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Practices and experiences: challenges and opportunities for value research

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to distinguish experiences from practices and relate this distinction to current developments in value research within service-dominant (S-D) logic and the broader service domain.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper provides a conceptual overview of how experiences and practices have been characterized in the literature to date, how they differ from each other, and if and where they intersect. Following this, the epistemological and methodological differences between practices and experiences are illustrated using narrated experiences and practical observations of car-washing.

Findings – While practices are primarily routinized patterns of behaviour, experiences focus more on individuals' value determinations in different contexts. Thus, different types of methodology are needed to observe customers' behaviour in value-creating practices and interpret customers' sense making of value experiences.

Research limitations/implications – Both phenomenological value experiences and value co-creation practices contribute to value research: while practices are the shared possession of the collective, internal and individual differentiation is included in practices. Practices may change or evolve over time, possibly resulting in improved value outcomes or experiences. Opportunities and challenges should be considered by value researchers including the temporal nature of practices and experiences, evidence about value, and the intersubjectivity of social relations.

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

Originality/value – This study is the first systematic attempt in service research to present an analysis of the distinction between experiences and practices, and to analyze the relevance of this distinction for value research.

Keywords Practice, Working practices, Experience, Value, Co-creation, Service, Narrative, Consumer behaviour

Paper type Conceptual paper



1. Introduction

Practices and experiences have been used in recent years to describe human behaviour, choices and preferences. Although there is contemporary agreement on the importance of the concepts of practice and experience, these constructs should be more precisely characterized in relation to each other in order to better inform the current discourse on value within the service domain. The foundational premises of service-dominant (S-D) logic indicate that value is individually and phenomenologically (experientially) determined, while positing that value co-creation takes place in actor networks, where social and economic actors integrate resources (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). In particular, the contemporary value discussion in S-D logic differentiates between routinized action, such as practices, and event-specific meaning-laden experiences, recognizing the importance of both constructs. Practices are identified as resource-integration activities that lead to value creation (Korkman *et al.*, 2010; Vargo, 2010). This paper contributes to the value discussion by relating value to experiences and practices and by identifying some opportunities and challenges of conceptualizing experiences and practices within the contemporary discourse on value.

Due to a lack of critical discussion and understanding of how the concepts of experience and practice have been characterized in S-D logic and service literature, experiences and practices have been presented as overlapping and somewhat interchangeable constructs in current service discourse and debates. As both experiences and practices are key concepts in contemporary value research, it is important to discuss their ontological and epistemological issues (i.e. what they are and what can be understood as evidence of them, respectively), in order to better appreciate how each construct might be more accurately conceptualized and operationalized within S-D logic and the broader service domain.

We first outline how experiences and practices have been characterized in the literature, and discuss how such insights can deepen the current emergent understanding of both concepts in contemporary S-D logic discourse. We discuss, illustrate and summarize the similarities and differences between experiences and practices using narrated experiences and practical observations of customers' car-washing practices. The paper then discusses challenges and opportunities for value research. It concludes by outlining its contributions to service research and S-D logic and suggesting future opportunities for value researchers and managers.

2. Characterization of practices and experiences

In order to understand practices and experiences, it is first necessary to examine the background of both concepts: what they are and what can be understood as evidence of them.

2.1 Background of practice

Practice theories are a broad category of social culturalist theories that examine the structures and routinized actions that emerge in our "everyday" life and "life-world" (Reckwitz, 2002). Our study draws on Reckwitz's (2002) understanding of practice theory as a type of cultural theory, which he relates back to a diverse group of scholars including, amongst others, Bourdieu (1972, 1997), Giddens (1979, 1984), Wittgenstein

(1984 [1952], 1984 [1969]), Heidegger (1986 [1927]) and Schatzki (1996). Reckwitz (2002, p. 249) defines a practice as:

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

Warde (2005) referred to Schatzki (1996) and Reckwitz (2002) in presenting the three components of practice as follows:

- (1) understanding in routinized ways, such as knowing how to do something or explaining how to carry out an act;
- (2) procedures in carrying out an act in doings and sayings; and
- (3) engagements, which link an individual to social life.

A number of authors have discussed practices in the context of S-D logic. For example, Korkman *et al.* (2010), focusing on e-invoicing services, were among the first to explicitly connect value co-creation in S-D logic and practice theory. Arnould *et al.* (2006) criticized S-D logic for underconceptualizing the role of customers and their rich value-creative competencies. Vargo and Lusch (2008) replied by characterizing value as phenomenologically determined in a social context of networks.

2.2 Background of experience

Numerous service marketing and other scholars have discussed experience in service contexts (Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Firat and Dholakia, 1998; Addis and Holbrook, 2001; Sandstrom *et al.*, 2008; Reynoso, 2010; Tronvoll *et al.*, 2011), and the concept of experience has been characterized in many ways (Carù and Cova, 2003; Klaus and Maklan, 2012). Based on differing ontological and epistemological backgrounds, experience in a service context has been predominantly characterized in the service literature in three different ways (Helkkula, 2011). First, experience has been characterized as being process based, which entails an understanding of service as a process consisting of different phases or elements that may be linked to experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Edvardsson *et al.*, 2005). Second, experience has been characterized as outcome based, that is, as one element in models linking a number of variables or attributes to various outcomes (Bel, 2005; Flanagan *et al.*, 2005; Galetzka *et al.*, 2006; Aurier and Siadou-Martin, 2007; Menon and Bansal, 2007). Third, experience has been characterized as a phenomenological experience, which relates to the value discussion in S-D logic, CCT and interpretative consumer research (Arnould and Price, 1993; Carù and Cova, 2005; Meyer and Schwager, 2007; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2012).

The category of phenomenological experience is topical in S-D logic discourse, as its tenth foundational premise identifies value as being phenomenological (experiential) and meaning laden (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). While the concept of phenomenological value experience focuses on externally observable behaviour, it also incorporates imagined experience or behaviour (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012). In their foundational premises, Vargo and Lusch (2008) preferred to use the word phenomenological instead of experiential, as experiential strongly connotes hedonic experience. Even if the focus on experience research has been on hedonic experiences, such as river rafting (Arnould

and Price, 1993) and giving and receiving of gifts (Clarke, 2008), recent research has also been interested in everyday service experiences, such as servicescape experiences in public traffic (Pareigis *et al.*, 2012).

2.3 Form of knowing and evidence

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

2.3.1 Practice: form of knowing and evidence. Korkman (2006) noted that practice theory takes an anti-subjective and anti-individualistic stance, whereas Schatzki (1996) posited that practices are coordinated performances, which can be situated somewhere along a sliding continuum between individualist and holistic approaches. Warde (2005), for example, acknowledged both the routinized nature of behaviour and the roles of emotion, such as embodiment and volition. For practice theorists, the *locus* of analysis is not the mind or individual interpretations of practices or behaviours; rather, it is the complex amalgam that is, in and of itself, a practice.

While practices are learned routinized bodily behaviours or performances, they also include mental activities and processes (Reckwitz, 2002). While there is a mental component to practices, they also encompass tacit knowledge, routinized emotion, embodied performance and “frames” for understanding the world. The mental routines, knowledge or activities encompassed in practice are therefore seen not as characteristics or possessions of individuals themselves, but as integral to the social practice itself (Reckwitz, 2002). The individual is simply a conduit or subconscious carrier of a practice and represents a unique intersection of many diverse practices within a cultural or social group (Reckwitz, 2002).

2.3.2 Experience: form of knowing and evidence. Phenomenologists seek to uncover and describe how individuals experience and interpret their world (Reckwitz, 2002). The form of knowing associated with phenomenological experience involves the interpretation of individual subjective experiences. This relates to Husserlian phenomenology (Husserl, [1931] (1967), [1936] (1970)), which focuses on individual subjective experience and how people make sense of it (Smith, 2007). In phenomenology, subjectivity and shared meanings are viewed as mental constructs of the conscious and unconscious mind (Reckwitz, 2002). When subjectivity is prioritized as a form of knowing, an individual’s internal experiences, and how he or she makes sense of them, can be considered as data (Goulding, 2005; Landridge, 2007).

Smith (2007) characterized various types of first-person experiences including, for example, perception, imagination, thought, emotion, desire, volition and action. These forms of experience represent the range of access to different pathways for interpreting value experiences. Phenomenologists describe different methods for studying experience, namely describing individual lived experience, interpreting an experience by relating it to its context (hermeneutics) and analyzing different types of experience (Smith, 2007). In addition, as value experiences may sometimes involve indirect encounters with the service, value experiences may be imaginary and illuminate individuals’ preferences or latent needs (Matthing *et al.*, 2004; Helkkula *et al.*, 2012). Accordingly, phenomenological experience may not always be externally observable, and cannot be considered as evidence of what really happened. Thus, data relating to

experiences can, but does not have to, provide an external replica of a practice that takes place (Valberg, 1992).

3. Discussion with illustration of car-washing practices and experiences

The following discussion considers in more detail whether value is constructed from an individual or social perspective, who defines the context and object of value co-creation, and the temporal nature of value. We use the context of car washing to illustrate our conceptual discussion. The examples do not aim to present an empirical study or to create a generalizable view of car-washing experiences or practices; rather, they aim to illustrate the nature of experiences and practices in common everyday value-creating events.

The illustrative quotes are derived from an empirical study in a car-washing context conducted in the greater metropolitan area of a Northern European city during the Winter and Spring of 2010-2011. We analyzed the phenomenon of car washing using a combination of observing customers' car-washing behaviour (observational dataset) and customer narratives (narrative dataset). The observational dataset was based on the observations recorded by the service provider representatives and documented in databases. Observations included the number of people who used the service at different days and times as well as how many paid with a company credit card. In addition, one of the authors observed and recorded, in a logbook, details of customers' car-washing practices at five different washing points at different times of the day, for a cumulative period of 20 hours. The period included time with and without snow on the ground, and temperatures varied from -20 to $+20^{\circ}\text{C}$. Observations were compared to other operational data on car-washing usage collected by the service provider in two separate meetings with the service provider.

Customer narratives (narrative dataset) emerged from ten interviews with car-wash customers. The interviews followed event-based narrative inquiry technique (EBNIT), which uses metaphors as a projective technique (Boddy, 2004, 2005) to encourage customers to generate innovative ideas and "out-of-box" thinking without limiting the study to technical capabilities or expertise in one specific field of business. The technique has been successfully applied in several fields of business in service innovation and development purposes and is well-suited for discovering value from the customers' point of view (Helkkula and Pihlström, 2010).

3.1 Individual and social perspective

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

3.1.1 Practice: social and individual perspective. Barnes (2001, p. 25) referred to practices as the "shared possession of the collective", not as autonomous characteristics of any individual. However, while practices are shared and learned bodily and mental routines and behaviours at a collective level, they are not routine at an individual level in all situations and contexts (Barnes, 2001; Warde, 2005). From the individual's perspective, the performance of a particular practice may vary based on factors such as perceived or actual intrinsic or extrinsic benefits, level of commitment, previous experience and stock of knowledge, all of which impact the understanding, procedures and engagement involved in carrying out the practice (Warde, 2005).

Individuals therefore do not perform practices in an identical way; rather, practices are dynamic and internally differentiated, for example among various groups of people, such as experts, novices, professionals and amateurs (Bourdieu, 1997; Warde, 2005). Shove and Pantzar (2005) emphasize the “home-grown” nature of practices and associated cultures by stating that even if similar types of practices may occur around the world, they are reinvented locally.

When observing customers’ car-washing practices, the researcher and car-wash employees noticed patterns in behaviour that may be related, for example, to the variation of visiting frequency at different times and seasons, or to whether customers visit the car wash alone or with the family. The variation in behaviour occurs at a social, collective level at peak times resulting from various environmental factors that cause people to wash their cars, such as weather or holiday season. According to the observational data:

[...] one of the car-washing peak times is just before public holidays, for example Christmas, Easter, student graduation feast. Other peak times include after a cold period when the temperature gets higher [when it is very cold the windows and doors freeze after washing], and once the sun returns after a period of rain. Most of the time, the car wash could serve a lot more customers.

However, variation can also happen on the individual level, for example in the time of day the car is typically washed. According to the observational data:

[...] the same customers tend to come during specific times, some in the morning, some after work, some later in the evening. The majority of customers come to get their car washed alone, and do not tend to interact socially when getting their cars washed. They tend to stay in their own cars while queuing. While the car is being washed, they wipe the car inside with the paper towel provided, write text messages with their mobile phones, or just sit back.

3.1.2 Experience: individual and social perspective. Traditional Husserlian phenomenology focuses on the individual subjective experience and how people make sense of it (Smith, 2007). While the primary focus is on individual experience, due to the intersubjective nature of experience, the mind is considered to be influenced by ongoing social interactions (Reckwitz, 2002). Therefore, individual interpretations and sense making in relation to experience are both individually and socially constructed (Pace, 2008).

In order to make the observed behaviour understandable, the customers’ view of the situation is necessary. Customer experience of washing the car explains how the practice of washing the car actually is constructed, for example when the weather changes, and what the intrinsic (e.g. enjoyment of driving a clean car) and extrinsic (e.g. making an impression on others) motives to do that exactly then may be:

For a long time I have thought that my car needs a wash, because it looks dirty. Then one morning I look at the sky and just experience that today I want to get my car washed [reason to wash the car][...] I get the car washed as I enjoy driving a clean car [reason to wash the car][...] I want to make an impression by having a clean car when I visit somebody and drive my own car, or when some people are driving with me [when do I get my car washed] (Male, 33 years).

Individuals make sense of their value experiences in a social context. Even if every individual experiences value in his or her individual way, within a group a specific type of value experience might become dominant, as people make sense of their experiences

in a social context (Helkkula *et al.*, 2012). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004, p. 10) view individual experience as integral to a multi-stakeholder network, where personalized experiences are unique to each individual “at a specific point in time, in a specific location, in the context of a specific event”. As individuals reconstruct current value experiences based on previous experiences in a social context, they never enter the realm of new experience with a totally blank mental canvas. Each person brings his or her own past life experiences to a situation (Webster and Mertova, 2007). On the other hand, every individual experiences specific phenomena from his or her own perspective.

3.2 *Objects and context*

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

3.2.1 Practice: objects and context. Practices are mostly understood as a routinized type of behaviour that takes place in a certain social, historical and cultural context. Objects, in addition to bodily and mental routines, are another integral and often indispensable part of practices (Reckwitz, 2002). Objects are often used in a particular way in particular contexts due to the shared understanding and knowledge of the collective. In practice theory, therefore, the know-how required to carry out a practice remains in the background as tacit knowledge and does not involve conscious reflection.

Carrying out a practice implies a routinized behaviour, as opposed to the conscious intentionality. Routine behaviour can be, for example, to brush one’s teeth, to celebrate Christmas or to avoid overspending during the end-of-season sales. In the car-washing context, routines are for example related to the connection between payment method and choosing objects such as alternative car washes (e.g. potions with or without wax) or supporting services and products that the customers may not be constantly aware of. The observational data revealed that:

[...] customers who independently pay for the car wash tend to choose cheaper washing potions and use the drive-in car wash more often. Customers paying with the company credit card typically take the most expensive washing options and buy the personal washing service more often.

If asked, customers would not be able to tell why they bought the option they did.

3.2.2 Experience: context and objects. An important concept within phenomenology is the concept of intentionality, originally developed by Edmund Husserl (1849-1938). Individuals intentionally use objects in certain ways in order to achieve certain goals or value-in-use. The concept of intentionality implies that experience always involves consciousness of something, in a specific context of our “being-in-the-world” (Pollio *et al.*, 1997). While experience embraces the “totality of the human-being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1962 [1927]), value experience also involves inner mental processes and interpretation. Therefore, individuals are always the subjects of their own value experiences in their life-worlds, not external observers. Thus, what appears to the individual as an experience constitutes the experience (Landridge, 2007):

[While in the car wash] I don't enjoy getting my car washed but I tolerate it in order to get a clean car (Female, 50 years).

The rationale as to how customers choose between the car wash alternatives (objects) is explained based on what the person thinks is relevant based on their own previous value experiences, external influences or future expectations:

[When choosing at the cash point the type of wash] I asked the boy at the cash point what the crystal wash is, why it costs 3 euros more than a super wash. He did not really know. I asked him whether the car would be shinier than if I choose the super wash, and he just admitted it might be so. I chose the cheaper wash anyway. I am frustrated with all the different options available as I can't tell how they differ (Female, 47 years).

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Sense making of value experiences may be based on both lived and imaginary speculation of what would be a good service (object) and when or how it should be performed (context):

[A customer driving a private car] I would like the car to become clean without me having to do anything. [...] I would want somebody to come, take my keys and return a clean car (Female, 43).

Most importantly, customers' experiences also reveal why cars may not be washed at a specific time or at a specific price that the practices or behavioural data would not tell. In the following examples, the reason is related to the behaviour of others, i.e. social context:

Always when I try to get my car washed, there is a queue. I would wash my car more often, but the car wash is always busy. I check the queue. If there are over five cars, I will not queue; I feel stymied and return home (Male, 51 years).

[When do I get my car washed] I choose a day when I do not have any meetings in the morning. Then I drive my car to the car wash next to my work. But I will not drive there if there is a long queue (Male, 47 years).

3.3 *Temporality*

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

3.3.1 *Practice: temporality*. Practices or routinized bodily and mental behaviours imply recursivity and repetition over time (Reckwitz, 2002). Practices therefore have a history, tradition and associated conventions (e.g. Bourdieu's notion of habitus). This does not imply, however, that practices are immutable and carry on indefinitely. Once collective dissent emerges in relation to the consensus of shared purpose and meaning, for example as a result of particular institutional, historical or cultural events, the structure of hitherto accepted practices breaks down (Reckwitz, 2002). Practices are therefore dynamic and change over time as shared meanings, understanding and conventions are contested, challenged or become inadequate in some way (Warde, 2005). In addition, changes to some practices impact other practices (Warde, 2005).

Observing car-washing practices revealed that the behaviour of individual customers may cause changes in the behaviour of a group of customers:

Usually customers first pay for the car wash and then drive to the car-wash line. However, if just one or two customers first drive to the line and go to pay while queuing, customers following them may do the same.

Nevertheless, these temporal cues may have an unexpected effect on behaviour and customer experiences when they accumulate over a longer period in time.

3.3.2 Experience: temporality. The phenomenological value experience is not restricted to linear time. Research has described phenomenological sense making using the hermeneutic spiral, where current experience is always based on previous experiences (Gummesson, 2000; Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2003). Phenomenological value experience is therefore longitudinal, as it includes the past, present and future value experiences. The following examples illustrate how people plan to use the car-wash services in the future based on their previous experiences:

[While in the car wash] Once I got stuck on the rails as I forgot to take off my hand brake. I had to wait for the staff to come and release my car, and then I had to drive back to the beginning and start the wash all over again. It was really humiliating for my male self-esteem. Every time I get my car washed, I am afraid that something like that might happen again.

[Reason to choose a specific car-washing point] I once received very good service here. That's why I tend to come here (Male, 47 years).

3.4 Summary of the ontological and epistemological differences

Based on the conceptual discussion and discussion with illustrations, we have distinguished experiences from practices. (For a summary of this discussion, please see Table I).

The narrative extracts and observations of car-washing practices indicate that experiences and practices intersect with many factors: when people get their cars washed, whether they pay for the service privately, and the consideration that car-washing is not a social action. Overall, the narratives of experiences interpret customers' sense making and subjective value experiences, but are not considered documents of objective occurrences (Goulding, 2005). Of particular interest are the narratives that illustrate why people do not wash their cars and why they may go to competing car-wash providers, insights that customer observations do not reveal. In contrast, the observations of behaviour illustrate observable practice, but do not reveal why people perform practices and how they value them. Observation and analysis of the experience narratives also indicate the temporal nature of service use situations. Experience narratives show previous, current and potential episodes of interaction with service personnel and other customers. In contrast, practices are limited to the current or longitudinal observable behaviour of a mass of customers.

4. Challenges and opportunities for value research

For value-creating purposes, it is meaningful to discuss how practices and experiences challenge and complement each other in value research. In the service literature to date, both approaches have been critiqued. Specifically, phenomenology is often critiqued for preserving the duality of mind and body by focusing on how the conscious subject interprets or makes sense of his or her behaviours and actions, resulting in an "over-intellectualization" or rationalization of experience and sense making. Korkman (2006) stated that the experiential/phenomenological approach to studying value is overly individualistic and subjectivist, as excessive focus is placed on the customer's own immediate experience. Holt (1995) notes that consumption as experience may not actively take the social and cultural context into account.

Characterization	Practice	Experience
Philosophical perspective	Socio-cultural	Phenomenological (experiential)
Phenomenon	Phenomena as embodied and routinized actions, performances	Phenomena as subjective experiences and how people make sense of them (Smith, 2007)
Evidence about the phenomenon	People's observable embodied behaviours in their everyday lives are justified as data	Interpretative: individuals' (service customers') subjective experiences are justified as data. They do not need to be externally observable
Form of knowing	Embodied performance and representation (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2005). Observation by an external observer (Korkman <i>et al.</i> , 2010)	Sense making that is based on an iterative and cumulative process of previous and current understandings (the hermeneutic spiral)
Individual versus social perspective	Practices are manifested and embodied at the collective level, but can be changed at the individual level (de Certeau, 1984)	Experiences are both individually (intra-subjectively) and socially (inter-subjectively) constructed
Context	Embedded and embodied in a socio-cultural context (Korkman <i>et al.</i> , 2010)	Event specific and justified by the individual in the individual's life-world, which is socially constructed. Identifies the world as lived in comparison to the world as construed by an external entity, e.g. a service provider (Heinonen <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
Temporal nature	Practices are recursive, more or less routinized actions (Korkman, 2006); however, they are also dynamic and change or evolve over time (Warde, 2005) Focus on externally observable embodied performance, representation or behaviour. While practices incorporate tacit knowledge or knowhow, this cannot be observed directly	Experiences are based on current, previous and future experiences within and outside the context of the specific service Includes lived and imaginary value experiences. Incorporates both direct and indirect experiences, i.e. the individual service customer can imagine the experience of service in the inner world without ever having experienced the service in the external world

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

Practice theory has had different views in positioning sense making within practices. In general, mental routines, knowledge or activities encompassed in practices are seen as characteristics of the practice, not the individual (Reckwitz, 2002). In addition, individuals do not appropriate cultural objects and reproduce practices when they engage in value creation. However, while some practice theorists seek to “de-centre” the value experience from value co-creation practices and assume that groups of people are disposed (or not) to a particular practice, our sense making in relation to value experiences from a phenomenological perspective cannot (and should not) be divorced from the experience of value-creation practice itself. At a conscious and unconscious level, we experience ourselves and indeed others partaking and engaging in value co-creation practices. Social practices can be viewed as units of value creation (Schau *et al.*, 2009; Holttinen, 2010). Therefore, value co-creation practices are part of the experience of a value, regardless of the degree to which it can or cannot be verbalized, observed, felt or remembered.

Phenomenology contributes to practice theory by giving primacy to the unique nature of the individual experience of value, which cannot be understood solely by observable routinized behaviours. Phenomenological mental interpretations are intended to reveal experience from the individual's perspective. Practice theory contributes to phenomenology by indicating that the separation between mind and body does not exist. Individuals, practices and culture cannot be separated from each other (Matthews, 2002 referring to Merleau Ponty). This implies that in value research, the intersubjectivity of social relations should be acknowledged in addition to the individual experience of value or value-creation practices.

4.1 Research implications

Based on our discussion of experiences and practices, we present research implications, which contribute to the contemporary discourse on value, and managerial implications for practical value co-creating purposes. Consideration of phenomenological value experiences contributes to value research by revealing that subjective preferences make sense of such perceptions in ways that are not externally observable. Equally, consideration of value co-creation practices contributes to value research by revealing people's behaviour in their everyday lives. In addition to value experiences or value-creation practices, the intersubjectivity of social relations should also be considered by value researchers.

Table II summarizes the possibilities and challenges for future research based on our conclusions that practices and experiences are intertwined in value creation, that neither of them solely can interpret and identify new possibilities for value co-creation, and that they both should be taken into account in future value research.

4.2 Managerial implications

Today, service organizations often use observation when they are innovating and developing new services. Experience research is less used, but more common in service development as companies seek to define the individual or segment-specific value co-creation opportunities. Based on the previous discussion, we encourage service organizations to complement observational studies with interpretations of value experiences. Understanding the underlying reasons beyond behaviour (or why imagined experiences are not realized) helps to better identify what could be done to improve the current use experience or to remove barriers of use. In addition, understanding behaviour in its context may give insights into which new service offerings (objects), could be developed and offered to the specific customer segments or individuals.

The car-wash examples illustrate that observing customer practices provides a socio-cultural view of routinized actions. Based on observations solely, the car-wash company may, for example, conclude that they have a lot of idle capacity. When interviewing people about their subjective experiences of using the car wash however, the bottleneck was caused by queuing for the car wash. This results in missed opportunities due to lost customers and lower frequency of use in comparison to the potential of the market.

Customer experiences help in constructing new meaningful value co-creation opportunities that support existing everyday life practices considering the heterogeneity of customer segments and customers' individual differences. Insights from practices, experiences and behavioural analytics could be combined so that they

Topic	Differences and similarities		Implications for future research	
	Practices	Experiences	Possibility	Challenge
The phenomenon and its temporal nature	Practices are recursive and subject to change over time	Experiences are based on previous, current and future experiences and recursive practices that may change over time	In order to gain a longitudinal understanding of value, value researchers should not focus exclusively on one event, as value is based on previous events as well	What to focus on when analyzing value, e.g. one service event versus the longitudinal effect of many service events
Evidence about value	Practice theory invites researchers and practitioners to consider the collective culture and conventions, which underpin, govern and frame to varying degrees how individuals conduct and engage with everyday life (Warde, 2005)	Phenomenology illuminates individual experience by examining how individuals make sense of their experiences at an individual and collective level (Warde, 2005)	To research, make sense of and thus facilitate value-creating practices and value experiences	Practices may be unconscious and mental and experiences may be imaginary. Defining the boundary of a practice (Warde, 2005), or indeed the degree to which practices can be bounded, reveals that individuals may be participating in a number of practices at any given point in time
Individual versus social perspective	Collective value-creating practices may be changed at the individual level	Individuals make sense of their value experiences in relation to other individuals in a social context	Implies that value creation takes place both individually and in networks. Therefore, value is socially co-created	People belong to many different networks, which continuously affect one another. The degree to which the researcher may claim that diverse non-identical individual performances relate to a particular practice (Warde, 2005)

Table II.
Possibilities and challenges for future research

support each other. In the car-washing scenario, novel insights and new types of service offerings (e.g. with the help of SMS, navigation devices or off-time reductions) would, for example, give people a reason to change their routine of checking the length of the car-wash queue (and turning away) into washing the car when there is no queue. Therefore, observation of practices combined with interpretation of customers' value experiences (e.g. with the help of narratives) offers valuable data for companies who seek to develop their service and co-create value with their customers.

5. Conclusion and limitations

This study presents an analysis of the distinction between experiences and practices, and analyzes the relevance of this distinction for value research. It also analyzes the relevance of this distinction in services' value-creation processes. The paper contributes to service research and especially to the value discussion in S-D logic by addressing some of the epistemological and ontological opportunities and challenges presented by developing a deeper understanding of how experience and practice constructs are characterized in the value discourse within S-D logic. While practices are primarily socially constructed and repeated patterns of behaviour, experiences focus more on individuals' unique value determinations in different contexts.

The study has also limitations. As this is a conceptual paper, the comparison of experiences and practices, as well as the themes, are primarily based on the theoretical discussion. The selected quotes from the empirical study are used as an illustration of the two perspectives: practices and experiences. The sample is small and the study does not attempt to generalize findings to car-washing or any other field of business. Therefore, the empirical analysis process is not reported in detail. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is not to argue that the concepts of experiences and practices are mutually exclusive, but to suggest that they are complementary and that, when understood in relation to each other, they offer future possibilities for value research. The authors encourage future conceptual and empirical studies of differences and similarities of experiences and practices, as well as of value experiences, value-creating practices and the co-creation of value. In addition, identifying customer segments that differ in what they perceive as valuable not only in services but also the service use experiences, practices, and the customer-provider relationship would be welcomed.

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