Creating Joint Experiences - Family Engagement with a Heritage Site

Abstract

Interactions between family members constitutes an important element of engagement with tourism sites, leading to enhanced value creation. Yet, we know little about how these engagement practices lead to experience outcomes. Studies of visitor engagement have explored C2C value co-creation contexts, adding to our understanding of social practices as a source of value outcomes. This study adds to this literature through a focus on the intimate social context of families' collective engagement practices, viewing the family unit as constituting a complex amalgam of individual, relational and collective resources (Epp and Price, 2008). Adopting a multi-stage and multi-method qualitative research design, we identify seven practices through which families engage with attractions, including: absorbing, interacting, information sharing, explaining, meaning construction, competing and deviating. Families associate these practices with experience outcomes; bonding, creating memories, entertainment, and learning. The findings inform the design of effective engagement platforms and resource deployment to facilitate group experiences.

Keywords: Visitor engagement, families, tourist experiences, Family Identity Interplay, practice theory

Introduction

Customer engagement has been increasingly linked to the achievement of satisfactory value outcomes from service experiences. Yet across the services marketing literature there are few examples which explored group interactions through engagement with service environments to understand value experiences (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014). Engagement in tourism takes the form of interactions between customers, service personnel and crucially between tourists, each of which can contribute to creating or co-creating value (Rihova, Buhalis, Moital, & Gouthro, 2013). Recent research has recognized that customer-to-customer social interactions are an essential facilitator of tourist experiences, although conceived as uncontrollable (Nicholls, 2010), which explains the nascent empirical work on such interactions in tourism, although this is an emerging area (see Reichenberger, 2017; Rihova, Buhalis, Gouthro, & Moital, 2018).

Therefore, the processes and practices of customer-to-customer interactions through which tourist experiences are co-created are not yet sufficiently understood, despite the fact that tourism is a context for deep and intimate social interactions, constituting a 'socially-dense' consumption setting (Rihova et al., 2013), that adds to the complexity and multi-layered nature of co-created experiences and value outcomes (Reichenberger, 2017). The focus of this study examines how social interactions within family groups, as relational units, engage with a tourist site to co-create and therefore enhance their collective visitor experience. The special focus on family tourism is warranted as this is the most important segment for many visitor attractions (Kozak, 2010). While there has been a recent surge of interest in family tourism experiences, including holistic approaches (Bronner & de Hoog, 2008; Schänzel, 2012; Schänzel and Lynch, 2016), there remains a distinct lack of understanding how families *collectively* engage with tourist sites from a perspective of resource integration, and

therefore, how individual, relational and collective family engagement contributes to their joint experience outcomes.

Theoretically, it is widely accepted that value cannot be 'delivered' to customers, and that services, events and activities are subjectively evaluated and phenomenologically defined by customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Tourists co-create value-in-use from experiences through their engagement with the service environment and other actors (Campos, Mendes, do Valle and Scott 2015; Reichenberger, 2017; Schau, Muñiz & Arnould 2009; Vargo & Lusch, 2011). Thus, within the service and marketing literatures, the need to identify and design suitable approaches to optimize customer experiences is recognized as vital to ensure satisfactory, memorable experiences, in light of greater intra- and inter-sector competition (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Recent research has explored how experiences are shaped through engagement with service environments and other customers, linking engagement to organizational outcomes. For example, increases in customers' engagement have been found to lead to enhanced firm performance (Kumar & Pansari, 2016), brand loyalty, satisfaction (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014) and referrals (Chandler & Lusch, 2015), as well as customers' intentions to spend, and to visit again (Alegre & Garau, 2010).

Whereas the growing literature on customer (actor) engagement theory has developed a focus on customers activities/practices (e.g. McColl-Kennedy, Vargo, Dagger, Sweeney & Van Kasteren, 2012), applications in tourism contexts have largely taken a different path, e.g. to develop measurement scales (Bryce, Curran, O'Gorman & Taheri, 2015). Empirical work on engagement in tourism has for example, conceptualized engagement as derived from motivation, prior knowledge and cultural capital in the context of museum visitation (Taheri, Jafari & O'Gorman, 2014). The marketing literature interprets the act of engagement

equivalent to co-creating interactive consumer experiences with other actors (Brodie, Ilic, Juric & Hollebeek, 2013; Lusch & Vargo, 2010). This perspective views the individual as embedded within a larger service system, or complex ecosystem, interacting with a multitude of actors to co-create his/her value experiences (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Early work classified family practices on cruise holidays as forming and embedding customer value co-creation (Korkman, 2006). Recent research has explored festival goers' social interactions as a source of value outcomes, identifying 18 customer to customer co-creation practices (c/f Rihova, Buhalis, Gouthro & Moital, 2018). Yet the literature on visitor engagement has yet to consider how individuals' resources are integrated and combined through activities and practices into collective outcomes. Secondly, the literature fails to distinguish between the close relational structure of families and the somewhat looser social configurations often detailed in C2C value co-creation settings, leading to incomplete understanding of how social interactions lead to enhanced collective value from experiences (Reichenberger, 2017).

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the emerging literature on C2C experience practices by focusing on socially dense interactions within families. Secondly, we contribute to C2C value co-creation, through the more observable lens (i.e. micro-foundation) of customer engagement (Storbacka, Brodie, Böhmann, Maglio & Nenonen. 2016). Our aim is to highlight the multilevel availability and integration of resources and how this shapes family engagement. Thirdly, we seek to enhance the family tourism literature, by examining the micro-contexts of interpersonal interactions, through the theory of Family Identity Interplay, to assess how families' engagement practices shape their collective experiences and enhanced family outcomes. In particular, the paper seeks to achieve two main objectives: (1) identify and categorize practices of family engagement with a visitor attraction; and, (2) offer insights

into the shared experience outcomes emerging from family engagement practices and assess their importance for future research.

Literature Review

Engagement to Co-Create Experiences

Pine and Gilmore (2011) emphasized that 'staging an experience is not about entertaining customers; it's about *engaging* them" (p.45, emphasis in the original). Only engaged customers are prepared to interact and commit resources to co-create their value experiences (Baron & Harris, 2008; Storbacka et al., 2016). Personal resources can include cultural knowledge, skills and technological competence (Prebensen, Vitterso & Dahl, 2013. From a provider perspective, customer engagement in tourism is recognized as enhancing brand performance indicators (Harrigan, Evers, Miles & Daly, 2017).

Research has focused on conceptualizing and measuring customer engagement in various contexts (e.g. brand engagement, brand community engagement, visitor engagement), an unintended consequence of which is a multitude of definitions and inconsistency in the dimensions of engagement (Dessert, Veloutsou & Morgan-Thomas, 2016). Engagement research has its theoretical roots in relationship marketing (Ashley, Noble, Donthu & Lemon, 2011; Vivek, Beatty & Morgan, 2012). Earlier theorizing on customer engagement viewed it as a behavioral construct (e.g. Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef, Reinartz & Krafft, 2010) but latterly this has broadened to encompass behavioral, cognitive, emotional (Brodie et al., 2011) as well as social dimensions (Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012). Drawing on Service Dominant Logic (SDL) and a service systems perspective (Vargo & Akaka, 2012), Brodie, Fehrer, Jaakkola and Conduit (2019, p. 183) offer the most generic definition of actor engagement as constituting a; "dynamic and iterative process that reflects actor's dispositions to invest resources in their interactions with other connected actors in the service system".

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As a multi-dimensional concept, actor engagement is subject to the interplay of the emotional and/or cognitive readiness to engage (i.e. disposition), the observable activity of engaging (engagement behavior), and the extent to which network relationships influence actors (i.e. connectedness) (Brodie et al., 2019).

It contributes to the value co-creation literature by concentrating analysis on the processes of customer resource integration that results in enhanced value creation. While research in marketing and tourism has classified resource types and examples of integration (cf Barron & Harris 2008; Prebensen, Vittersø, & Dahl, 2013), much of this takes a goal-orientated approach, assuming resource integration as 'ultimately rendering value for the organization': even consumer value is conceived as facilitated by the provider (Rihova et al., 2018, p. 363).

Within tourism, considerable effort has been devoted to developing measurements of customer engagement. Acknowledging its context specific nature, this literature falls into two broad categories; studying customer engagement with an on-line tourism brand (e.g. Harrigan et al., 2017), or capturing engagement during a service experience (e.g. Bryce et al., 2015). Taheri et al.'s (2014) work is influential since it developed a measurement scale of visitor engagement during a museum visit. Although this offers a useful starting point, the work is limited as it only captures the scope of visitor engagement with the site, rather than the cognitive, emotional and social levels of engagement. Their study does however, recognize the influence of resources, since it demonstrated that a visitor's prior knowledge and cultural capital drives engagement with the museum, albeit from a dyadic perspective not accounting for social or network influences.

The work on customer engagement with tourism social media brands extends the definition of engagement as a 'personal connection to a brand as manifested in cognitive, affective and behavioral responses *outside of the purchase*" (So et al., 2016, p. 65, emphasis added), incorporating: attention, identification, absorption, enthusiasm and interaction dimensions. Here, the focus is not solely on resources but also on an individual's cognitive engagement with the brand, where the 'interaction' dimension relates to that within the brand community members. This includes sharing and exchanging ideas, thoughts and feelings about experiences. Thus, engaged customers invest resources in interacting with each other, and strangers within an on-line environment to reflect on consumption experiences.

Collectively, this discussion points to the fact that the focus of engagement has been the brand/tourist site or community (see also Dessart et al., 2016), and has overlooked those resources of individual family members, including past experiences, that could impact on how a family engages within consumption contexts, and thus influence their shared experience.

The Social Nature of Consumption Experiences

A holistic approach to customer experience is widely accepted to be of importance in deepening our understanding of customer behavior, recognizing cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial and social components across the entire range of the experience (pre-experience, experience and post-experience) (Arnould, Price & Malshe, 2006; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Schmitt, 1999, 2003). Value in experience is phenomenologically determined, capturing actual or even imagined experiences of the customer formed by an; *"iterative circular process of individual, and collective customer sense making, as opposed to a linear, cognitive process restricted to isolated service encounters"* (Helkkula et al., 2012, p. 59).

Thus, while the individual experience is important, including cognitions and emotions, this perspective highlights integration of the individual with the social value experiences derived from interactions with other people such as friends or family. Collective or shared consumption experiences are created in situations where several customers simultaneously consume services, interact and co-create their experiences (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). Despite the ubiquitous nature of collective consumption settings, and the extensive literature on customer co-creation, few studies have focused so far on the C2C processes of resource use and integration or the practices that lead to value-co-creation and shared experiences. However, recent work is emerging on aspects of these practices. For example, early work investigated the interplay between individual and co-consumer resource integration and on the perceptions of individual and other group members' task contribution in group service encounters (Baron & Harris, 2008). Drawing on practice theory, recent research examined: co-creation practice styles amongst patients (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012), practices amongst families on cruise ships (Korkman, 2006), brand communities (Schau et al., 2009) and tourists in a festival setting (Rihova et al., 2018). In a conceptualization of the social context of tourist value co-creation, Rihova et al. (2013) distinguish between four layers comprising of detached customers, social bubble, temporary communities and ongoing neo-tribes; with families representing a 'social bubble' given their close social ties. These distinctions are important since interactions amongst tourists are influenced by personal factors, such as closeness to other customers and attitudes towards sociability (Reichenberger, 2017). Connectedness is also a key component of actor engagement (Fehrer, Woratschek, Germelmann & Brodie, 2018) and refers to the repository of exchanges with other actors over time, whereby the present experience is continually influenced by the past (Granovetter, 1985, Chandler & Lusch, 2015).

In contrast, the outcomes of shared consumption have been widely researched within the area of event marketing, on how to promote positive guest interactions (e.g. Levy, 2010), since the social aspect of these experiences is a key contributing factor in how consumers evaluate them (e.g. Grove & Fisk, 1997). Carlson, Rahman, Rosenberger III and Holzmüller (2016) show how in group-oriented event tourism, the holistic customer experience comprises an individual experience as well as a communal element. Positive tourist and service experiences are associated with entertainment and enjoyment (Tung and Ritchie 2011), learning and the development of new skills (Falk, Ballantyne, Packer & Benckendorff, 2012) and nostalgia that manifests itself in reminiscing (Dann 1994), which often implies a social context.

However, we could find no examples of literature on family engagement practices specifically and so our understanding of how interactions within the family unit can enrich their joint experience is limited. Families are special types of social groups due to the intimacy of the relationships, and the roles, role expectations and resources of each member are important factors that might determine resource integration and value outcomes. Against this background we define family engagement with a tourist site as *a dynamic and iterative process that reflects family members' disposition to invest resources in their interactions with other family members and the tourist attraction to enhance the family's collective experience.*

Family Tourism Research.
Although the family market is one of, if not, the most important to the tourism industry, the family has not been the focus for sustained academic research (Obrador, 2012). A range of early studies focused largely on children's influence on family decisions, attitudes towards

vacations, and experiences (c/f: Cullingford, 1994; Ryan, 1992; Thornton, Shaw & Williams, 1997). The literature mapping and evaluating the family tourism experience has reemerged in recent years (Carr, 2011; Schänzel et al., 2012). This has highlighted the need for a more detailed focus on the different voices of children and adults in family tourism experiences (Mikkelsen & Blichfeld, 2015). Schänzel et al. (2012), for example, suggest greater attention be placed on the family *per se* as well as individual perspectives on goals, experiences and outcomes of family holidays. Obrador (2012) critically evaluates the social dimension of family interactions in tourism. He argues that the 'thick' sociality of family life experienced by the vacation pool-space, can be a source of stress and tension as well as happiness. Social tourism research has pointed to important family outcomes from holiday experiences, including time spent together as a family, quality time together and increased family bonds (e.g. McCabe, 2009). Holidays are important as they provide an important temporal and spatial context where versions of family life can be performed (Mikkelsen & Blitchfield, 2015). Individual tourism experiences are often mediated by close family members, whereby individual preferences are sublimated to ensure positive outcomes for children, or (dis)satisfaction for one member has impacts on others (Thornton et al., 1997), acknowledging that individual experiences are often dependent on or determined by other members of the travel party/family. Therefore, it is important to understand how a family as a unit engages with tourist attraction and its impact on joint experience outcomes.

Approach and Methodology

The lack of research on the dynamics of family tourism experiences can be partly attributed to the difficulties posed by investigating activities in tourist settings, and the effects of researcher interference in family vacation time and spaces. In light of this, we utilize a multi-stage, multimethod study based at a single heritage visitor attraction as an ideal way to

examine dynamics of engagement activities. The empirical context chosen is Edinburgh Castle, one of the most popular paid visitor attractions in the UK, managed by Historic Environment Scotland, with over 2.1 million in 2018 (Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, 2019) enjoying global renown as one of the UK's most distinctive historical and cultural tourism resources. At a broader level, cultural and heritage tourism are a vital component of the UK's tourism resources (VisitBritain, 2014) and will continue to be a key driver of global tourism (UNWTO, 2018). The castle is a large and complex service environment, employing a variety of interpretative resources, ranging from information boards and costumed re-enactors to touchscreen panels and a multi-lingual audio guide, making it ideally suited to the study of resource use and integration.

In line with marketing and consumer research on online community engagement (Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek, Juric & Tang, 2017), in tourism on C2C interactions as a source of value co-creation (Rihova et al., 2018), and recommendations (Vargo & Akaka, 2012), we employ practice theory to better understand the social interactions and activities amongst family members and the wider service system. We draw on Schau, Muniz and Arnould's (2009, p. 31) definition of practices as "a spatially dispersed nexus of behaviors that include practical activities, performances, and representations or talk". These activities are linked via three coordinating mechanisms, which are: (1) understandings (i.e. knowledge of what to say and do); (2) procedures (i.e. explicit rules and instructions); and (3) emotional commitments (i.e. emotionally charged ends and purposes) (Schau, Muniz & Arnould, 2009). This is in contrast to sociological approaches to practice theory, for a discussion of which we refer the reader to Rihova et al. (2018).

Researching Families

We utilize the Framework of Identity Interplay (FII) (Epp & Price, 2008) to explore types of family engagement using a qualitative methodology to gain deeper insights into interactions and practices. The FII recognizes that families are a complex amalgam of individual, relational and collective identities, and as such, it is the interplay of these multi-layered interactions that drives consumption decisions. Relational units can be fixed or fluid; they are often formed on gender or generational lines, and their interactions are strongly influenced by their unique rituals and narratives (Epp & Price, 2008). We draw on the differentiation and interplay between these three levels for a more detailed and nuanced understanding of co-created family experiences (e.g. Kerrane, Hogg & Bettany, 2012).

This was operationalized through participant-centered research design involving multiple rounds of in-depth interviews (before and after the visit) and video/photographs with some participating families. The ages of the young participants ranged from four to 18 years old. Safety of children was paramount in designing and carrying out the research. To facilitate children's involvement, interviews took place within the safe and familiar setting of families' homes and questions were designed accordingly. In following the recommendations for child research that emphasises research *with* children as opposed to *on* children (Christensen, James & Jenks, 2000), we approached both young and adult family members as equal partners in the research process. During the interviews we were careful to strike a balance between "… *not patronising children and recognising their competencies, while maintaining their enjoyment of being involved with the research and facilitating their ability to communicate their view of the world.*" (Punch, 2002, p. 337). There was a risk that the adult member(s) would be worried or uncomfortable reporting information that might make them 'look bad' (Cheney, 2011). Building relationships and rapport with the family, and interviewing them in the familiar home environment helped limit such occurrences.

Appendix 1 further details how guidelines were used to design and conduct research with children. Families were provided with a participant information sheet, outlining their rights to anonymity, data protection and to withdraw at any time. Our research was approved by the university's research ethics committee.

Sampling Approach

Sampling proceeded using a theoretical approach consistent with Grounded Theory (Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017). As can be seen in Table 1, six nationalities were represented, with five local families involved. Families from different social backgrounds were selected to ensure a wide range of resource configurations within family groups. Family members with higher levels of cultural capital are more likely to be able to draw upon resources – in the form of knowledge, experience and connections – to facilitate their engagement within such attractions (Chandler & Lusch, 2015; Taheri et al., 2014). Our final sample included 14 families, comprising of 24 adults and 33 children.

Table 1: Details of Participating Families

Family code	Family type	Family composition (M = male adult, F = female adult, S = son, D = daughter; numbers after 'S' and 'D' refer to order of birth; children's ages at time of interview are in brackets)	Video camera used
GR (Pilot)	Blended	GRM - service engineer GRF - shop assistant GRS (17)	No

BC (Pilot)	Single parent	BCF - retail manager BCS1 (11) BCS2 (8) friend of BCS1 (11)	No
BE	Nuclear	BEM - financial adviser BEF - financial adviser BED1 (21) BED2 (15) BES (13)	No
JP	Nuclear	JPM - assistant professor JPF - housewife JPD1 (12) JPD2 (7)	No
DE	Single parent	DEF - local council social department officer DES1 (17) DES2 (13)	Yes
KR	Nuclear	KRM - primary school headteacher KRF - primary school teacher KRS (13) KRD1 (10) KRD2 (7)	Yes
MR	Blended	MRM - electrical engineer MRF - housewife MRD (12) MRS (9)	Yes
KY	Nuclear	KYM - property maintenance engineer KYF - NHS manager KYD (12) KYS (6)	Yes
SI	Nuclear	SIM - IT executive SIF - housewife SIS1 (12) SID1 (12) SID2 (8) SID3 (5) SIS2 (4)	Yes
WI	Nuclear	WIM - medical researcher WIF - doctor WID1 (11) WID2 (8) WIS (8)	Yes
TO	Single parent	TOF – author TOD1 (15) TOD2 (12) TOS (9) [TOD1 is the half-sister of TOD2 and TOS	Yes
EK	Single parent	EKF - university administrator EKS1 (18) EKD (12) EKS2 (8)	Yes
AD	Nuclear	ADM – teacher ADF - teacher ADD1 (17) ADD2 (14)	Yes

		ADD3 (11)	
JH	Nuclear	JHM - university admissions manager	Yes
		JHF - professor	
		JHD1 (15)	
		JHD2 (10)	

After analyzing the first four post visit interviews, it became clear that families needed a way of documenting their visit and children needed aids during the interviews to describe the visit and their experiences. The remaining ten families (see Table 1) were provided with a digital recording device that could take both short videos and photographs.

Research Design

The use of visual research methods (Rakić & Chambers, 2012) was particularly helpful to get closer to the 'essence' of families' visitor experiences, in a non-intrusive manner (Echeverri, 2005); especially when involving participants who may find it difficult to fully articulate their thoughts via other means, including children (Geeson, 2007). When issuing digital video devices/cameras we asked families to record whatever they felt was important or memorable in their shared experience. We stressed that anyone in the group should be allowed to record or take photographs (c/f Echeverri, 2005). This helped to ensure that all participants' voices were heard, and also helped reduce potential for social-desirability bias. Watching families' video clips together helped to ensure that responses could be probed, checked and clarified between members.

Pilot interviews with two families in the lead author's personal network, prompted minor changes of interview format and wording. Appendix 2 illustrates the questions asked during the pre- and post-visit interviews, and their link to the relevant literature. Adopting a semi-structured approach, the purpose of pre-visit interviews was to develop rapport with the families, especially the young participants, and to gain relevant background knowledge of

each family. The pre-visit interviews proved essential in establishing and building trust between the researcher and participants, and securing acceptance and commitment to the study.

The post-visit interviews included watching some of the family videos, conducting *a posteriori* sense-making from which emerged highly-revealing insights. This allowed the researcher to examine participants' interpretations of their own actions within particular situational contexts, proving highly effective in triggering insights into practices that might otherwise have been overlooked. The pre-visit interviews ranged from 35-60 minutes, with post-visit interviews lasting up to 90 minutes; data were transcribed and analyzed manually.

Interview data was supplemented by notes and photos from covert observations of non-participating visitors, conducted at the castle over a 2-month period prior the interviews. As well as a form of data triangulation (Goulding, 2001), observations are seen as highly appropriate for research focused on visitors' interactions and interpretations, helping researchers better contextualize what participants say they do with firsthand insights into the phenomena under investigation (Cole, 2005).

Approach to the Analysis

In our desire to explore family engagement practices and experience outcomes, we adopted a grounded theory approach to the analysis, which we considered most consistent with a desire to provide a "plausible account" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 132) of family interactions that constitute engagement practices. This is best characterized as the post-positivist approach (Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017), since we had a general analytic framework prior to the data collection and sought to apply a coding framework that allowed some reflexivity on the

dynamic nature of reality as emergent in group interactions. In practice, this meant an iterative process of data collection and analysis.

The data was in the form of memos – notes and observations taken during interviews and covert observations. However, the bulk of the data was derived from the interviews. Early analysis utilized the 'constant comparisons' method. Here, incidents were noted, then continually compared against other incidents for likenesses and dissimilarities. This brought dual benefits to the analysis: "*Making comparisons assists the researcher in guarding against bias… comparisons also help to achieve greater precision (the grouping of like and only like phenomenon)*" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 9). This initial coding stage generated many codes, varying from the different activities, resources, reflections and interactive configurations observed, to the different roles individual family member's played. The introduction of still photographs and video clips rendered the open coding process simultaneously richer and more challenging. Visual data were categorized according to which aspect(s) of family activities they illustrated and linked to specific segments of textual interaction.

The next stage involved focused coding, a process of reduction, organisation and selection of the most relevant codes (Charmaz, 2006). This was followed in turn by axial coding, which aimed to unify the disparate codes developed earlier in the process and find connections within the data (see Appendix 3 for an example). The interviews were discontinued when the researchers concluded that data saturation was achieved, i.e. when data analysis revealed no more meaningful patterns or characteristics of these patterns, and the interaction and activity patterns were fully fleshed out (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In regards to the conceptual focus of the analysis, this was undertaken in two stages: firstly, we identified engagement practices within families, referring to patterns of interactions within the family unit, a family unit with other actors (i.e. visitors or staff), or with the service environment. Each practice had been broken down into the three components - Procedures, Understanding and Emotional Engagement. Appendix 4 details this for all practices, following the example by Schau et al. (2009). We also considered whether these practices were prevalent across all or just a subset of families. In the next stage, we focused on the added experience outcomes families associated with their family engagement practices. The three researchers independently analyzed the data. To ensure inter-coder reliability, the three researchers compared their interpretations to hone, or eliminate, particular themes, connections, and practices. Interview data were triangulated with the rich VRM data and observational notes.

Findings

In the following sections, we detail distinct family engagement practices with the tourist site or other actors, relating them to the dimensions of engagement. Drawing on the FII framework (Epp & Price, 2008), we differentiate between practices at the individual, relational and collective level. All families adopt a number of engagement practices throughout their visit, albeit in different combinations. It is the combination of core, enhancement and extra-ordinary practices that shape the family's joint visitor experiences (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Interconnected Engagement Practices
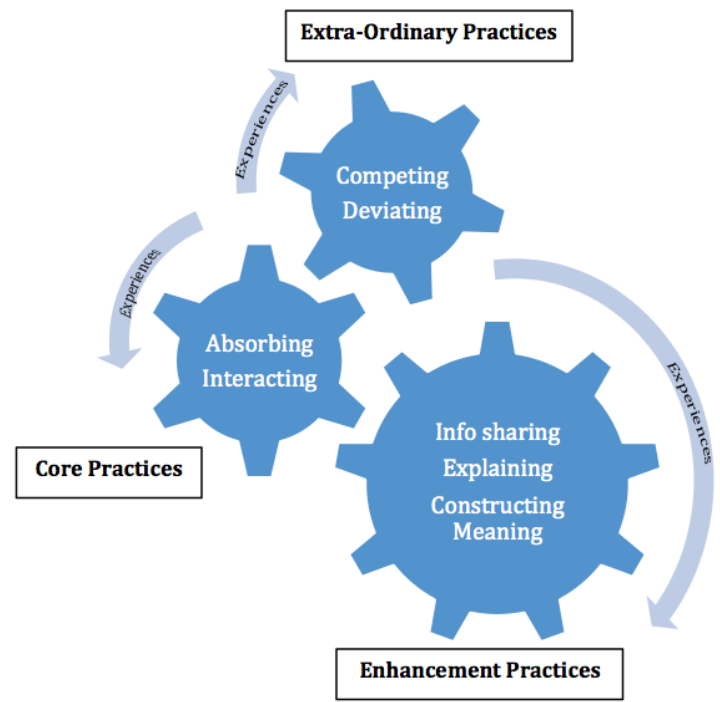
We demonstrate how these engagement practices and the interplay between individual,

relational and collective behavior patterns enrich family experiences. Table 2 provides a

summary of the findings.

Table 2: Components of Families' Engagement Practices and Shared Experiences

Engagement practices	Dimensionality of engagement	Family level + other actors	Shared experiences at family level
Absorbing	Cognitive, Emotional	Individual, Collective +Other visitors +Guides/staff	Bonding: where social ties have been strengthened or reaffirmed
Information Sharing	Cognitive, Behavioural, Emotional	Relational; Collective	Memories: where family members recollect notable interactions or other aspects of the visit
Interacting	Social, Behavioural, Emotional	Individual; Relational; Collective +Other visitors +Guides/staff	Entertainment: where interactions within the service ecosystem have been enjoyable
Explaining	Cognitive, Behavioural, Emotional	Relational; Collective	Learning: where new knowledge has been acquired, or existing knowledge reaffirmed/extended
Meaning construction	Cognitive, Behavioural, Emotional	Individual; Relational; Collective +Guides/staff	

Competing	Behavioural, Emotional	Relational; Collective +Other visitors	Achieving: where family members feel accomplishment after a particular action
Deviating	Behavioural, Emotional	Individual, Collective	

Absorbing: This constitutes a core engagement practice among our families, and covers a range of cognitive activities that are perceived as standard when visiting a heritage site, including; reading information boards, listening, watching audio-visual material, observing re-enactments, or watching other visitors' (family members or other visitors) interactions. To engage in these activities family members must also perceive them as interesting (cognitive engagement) and often joyful (e.g. emotional engagement). This engagement practice tends to play an important facilitating role to catalyze individual or group engagement, leading to new individual, relational or collective experiences.

Careful reading (i.e. absorbing) of the exhibit explanations is a practice often only undertaken by individual family members in order to gain an understanding of the meaning of the exhibits or be entertained by events. It leads to further forms of engagement with other family members, e.g. explaining (see later).

Observing often happens at family level, for instance, the BC family had two unexpected, yet memorable observational encounters; the first was a wedding ceremony taking place at St Margaret's Chapel. The mother commented how much they had all enjoyed observing a special occasion, which had not disrupted their own experience of the chapel as they managed to get in beforehand: "*Well I felt lucky, … it was really lovely to see people, you know guys in kilts… it was obviously a place that was special enough for somebody to want to get married there… you know, that made it very, very special.*"

The family also enjoyed interacting with some costumed re-enactors dressed as WW1 soldiers, when they were interrupted by a loud, elderly visitor from North America. While initially feeling aggrieved, the family observed the unfolding situation, and were able to witness a memorable personal story based on the other visitor's fathers war experiences, which engaged them further in the re-enactment. These unexpected, observed encounters became powerful experiences in the collective family memory; poignant and meaningful experiences of other customers had positively influenced their emotional engagement (Carù & Cova, 2003).

*Interacting***:** Visitors can engage with the castle by interacting through a variety of mediums (e.g. touchscreen interpretation monitors, staff and other visitors) though the focus of this practice is on social, human interactions. The human presence remains a vital facet of many tourist attractions; in the castle this comprised guides, stewards, ticketing staff, as well as a range of supporting personnel, such as shop assistants and cleaning staff. Staff often initiated interactions that then stimulated engagement in the form of further interactions or observation within the family groups.

The son of GR family, GRS, identified the important role interactions with staff had played in facilitating his family's individual and collective experience (i.e. in both relational and cognitive dimensions); "*The staff who were in the rooms… they all knew their stuff… the wee guide as well, he knew a lot of things… was very gung-ho and… he seemed to be very, eh, enthusiastic about everything. That was really good actually… it kind of reaffirmed everything that we did know, but I had kind of forgotten about the, em, what do you call it, the memorial area* [the War Memorial]." This illustrates that interactions with *the guide* had

helped to refresh existing knowledge of the GR family members, and also introduced new information to help them to further engage cognitively with aspects of the castle. Interacting with service personnel stimulated further engagement which was borne out in other interviews, such as the mother of the MR family, highlighting that these enhanced their experiences by offering both educational stimuli and entertainment: "*I love those kind of guides, talking about what kind of things happened… and yes, just the kind of banter you get, you know, and they tell jokes.*"

Some families had been less positive about the guide's performance, leading to reduced emotional engagement which discouraged them from further interacting with the guide, (i.e. behavioural engagement). The mother of the AD family admitted that he '*knew his stuff*', but reeled it off '*robotically*', causing the eldest daughter to note, "*He'd memorised it… I was just zoning out.*" In addition, family resources and past experience affected the depth and quality of their interaction with guides and other support staff. The family lacked much experience and knowledge of the castle, so were more reliant on the quality of such encounters to cognitively engage with the tourist attraction.

The following four practices are labeled 'Enhancement Practices' since the main purpose of these practices is to enhance the experiences of other family members (i.e. relational) and/or the whole family unit (collectively).

Information Sharing: Information sharing among family members took place both before the visit, such as inputs into planning the visit, as well as during the visit to the castle. Family members exchanged various types of information (facts, processual information and subjective observations) with each other. They also drew from a variety of public (provider)

resources as well as their own personal resources, such as information acquired from formal education, previous experience or media sources. Cognitive resources varied widely between family members, and between family groups, however, information about the site was shared relationally through intra-family interactions. Relational family engagement (e.g. between father and mother) might be at the cognitive level in the planning phase, it could also lead to behavioral and emotional engagement of the whole family during the visit, as illustrated in the following example.

The mother of the BC family used her prior visit experience to persuade the family to arrive very early for the daily firing of the One O'clock Gun, one of the most famous events staged by the castle, since this enabled them to acquire a prime location at the front of the viewing area, and would maximize their enjoyment. Her oldest son commented on how special this made their experience: "*That's another thing I'll never forget*"; it was seen as memorable, fun, and gaining a place in the front row felt like an achievement.

The utilization of past experience was not only evident among adults. In several families, children had gained experience through school trips to the castle, which had strengthened their knowledge of relevant historical events and of the topography and range of attractions at the castle. For instance, GRS's individual knowledge and experience stimulated cognitive, behavioral and emotional engagement within the GR family's collective interactions both during and after the visit, which added to their shared experience. The stepmother made the following observation:

> *We enjoyed it as a family because we were all bringing something to it,*
> *and GRS actually was pretty well informed from having been the most*

recently of any of us for a proper tour. And we were all able to sort of,

bolster each other's experience, 'cause I would say 'my uncle fought in

the war and I'll show you the book' [referring to the books of

remembrance within the War Memorial that are continually being

updated with the names of fallen soldiers]… *and then he* [GRS] *could*

tell us about somebody who had that wedding in that hall [GRS had

learned during a recent school visit], *so as a family we all brought*

different things.

The JP family provides another illustrative example of how one family member could share

personal knowledge to add value for the whole family. As overseas visitors, it was the older

daughter, JPD1, who had the most extensive cultural resources to facilitate the family's

engagement. She had visited the castle several times, which enhanced the ability of the JP

family to utilize and interact with resources within the service system. This included her

pointing out the Dog's Cemetery, which became one of the highlights for the family, but is

easily overlooked. During the interview, the father mentioned how having their own private

guide had made it more rewarding for them: "*All these times I just go* [to visitor attractions]

alone, it's quite boring… so it was much better this time, together as a family… Yeah!

Somebody guiding for us!"

Explaining: This combination of cognitive, behavioral and emotional engagement practice

involved family members' desire to make the visit enjoyable for the rest of the family by

providing explanations about features of the attraction within their relational and collective

roles. Explaining practices were found across all families and were usually performed by

members with more cultural resources, indicated by an ability to explain and interpret

artefacts to other family members which facilitated their own interpretations or rendered them more accessible. Explaining could also supplement and counteract deficiencies in the service setting, for example, relaying the description of panels into a form that was accessible to younger children. As the following extract shows, the mother of the MR family, distilled detailed information which she retold to the child(ren):

I really like the panels, and… I prefer as a parent, you can read it yourself, but even if there's a lot of information, you can then re-tell it to your children, depending on their age… I can mediate it. You know, I might have a 5-year old or a 10-year old or whatever, em, and videos can be very useful as well, can't they?

Video evidence also showed instances, whereby parents had to relate information to children, e.g. in crowded situations that blocked the views for smaller children. Parents also understood when to compensate for the lack of entertainment stimuli offered by the service setting which would lead to frustration amongst their children. For instance, BCF commented about her disappointment about the Royal Apartments and her efforts to counteract this:

… it has so much history it's almost like you don't know where to start… there's so many fantastic real-life characters that they could take forward… and grab the kids' imagination. It's, it's just not coming out… Now I'm not the best guide but … we were talking about the little drummer boy, who haunts the passageway [a ghost story that visitors can learn from the audio guide and tour guides…., *and they* [her children]*'re like 'Really! Wow! What?!'; they just couldn't see how that was.*

The level and type of explanation provided may be determined by the ages and resources of individual family members. Often children have the resources to engage through additional

explanation. The above example highlights the role that visitors' own resources play in transforming provider-based resources into individual and shared experiences. These resources, activated through explaining practices are essential in some cases to derive the latent value within service experiences accessible to those with fewer cognitive resources (i.e. connections) (Chandler & Lusch, 2015). These examples also demonstrate how customers co-create their experiences independently from service providers (Grönroos & Voima, 2013), drawing from their own unique resources, to create experiences at the individual, relational and collective level.

Constructing Meaning: This engagement practice is at the cognitive and emotional level and took place when families attempted to interpret artefacts, understand events or, find answers to questions they raised during their visit. Pine and Gilmore (2011) claim that memorable customer experiences are formed through the strength of connection that emerges, linking the customer to the experience event. In turn, visitor attractions interpreted as boring, intellectually inaccessible or irrelevant for example, may be ignored by visitors, reducing their overall experience. In the following we illustrate how meaning creation can be initiated by the family itself or actively encouraged via the service provider, i.e. the tourist attraction.

The WI family illustrates how meaning construction can happen unprompted. Taken from one of the family's videos, images 1-3 show their attempts to translate the Latin inscription '*Nemo me impune lacessit*' above the portcullis, and also establish who the two statues on either side of the gate represent. As the interpretation is only available inside the castle, the children were able to tell their parents the translation was '*No-one safely provokes me,*' having recently visited with their school. After amused discussion, the family settled on the alternative translation of "*Don't mess with me!*" The video clip clearly showed the

children's role in this collective meaning construction and the entertaining experience for the family collectively.

Image 1: The front of the castle, with the inscription above the open portcullis, flanked by the statues of Robert the Bruce and William Wallace	Images 2 and 3: The older daughter leading the family discussion followed by her brother and father

Meaning construction can also been stimulated by the service provider as part of the service offering, by exposing visitors to age-relevant touchpoints which triggered some participants curiosity and engaged them emotionally. Examples centered on individual's insights and impressions which stimulated meaning construction at family level. The practice of meaning construction then enriched the individual or collective family experience. For example, throughout the SI family visit, the children's quiz had played a key role in inspiring the whole family to engage with the exhibits, leading to individual and collective meaning construction. In the following the mother SIF, described how in the Prisoners of War section, she very carefully listened to the audio guide to help the children complete their quiz sheet.

"I had my headphones on [the audio guide] *and I found it really*

interesting... because it had the noises as if the men were in on their

camp beds and they were you know, spooning up their food and things

and… it made you feel like you were there…You know, just learning

things that you maybe didn't know or really things that you'd forgotten

and 'Oh yeah, that's right'… And I think that coupled with the kids' quiz

was quite good... You were actually having to listen or having to look for

information, so I found that really good…"

As well as facilitating learning, the engagement through the quiz helped to stimulate

interaction, search and interpretation of information, and entertainment at the individual,

relational (a number of the five siblings formed a sub-group) and collective levels. The

desire to find the relevant answers (i.e. meaning creation) provided extra motivation to

consult and investigate through interactions with the castle's interpretive resources.

As these examples show, the practice of constructing meaning was pursued by some of the

families deploying cognitive resources. These include a sense of curiosity and interest, the

availability of accessible and usable resources on site, which was instrumental in facilitating

greater depth of cognitive and emotional engagement through meaning construction, and

leading to an enjoyable visitor experience. The final two remaining practices were labeled

extraordinary practices, which were not related to core or enhancement practices, but when

performed had a direct contribution to shared outcomes.

Competing: Competing as an engagement practice refers to cognitive, behavioral and

emotional efforts by family members to use, access and acquire desired aspects of the service

when other customers were also doing so. Examples include the desire to secure a good position ahead of others to view an event, or obtaining tickets for a show or tour.

While families were not asked directly if they had competed with other visitors during their visit, the topic did arise when asked about interactions with other visitors and impact on their collective experience. There were references to queuing and the consequent disappointment and frustration felt in relation to access to popular exhibits, such as the Honors of Scotland. One example is provided by the DE family, in relation to the café, situated near the top of the castle, and offering views overlooking Edinburgh. From observations and interviews, the views are best obtained from a small number of window tables which are in constant demand. The family ensured that they would get access to one of their desired tables as the older son hovered in close proximity to a couple who were about to leave. Since customers are obliged to order and pay for their refreshments before finding a seat, this was not entirely appropriate behavior. The family's video clip showed that there were several customers in front of them in the queue, but the family's tactics worked, as the mother exclaimed "*But we actually got to the café we got the best seat in the house!*" Through collectively competing, their teamwork and complicity allowed them to achieve a shared goal. This joint sense of achievement enhanced an aspect of their collective visit experience.

Deviating: The castle has a number of rules for visitors, as it contains several sensitive sites, including the War Memorial, and important historical artefacts. 'Deviating' is an emotional and behavioral engagement practice and occurred when visitors desired excitement and consequently ignored, bent or flouted these rules or deviated from social norms relating to appropriate behavior. Deviating could relate to the behavior of one or several members of the family. The father of the KR family provided a humorous example of this activity:

"One of my best memories of Edinburgh Castle is getting a row from, eh,

a Historic Scotland guy. I was giving a chat... about how to fire a

cannon and I climbed and sat on top of one of the cannons to give the

talk... And, a Historic Scotland guy came over and told me in no

uncertain terms that I was to get off it, which the kids thought was really

funny."

Often, in the outdoor areas, children behaved more freely by running around or attempting to lift huge cannonballs. Yet sometimes such actions broke visitor rules, such as climbing on cannons or part of the castle walls (see Images 4 and 5 below). Discussing deviating behavior in the post-visit interview with the DE family elicited much laughter, as they recounted their particular experience. The mother, DEF, older son, DES1, and younger son, DES2 had clearly gained much entertainment from this situation.
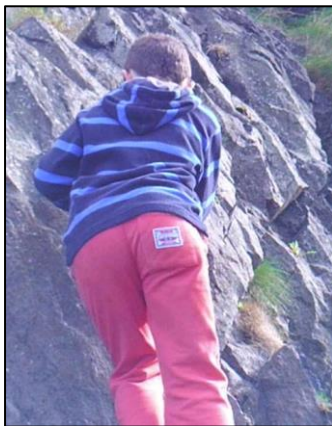
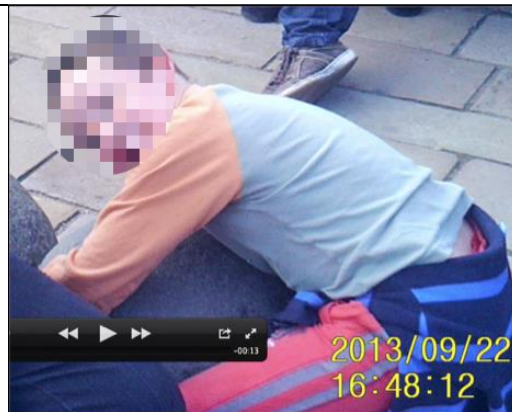|	
Image 4: The son of the TO family, TOS, climbing the castle walls (shortly before being told off by a steward as visitors are not allowed to climb within the castle)	Image 5: TOS trying to lift some of the massive cannonballs next to the medieval cannon Mons Meg

Thus, despite the potential risks involved from deviating behavior, some family members were willing to break rules, the opportunity for which resulted in particularly memorable experiences and entertainment.

Conclusions and Implications

While engagement of visitors has been the focus of some research in tourism in terms of C2C value co-creation and shared experiences at events, our research focuses on the resources and relational structures that are brought into play in shaping engagement practices, and experience outcomes. This study contributes to our understanding of how families engage with tourist attractions and, how their engagement contributes to their individual and collective experience, knowledge of which was previously rudimentary. Our approach allowed us to identify and categorize the practices of family engagement with a visitor attraction and develop meaningful insights into shared experience outcomes emerging from these practices.

Adopting the lens of the visitor as embedded within a network of actors (Vargo & Lusch, 2008), who through engagement deploys and draws on resources to co-create their own experiences, offers a useful framework to analyze and interpret family tourism experiences outcomes. Seven different engagement practices prevalent within families were identified, namely: absorbing, information sharing, interacting, explaining, meaning construction, competing, and deviating, which were classified into core, enhancement and extraordinary types of engagement practices, offering a useful approach for service designers and managers to prioritize strategies to enrich and manage service interactions. By also acknowledging the individual, relational and collective dimension nested within a family (Bronner & De Hoog,

2008; Epp & Price, 2008), the interconnected nature of engagement practices amongst family members has become more transparent.

Jointly, these findings offer unique insights into how family engagement with a tourist attraction is manifested and demonstrates considerable contribution to family tourism experiences. While previous work often focused on the characteristics of engagement, adopting a practice perspective demonstrates the multi-faceted and interconnectedness of these dimensions. Most of the practices identified in our study require engagement at multiple levels. Choosing as foci of engagement a heritage tourist attraction, we explored the interactions within the family that relate to the site and other actors (e.g. visitors, personnel) they encounter, and which are implicated in and affect tourist experiences.

Implications for Theory and Practice

We argue that engagement practices need to be examined from a services systems perspective, taking into account the individual, relational and collective dimensions of a group as well as other visitors. Engagement practices also cannot be directly attributed to a specific dimension. Instead, most practices require a blend of cognitive, behavioral, emotional and social engagement (see Brodie et al., 2019). Families tend to engage in a number of these diverse engagement practices and it is precisely this diversity, which tends to enrich their experience through providing, memories, learning and entertainment.

Secondly, our work has answered the numerous calls for more research on the perspectives of families and children in tourism (e.g. Kerrane et al., 2012; Obrador, 2012; Schänzel, Yeoman, and Backer, 2012). We believe this to be one of the first studies to provide deeper insights into the importance of children's contributions to families' shared visitor experiences. While

previous research has acknowledged the important role that children play in influencing family decision making in tourism (Thornton et al., 1997; Bronner & De Hoog, 2008), there is virtually no extant knowledge on how children's cognitive resources contribute to shared family experiences or how their behaviors can enhance outcomes for other family members. Additionally, while it is evident that prior knowledge enhances the scope of engagement with a museum, this study has shown how adult *and* child family members can provide resources which transform and translate elements of the experience to achieve enhancements for individual and shared family experiences.

Furthermore, we argue that family engagement with visitor attractions should be seen as a process encompassing all stages of a visit. This is consistent with the view of co-creation of value (Payne, Storbacka and Frow, 2008) as well as the view that engagement should be considered as a process (Brodie et al., 2011). To illustrate, information sharing between family members means that different members have unique information resources and perform diverse engagement roles in the planning phase. This has implications both in terms of marketing communications and for service design. Marketers could target family members according to their specific information needs, prior experience and interests. In terms of service design, there is a need to consider the service blueprint, and the customer journey, from the perspectives of different actors in the family as opposed to the perspective of an individual embedded within an ecosystem (Patricio, Fisk, Falcão e Cunha and Constantine. 2011). In the pre-experience phase, service providers could segment the information material according to the different engagement roles of family members, or ensure that at least one family member is familiar with the material and is sufficiently engaged to share. Different material could be generated for different age or interest groups. Material should be created in

such a way that information exchange is facilitated, leading to meaning creation and deeper collective engagement.

Deviating engagement practices have previously been conceptualized in the literature in relation to negative tourism experiences, often in the context of dark tourism. Yet, our perspective aligns more closely to the position offered by Uriely, Ram and Malach-Pines (2011), who argued that deviance in tourism should be considered relationally to normative behaviors. Our families showed how deviating from the prescribed rules or social norms in the visitor space can be a source of enjoyment and contribute to the emotional engagement of families. This aligns with thinking within service design that advocates tourists' wanting to find their own path, a desire to find detours from scripts, favoring spontaneity and consequently unpredictability (Ek, Larsen & Homskov, 2012). Therefore, attraction managers should allow for personalization of experiences, and consider how such small breaks in the rules could lead to positive evaluations of experiences. Clearly this has to be balanced against meeting health and safety standards, securing the longevity of the heritage site and the enjoyment of other customers.

In terms of interaction practices, we found that communicating with other visitors was primarily positive for shared family experiences. The social influence of other visitors and/or personnel on the tourist experience is an important contributor to tourism outcomes (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Rihova et al., 2018). However, our research highlights the important ways in which other actors can provide opportunities to facilitate engagement within groups, or to personalize shared experiences. This has important implications for visitor attractions to build memorable and unique services leading to loyalty and competitive advantage (Pine and Gilmore 1998; Tung & Ritchie 2011). As any one of these practices has the potential to

enrich the experience of family members, their combined effect is likely to result in an even richer and memorable visitor experience for the whole family. For service providers, these findings could inform the design of service delivery systems, in a range of high-contact service environments, from visitor attractions to museums and the wider tourism service environment. It highlights that heterogeneity of visitors in terms of their cognitive resources necessary to interpret the exhibits, displays, enactments or material provided, can be compensated by resources of other family members.

The study also contributes by demonstrating the practices by which family members help enrich each other's experience in multiple ways. Previous work has emphasized that families visiting heritage attractions are not simply motivated by a desire to learn but also seek cultural entertainment through interactions with public-facing resources (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2016). Our findings demonstrate that from families' perspectives, the engagement practices within the family unit also offer the opportunity to compensate for deficiencies in the service setting, enhance social relationships, and experience intellectual development, supporting work by Falk et al. (2012). In line with extant literature on individual and group experiences, positive experiences at family level were associated with relational family identities, strengthening them through shared experience (Kerrane et al., 2012), fun, entertainment and enjoyment (Prentice, Witt and Hamer, 1998), and creating shared memories (McCabe, 2009).

Limitations and Future Research

As this is the first study directly linked to engagement from a family perspective, the generalizability of the findings needs to be established. The above findings should be seen as a starting point to encourage additional research which could explore the practices and processes of engagement in less complex relationship groups, such as couples or groups of

homogenous visitors including tour groups. While group interactions have been examined for their contributions to customer co-created tourist experiences, the specific contributions of family practices to value creation from the perspective of marketing and service design are not understood. Similarly, future research could examine engagement in different tourism service contexts including package tours. Our study focused on family resources and practices that enhanced value in shared experiences, and we did not explore how tensions were resolved, or on how negative practices, such as family conflicts might detract from value in use individually and collectively. At the theoretical level, we need further research on the specific dimensions of experiences that are both facilitated and hindered by different engagement practices, to test the concepts to examine how value can be enhanced or to understand how potential for value impairment can be mitigated. Additional research could explore the ways that engagement practices can be operationalized in marketing strategy to facilitate the co-creation of experiences.

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Appendix 1: Issues in Designing and Conducting Research with Children

Research issue	Action taken by interviewer to address issue
- Importance of building relationships & rapport	- Used skills as educator & parent in building trust with both children and adult gatekeepers; upheld the importance of honesty, understanding and approachability in dealings with all family members
- Greater need to consider research environment	- Was aware that children may not feel comfortable in 'adult' research environments, so carried out interviews in families' homes - Was aware that children may be stressed by an adult researcher 'invading' their space, so behaved as a respectful guest and constantly was aware of children's reactions - Sometimes reassured children through inviting the input of parent - Reassured children that there were no right or wrong answers
- Need for appropriate research methods	- Was aware of children's more limited attention span so framed questions in a more informal manner, and tried to limit own contribution - Used a combination of methods to elicit answers; this allowed younger family members to display their competencies in different ways, and enabled them to feel more comfortable with an adult researcher
- Adults' fears, assumptions and attitudes affect their behavior towards children, methods chosen and interpretation of data	- Was reflexive of impact of self throughout research process, particularly method selection and design
- Children won't understand the tasks or questions	- Clarity of language was vital and questions were sometimes varied for different age groups; the pilot interviews were useful method of assessing their understanding.
- Children's accounts lack validity and reliability	- Was aware that children may lie for several reasons (to avoid talking about sensitive subjects, to say what they think researcher wants to hear, through shame or to create favorable impressions), so monitored reactions of parents & other siblings carefully and confirmed points if there was uncertainty over their veracity - As above, during the interviews & analysis, was aware that accounts were from children's perspective and may not necessarily reflect reality - Invested time in establishing relationship and trust, especially with parents, to encourage openness and acceptance into families' homes
- Choice of which data to	- In order to involve and empower all family members,

| include and the interpretation | they were encouraged to help with selection of which visual material to discuss during post-visit interviews |

(adapted from Punch, 2002; Christensen, James & Jenkins, 2000)

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for the Semi-Structured Interviews with Families

Question Theme	Pre-Visit Interview Questions	Post-Visit Interview Questions	Literature
1) Families' Leisure & Visitor Attraction Experience and general interest in history	- What do family members enjoy doing in their free time & during holidays? - Who (family member) enjoys going to historical visitor attractions? Why? - Who has been to Edinburgh Castle? - If yes - What memorable incidents can you remember from previous visit(s) [good or bad]? - What activities did you take part in during their previous visit(s) [guided tours, re-enactments, events, etc.]?	- If family/family member has/have previously been to historical visitor attractions/Edinburgh castle – how did this help with this visit? - How did the visit compare to previous visits to the castle/other attractions?	Cultural and other resources (e.g. Taheri, Jafari & O'Gorman, 2014). Engagement – disposition and connections (e.g. Brodie et al., 2019)
2) Families' Attitudes to Different Visitor Attractions' Interpretive Resources	- What activities do they like doing at visitor attractions? - What features of the castle (or other attractions they've been to) do they like? - How do they feel about [particular interpretive methods]?	- What did individual family members/ family unit see/observe/listen to/do at the castle? Prompt to see photos/videos - How did they find [particular exhibits/aspects of the castle]? Why? Prompt to see photos/videos	Cultural and other resources (e.g. Taheri, Jafari & O'Gorman, 2014). Engagement – disposition and connections (e.g. Brodie et al., 2019) Value Co-creation through interactions with the service environment and through customer to customer interactions (e.g. Campos, Mendes, do Valle and Scott, 2015; Reichenberger, 2017; Schau, Muñiz & Arnould, 2009; Vargo & Lusch, 2011) Family Identity Interplay (Epp & Price, 2008) Individual and shared experience outcomes (e.g. Grove & Fisk, 2007; Carlson et al., 2016; Falk et al., 2012)
3) Families interacting with each other Experience outcomes	- How does the family make decisions during visits to attractions – about what to see/observe?	- How did the family make decisions during their visit [e.g. decide what to do, what to see, in what order, etc.]? - Did family members talk to each other, discuss what they heard/read/observed. – Prompt for Examples - Was visiting as a family better than visiting alone? Why? - What did you enjoy most /not enjoy as an individual/as a family? Why? Prompt for photos/videos	

Appendix 3: Sample coding table and link to theory

Raw Data (Interview excerpts)	Open Codes	Axial Coding	Theme	Theory
SIM…*for the older ones because SIS1* [the oldest son] *was really into the quiz, he really liked it…*	Interactive task	Looking for answers/explanations	Intellectual stimulation	Engagement – cognitive
ADM *They could have done that with the Great Hall a bit more, couldn't they? I mean it's a great room and there were suits of armour and big shiny swords and things, but you perhaps need a bit more explanation of… a lot of empty rooms I suppose.*	Emptiness			
JHF *I followed the radio* [referring to the audio guide] *a lot and I know what exactly I saw… But it's better than before… it's now in Chinese [respondent is Chinese.*"	Usefulness of Audio	Being able to interpret what you see/ask questions		
BCF W*e saw guys in costume… dressed up as if they were from the First World War…*	Making sense of enactments			
BCS1 *…then when it came to speaking to these people in uniform and being able to ask them questions…*	Speaking to actors			

Appendix 4: Anatomy of Engagement Practices (based on Schau et al., 2009)

Engagement practices	Procedures Explicit Performance Rules, principles 'know-that' knowledge	Understanding Knowledge of what to say and … 'know-how' e.g. tacit cultural templates for understanding and actions.	Emotional Engagement Ends and purposes, which are emotionally charged, in the sense that people are attached or committed to them.
Absorbing	Visitors walk around the heritage site and are expected to read descriptions of exhibits observe enactments, listen to audio guides and watch audio/visuals.	There is an expectation that visitors walk at a speed to be able to read descriptions of exhibits and listen to the audio guides. There is also the assumptions that visitors are able to read or have access to the exhibits. This could be hampered by literacy levels of children, and/or impaired vision. There is also an assumption that visitors take time and have access to observe enactments and other events.	Family members would like to read, listen, watch and observe to gain an understanding of the meaning of exhibits, or be entertained by the events.
Interacting	One or more family members start a conversation with service personnel or other visitors.	Ability to approach and speak to other visitors and service personnel.	Desire to learn or find out more and be entertained.
Information Sharing	Family members talk to each other and share information relevant to the heritage site visit	Family members have an understanding of what would be of interest/importance to other family members based on past experiences.	Family members would like to enhance the understanding and experiences of other family members.
Explaining	Family members elaborate and explain to each other what they have seen or read often drawing on previous knowledge and experiences.	Family members know when other family members require additional information to make the material accessible to them. Parents to children, children to parents. Readiness to pass on knowledge.	Parents ensure that children learn and enjoy the visit. Children want to demonstrate to their parents that they know something the parents didn't know.
Construction Meaning	One or more family members are given a stimuli (e.g. quiz) or are confronted with an artefact/behaviour they can't make sense of. This	Family members have a sense of curiosity and interest. Knowledge available amongst family members; willingness	Family members enjoy a cognitive challenge, it is seen as a source of fun and entertainment for families.

	triggers a discussion amongst family members.	to spend time on such activities.	
Competing	Family members work together to compete against other visitors for limited resources (e.g. space, access, view).	There is an awareness that access to certain resources is limited. There is also a willingness to bypass rules for polite behavior (e.g. rules for queuing).	There is a sense that their enjoyment would be diminished if they could not access resources that are limited (e.g. space, view, access).
Deviating	One or more family members break rules and deviate from expected visitor behaviour.	Boundaries of appropriate behavior are not perceived as justified.	Desire to make the visit more fun and enjoyable for oneself or other family members.