to stay and continue watching. In turn, the entertainment makes consumers stay longer in live shopping. However, the respondents also stated that they do not want live shopping to include too much of a show, because the high level of entertainment might overshadow the purpose which is the provided information and inspiration.

Overall, consumers perceive live shopping as an educational experience, where entertainment makes consumers stay for a longer period of time. Consequently, entertainment attracts and retains consumers, whilst education constitutes the core purpose of the live shopping experience. The escapist and esthetic realms support and strengthen the experience through a deeper immersion.

The escapist and esthetic realms received less attention from the respondents. This lower distribution of attention could be related to the general theme, which did not revolve around these realms. The subjective nature of escapism means that consumers do not enter live shopping to intentionally escape reality. The escapist aspects are first unveiled after the consumer reviews the experience afterwards. The esthetic realm can be seen as a cross-over with the realm of entertainment. For example, the host of the live stream could be boring to look at, which is signified by negative cues of both entertainment and esthetics. Therefore, some of the attention to entertainment affected the realm of esthetics as well. However, the escapist and esthetic attributes of live shopping function as an unexpected bonus in consumers' live shopping experience. Instead, consumers expect the live shopping to be educational and entertaining.

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## 6. Conclusion

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*This chapter will summarize the conducted study followed by a conclusion regarding the consumers' perspective of live shopping as an experience. Furthermore, implications, limitations and suggestions for future research will be presented.*

### 6.1 Thesis Summary

The theory of experience economy was deductively utilized as it is a renowned theory within experience research. A conceptual model was created from the merging of four realms of an experience and the five principles of design. This allowed for a deep exploration of consumers' opinion in regard to the experience economy theory. The conceptual model aided in the development of the interview guide and coding of the empirical data gathered from the semi-structured interviews.

The findings showed that many respondents viewed live shopping as an experience of entertainment and education. The educational aspects of live shopping were deemed as most valuable. The host and the chat were the strongest entities that could be linked to the realm of education. Entertainment was also important to retain the attention of consumers, and this realm was also impacted by the esthetic realm. A boring host was a big contributor to poor entertainment. Likewise, an entertaining host in an unesthetic environment made a negative impact on the esthetics. Escapist factors were seen as complementary aspects that strengthened the overall experience on a more immersing level. Consumers emphasize the sense of community and the possibility of performing a mental escape to the physical store.

### 6.2 Conclusion

This study introduced the relatively new phenomenon of live shopping that has previously received great attention from a business perspective, with a focus on utilitarian aspects that increase profit. The previous focus on the functionality of live shopping sparked an interest to explore live shopping from a different perspective, with a focus on the subjective opinions of consumers. Simultaneously, the experience economy theory argues that consumers demand

offerings for hedonic reasons, rather than strictly utilitarian. In turn, it was interesting to explore live shopping as an experience from consumers' perspective.

It was expected that the respondents would provide a great variety of opinions, some more alike than others. Thus, there was a need to include different motivational factors that influence consumer's behavior, in this case hedonic and utilitarian buying motivations. Respondents that considered themselves as utilitarian valued traits in the live shopping experience that were focused on practicality. This practicality could be related to the format of the live shopping software, the live shopping content and the host's level of expertise. In contrast, the respondents with a hedonic nature, valued aspects within entertainment in higher regard, as they wanted to be entertained rather than to solely receive practical information. However, the respondents' motivations were predominantly mixed. Both hedonic and utilitarian aspects of the experience were considered important by most respondents, which shows that the experience of live shopping contains a combination of utilitarian and hedonic attributes.

Consumers perceive the live shopping experience as a mix of education and entertainment. The purpose of the experience leans towards education, but consumers will not stay unless they find the live shopping to be entertaining. The live shopping experience consists of positive cues that mostly relate to the host and stage. The host strengthens the theme by educating, provoking laughter and inviting consumers to a conversation where opinions can be shared. In turn, a two-way interaction can be established and further involve consumers in the experience. Moreover, the host can also establish trust through the knowledge and inspiration that is provided. The stage can be more colorful and dynamic to provide something new to look at and minimize the risk of boredom. In addition, the stage and host can strengthen the specific theme through appropriate style and design.

The live shopping experience often contains negative cues that worsen the experience. Most of these negative cues are related to the host and stage of the live shopping. For example, a host that fails to answer comments in the chat, leaves a careless impression. Further, the host can seem insincere due to misleading advertising or due to low interest in the specific theme. If the live shopping experience becomes too stationary, consumers might get bored and lose focus. Instead, the environment should be dynamic, and the schedule not too slowly paced.

Moreover, the live shopping experience is able to provide memorabilia that can be considered unconventional. Consumers can purchase products in live shopping that can act as memorabilia, which is also the conventional view of memorabilia as a tangible object. However, this study suggests that consumers can gain new information and inspiration that can later be transferred into a tangible object whenever the information or inspiration is utilized. In addition, this study found that memorable experiences do not only have to be positive but can also be negative. For example, a bad experience can provide negative memories that are activated through the brand or logo.

The five senses principle showed that every experience is required to stimulate certain senses since consumers expect them to be present. The remaining ones do not worsen the experience but instead function as an unexpected bonus that strengthens the immersion of the experience. In terms of live shopping, consumers mainly expect their sight and hearing to be stimulated and react positively if other senses are stimulated.

This study shows that live shopping should be perceived as something more than a utilitarian tool of marketing. Consumers mainly watch live shopping to learn and gain new information, but only stay if the experience is deemed as entertaining. The escapist and esthetics aspects of live shopping function as complementary attributes that strengthen the overall experience through increased immersion. However, these aspects are not necessary for the consumer experience, but are rather seen as welcome bonuses.

### **6.3 Limitations**

There are two main limitations regarding this study: the respondents' different live shopping experiences and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents have experienced different live shopping streams. This limits the replicability of the study since different live shopping streams might yield different experiences and opinions. This makes it hard to retain a focused image regarding consumers' perspective of live shopping as an experience. The respondents were asked to watch live shopping before the interviews. This preparation could yield a bias since the respondents did not act upon their own incentives.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic functioned as a limitation since it hindered the use of physical interviews. The digital interviews had a negative impact on the ability to maintain eye

contact with the respondents and to analyze their body language. Furthermore, this study mainly used Pine and Gilmore's theory of experience economy. This extensive use of the theory can be considered a limitation since it directed our interpretation of the collected data. The theory influenced the interview guide as the questions were made to follow the conceptual model. In turn, a different experience theory could create different data and analysis.

## **6.4 Future Research**

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. In turn, the respondents included the pandemic as an aspect of live shopping and thought that the phenomenon was a great way to engage consumers that follow restrictions. Future research should investigate live shopping as an experience outside of the current pandemic. Furthermore, the respondents mentioned suggestions of improvements to the live shopping experience. This study did not take these suggestions into consideration since they were not related to the respondents' contemporary perception of live shopping. Therefore, future research can focus on improvements that can be made to the live shopping experience. In addition, this study found that bad live shopping experiences can also be remembered through negative memorabilia. Future research can investigate the effect of a bad live shopping experience on a company's brand.

## **6.5 Implications**

The purpose of this study was to explore live shopping as an experience through the perspective of consumers. This study has contributed to the experience economy theory by using the theory in additional areas, other than tourism and hospitality.

Pine and Gilmore (2011) argue that higher memorability improves the experiences. Since memorability is the measurement of an experience, the authors focus a lot on factors that increase the memorability of an experience. However, the experience economy theory does not consider negative memorability. This study has found that a bad experience can provide negative memorability. In turn, the measurement also includes a negative side. When an experience is bad, it can be negatively remembered which provides long term implications for a company and its brand.



Further, Pine and Gilmore (2011) focus on memorabilia as tangible objects that are found in the experience. Instead, this study proposes memorabilia to be more complex. If consumers gain negative memories from an experience, the brand and logo can act as memorabilia but in a counterproductive fashion. Further, if consumers gain information or inspiration in an experience, they can create positive memorabilia every time the information or inspiration is used.

The practical implications of this study revolve around the consumer perspective of live shopping as an experience. Companies can use this study to avoid negative cues that worsen consumers' live shopping experience. Furthermore, the positive cues can be utilized to ensure a presence of positive aspects in the live shopping experience that are coherent to both the general and specific theme.

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# **Appendix A – Interview guide**

## **General**

Do you like shopping?

Why do you usually shop?

What is your goal in shopping?

Could you describe what live shopping is?

What do you think about live shopping?

Why do you think people are drawn to live shopping?

What three things distinguish live shopping?

What advantages do you find in live shopping?

What disadvantages do you find in live shopping?

Is there anything in live shopping that you feel is boring?

## **Education**

Do you believe it is possible to learn something in live shopping? What/why not?

Do you believe the people in the chat can teach you something? What/why not?

Can you teach them anything? What/why not?

How can the host involve you in the live shopping?

What do you think the host should mediate as a person?

## **Entertainment**

How does your experience change if the host makes you laugh?

What do you think of the entertainment in live shopping?

If a celebrity that you like would take part in a live shopping. How would it influence your participation and will to watch?



## **Escapism**

Do you think live shopping can be an escape from reality? Why?

Do you believe one would feel less lonely by participating in live shopping? Why?

## **Esthetics**

Does the physical environment in the video influence your live shopping experience? How?  
Please exemplify.

## **Theme**

Do you think it is important that live shopping includes a theme? Why?

What is the role of the theme in live shopping?

How can you theme live shopping?

How can you make the viewers understand the theme?

## **Positive Cues / Negative Cues**

How does the host influence your behavior in live shopping?

- How does is your participation affected if there are two hosts compared to one?

What do you think about the chat function?

- Do you look at what others write?
- What do you think about the possibility to ask question to the host/hosts?

Do you think live shopping is worth your time? Why/why not?

What is required for live shopping to be worth paying for?

How does the duration affect live shopping?

From your experiences, was there anything lacking?

What makes you want to stay in live shopping? What makes you want to leave?

## **Memorabilia**

Can you tell me about your strongest memories from live shopping?

- Is there anything specific that makes you go back to these memories?

## **Five senses**

Are all your senses stimulated in live shopping? Hearing, smelling, seeing, tasting, feeling?

- If you think outside of the box, what can stimulate these senses?