



The Impact of Reflection on Experience Type Perceptions

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Abstract

Whether an experience is perceived as ordinary or extraordinary (i.e., memorable, meaningful, transformational) (Duerden et al., 2018) depends on a variety of potential factors including but not limited to time, social connection, and reflection. The purpose of this experimental study was to assess how activity type, social connection, and reflection type influences experience type, ordinary versus extraordinary, perceptions overtime. Data was collected from 209 undergraduates using a 4x4 experimental design. Participants engaged in one of four different 20-minute activities based upon Melton's (2017) family activity model (e.g., core:parallel, core:joint, balance:parallel, and balance:joint). Each activity was run for four different groups resulting in 16 different groups. The 16 groups were randomly assigned to four different reflection conditions (i.e., synchronous, asynchronous, solo, none) which occurred two weeks after the initial activities. Repeated measures ANOVAs will be conducted to assess the relationship overtime between activity type, social connection, and perceived experience type. Analysis is currently underway on the collected data and will be completed in time to share at the conference.

Keywords

extraordinary experiences, reflection, experience design

Introduction

Research is needed to understand the relationship between different types of experiences and how they are perceived by individuals. Experiences (Duerden et al., 2015) are how individuals interact with the world around them, develop their sense of identity, form opinions, and connect with others. Research is also needed to understand how different types of experiences influence social connections and the role reflection plays (Duerden et al., 2012) in the overall impact and perception of experiences.

Literature Review

Melton (2017), drawing upon the work on Zabriskie and McCormick (2001), the family activity model which proposes a two by two model with axis related to family interaction style, parallel vs. joint, and activity environment, novel vs predictive. The four quadrants of this model are core:parallel, core: joint, balance:parallel, balance: joint. This model informed the structure the experimental design of our study. Melton's model allows us to examine the role activity type, as defined by Melton, influences how people perceive experiences and how these perceptions interact with activity types to influence social connections formed during group activities.

We drew upon the work of Duerden et al.'s (2018) experience type framework of memorable, meaningful, and transformative experiences to guide our thinking and measurement around experience types. Our exploratory research questions will allow us to look at the relationships between activity type, perceived experience type, and social connection. We also want to look at the role reflection on experiences (Duerden et al., 2012) plays in the relationship between the aforementioned variables.

Methods

Data was collected from 209 undergraduates using a 4x4 experimental design. Participants engaged in one of four different 20-minute activities based upon Melton's (2017) family activity model (e.g., core:parallel, core:joint, balance:parallel, and balance:joint). Each activity was run for four different groups resulting in 16 different groups. The 16 groups were randomly assigned to four different reflection conditions (i.e., synchronous, asynchronous, solo, none) which occurred two weeks after the initial activities. All reflection conditions used the same question prompts. Synchronous reflection involved an in-person focus group. Asynchronous reflection involved posting responses to a private online chat board. Solo reflection involved emailing responses directly to the research team. The no reflection group did nothing.

Participants completed a post-activity questionnaire directly after the initial and a final questionnaire two weeks after the reflection experiences. The same single item questions were used to measure social connection and perceived experience type (Duerden et al., 2018; Duerden et al., In Review). Repeated measures ANOVAs will be conducted to assess the relationship overtime between activity type, social connection, and perceived experience type.

Findings

The data for this study are currently being analyzed. Results will be ready to share by the time of the conference.

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