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DERIVED FROM THEME PARK EXPERIENCES

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## **Delighted or satisfied? Positive emotional responses derived from theme park experiences**

**Abstract:** Many scholars and practitioners indicate a need to provide extraordinary experiences that delight rather than satisfy. The extant tourism literature on hedonistic experiences has focused on identifying particular stimuli that appear to be associated with positive emotional outcomes, rather than examining the psychological processes that explain the elicitation of emotion. This study uses cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) to explain some visitors may be delighted and other satisfied from similar experiences, as well as their respective effects on revisitation intentions. A survey (n=645) of visitors to a theme parks showed that tourists' different evaluations of their experience on certain appraisal dimensions proposed by CAT, such as the degree of goal realisation, goal relevance and novelty, led to either delight or satisfaction. Tourists' level of loyalty intentions were also varied systematically with their particular emotional response. These findings provide practitioners with an understanding of how to design favourable experiences for their customers.

**Keywords:** customer delight; customer satisfaction; CAT; loyalty intentions; emotions; hedonic consumption experience

### **Introduction**

How to delight, not merely satisfied tourists? Many scholars and practitioners indicate a need to provide extraordinary experiences that delight rather than satisfy in order to create loyalty and future business. In an experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), travellers seek extraordinary experiences that delight (Crotts & Magnini, 2011), engage the visitor spiritually (Matheson, Rimmer, & Tinsley, 2014; Willson, McIntosh, & Zahra, 2013), stimulate the senses (Agapito, Valle, & Mendes, 2014), or create and reinforce identity (Carnegie & McCabe, 2008; Dunkley, Morgan, & Westwood, 2011). This has led to a sharp growth in the study of tourist experiences (Jennings et al., 2009; Ritchie, Tung, & Ritchie, 2011) and interest in improving their design (Tussyadiah, 2014), although the psychology of tourist experience is only a minor theme in the literature (Pearce & Packer, 2013). A better understanding of how and why a tourist may be satisfied or delighted during their experiences appears central to experience design. It is therefore surprising that there is lack of clarity between the concepts of satisfaction and delight both in terms of their causes and their consequences.

One reason for this confusion is that *cause* of delight is often examined from a business perspective and attributed primarily to the type of service elements offered (Torres & Kline, 2006), suggesting that products or services have an inherent quality that is hedonic or utilitarian irrespective of the tourist's goals (Fuller & Matzler, 2008; Loureiro, Miranda, & Breazeale, 2014). From the perspective of cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) however, the elicitation of an emotion is the result of a subjective rather than objective evaluation. There is also lack of agreement about the *effects* of delight and satisfaction on post-experience behavioural intentions. Some studies regard delight as an extreme form of satisfaction (Fullerton & Taylor, 2002; Ngobo, 1999) which may have a non-linear effect on behavioural intentions (Keiningham & Vavra, 2001; Rust & Oliver, 2000). Alternatively, Finn (2012) argued that delight has a direct effect on intentions in parallel with the effect of satisfaction on intentions and therefore delight is not an extreme of satisfaction (Alexander, 2010).

A third reason for confusion is disagreement as to whether satisfaction is an attitude or an experienced emotion. For some, satisfaction is considered an attitude resulting from 'making an evaluative assessment of an item, good or service' (Pearce & Packer, 2013, p. 395) and may have an emotional component. Others consider satisfaction is an emotional response to an experience (Oliver, 1981) especially when people's inner-directed or drive-based values (push motivation) are fulfilled (Gnoth, 1997). Delight on the other hand is consistently identified as an emotional response (Frijda, 1993; Scherer, 1997) which may influence the evaluation of an experience and lead to a favourable attitude. In this study both delight and satisfaction are considered as emotions and the subjective elicitations of the two emotions are addressed to distinguish between them.

These disagreements and confusion suggest a need to better distinguish between these two concepts and to identify the different causal basis for each and their effects on intentions. Cognitive appraisal theory is adopted in this study to provide the theoretical basis for the causal relationship between stimuli and emotions elicited. In cognitive appraisal theory, any particular emotional response to an experience is elicited based on a (usually unconscious) cognitive evaluation using various dimensions such as novelty, goal relevance and the degree of goal realisation. Therefore, tourists with similar experiences may feel delighted or satisfied dependent on their goals, goal relevance and so on. In this study, cognitive appraisal theory is used to investigate the differences in antecedents and consequences of satisfaction or

delight derived from visitors' theme park experiences - a typical hedonic tourism consumption experience (Bigne, Mattila, & Andreu, 2008; Milman, 2001).

## **THEORY**

In the satisfaction literature, a robust direct link between positive affect (emotion) and satisfaction has been found for a variety of products and services (Dubé & Morgan, 1996a; Westbrook, 1987). Research findings in the tourism and leisure literature also demonstrate that positive affect is positively related to satisfaction and negative affect is negatively related to satisfaction (Benkenstein, Yavas, & Forberger, 2003). Further, the joint effects of positive cognition (disconfirmation) and emotions (pleasure and arousal) on satisfaction, as well as on loyalty and willingness to pay more is empirically supported in the context of hedonic services (Loureiro et al., 2014). Affective variables have been integrated into the cognitive disconfirmation model of satisfaction in the context of utilitarian services (Wirtz & Bateson, 1999). In this study we define satisfaction from consumption experiences as an emotional response characterised by mild positive affect (Finn, 2005) elicited when consumers' motivation or needs being fulfilled. It is derived from an evaluation based on a person's motivations or needs for a consumption experience (Bigne, Andreu, & Gnoth, 2005; Gnoth, 1997). Since judgments of satisfaction vary along a hedonic continuum (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991), there arises a question: are satisfaction and consumption emotions distinguishable theoretical constructs; that is to say, can emotions be distinct from satisfaction, or can satisfaction itself be conceptualized as an emotional response?

An early study by Hunt (1977) found that, "satisfaction is not the pleasurable of the [consumption] experience, it is the evaluation rendered that the experience was at least as good as it was supposed to be" (p. 459). When consumers generate satisfaction evaluations of product usage or services, they express qualitatively different emotions coexisting with, and contributing to satisfaction judgments. This is exemplified in a study to specify types or categories of emotional response that may be causally antecedent to (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991) and coexist with the satisfaction judgment (Oliver, 1989). Westbrook and Oliver (1991) proposed five qualitatively different emotional states related to instances of satisfaction: acceptance (contentment), happiness (pleasure), relief, interest/excitement and delight ordered by increasing favorableness and contribution to satisfaction. These emotions are regarded as qualitatively different states of satisfaction with different emotional 'markers'. Similar findings appear in their later study (Oliver & Westbrook, 1993) in which

different of satisfaction ratings were related to distinct labels of emotional content. Emotional responses are further argued as distinct outcomes elicited during consumption independent of satisfaction (Westbrook, 1987; Finn, 2012). Similar arguments are presented by the study on expectations, post-purchase emotional states and affective behavior (Santos & Boote, 2003), when four emotional responses of post-consumption: delight, satisfaction (or positive indifference), acceptance (or negative indifference), and dissatisfaction were found.

In tourism, different emotions, such as pleasure and interesting challenge as a result of tourist experiences in tourism attractions, are also found within a similar overall satisfaction level (Vittersø, Vorkinn, Vistad, & Vaagland, 2000). Delight as an emotion has been distinguished from satisfaction in the context of B2C websites (Finn, 2005, 2012), the restaurant industry (Bowden & Dagger, 2011), and rural tourism (Loureiro, 2010). Hence, we may consider satisfaction and emotional reactions as two separate outcomes of the consumption experience, although interacting with each other.

In contrast to the distinction between emotion and satisfaction, other investigators has conceptualized satisfaction as itself an emotional response to the judgmental disparity between product performance and a corresponding normative standard (Cadotte, Woodruff, & Jenkins, 1987). Satisfaction as an emotional perspective is defined as “an emotional state of mind after exposure to the opportunity” (Baker & Crompton, 2000, p. 787), “an affective state that is the emotional reaction to a product or service” (Spreng et al., 1996, p. 17), and a “subjective emotional state that occurs in response to an evaluation of a set of experiences” (Westbrook, 1981, p. 70). Although it is unclear whether satisfaction is phenomenologically distinct from many other positive emotions (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999), the measures of joy and satisfaction load onto one factor (Nyer, 1997b). Furthermore, satisfaction is found to share common variance with positive emotions such as happiness, joy, and gladness (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987). When emotions are examined in the context of the hospitality experience and special meal occasions, it is suggested that “customer satisfaction is more likely to be a response to the emotion of the occasion than rational calculations” (Lashley, Morrison, & Randall, 2005, p. 80). Findings from previous studies that have found differences between satisfaction and positive emotions like joy and happiness can be explained by the way items are presented on the questionnaire (e.g., separation of measures of satisfaction from measures of other positive emotions), or the lack of inclusion of a sufficient number of positive emotions (Bagozzi et al., 1999).

Some of the disagreements in the literature may be explained by the difference between needs satisfaction and attribute satisfaction, whereby needs satisfaction is more likely to be expressed as an emotion. Satisfaction is generally classified into two different types: needs satisfaction based on motivational theory and attribute satisfaction based on expectation-disconfirmation theory. Needs satisfaction is the final stage of motivation process (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997) while attribute satisfaction is the process and antecedents of needs satisfaction (Shu & Crompton, 2003). For example, consumers' rational evaluations of the performance of a service or product affect the fulfilment of their needs, as well as needs satisfaction. This is similar to the notion that "satisfaction as an emotional response to an experience (Oliver, 1981) is more closely related to inner-directed or drive-based values rather than to outer-directed or cognitive dominant values" (Gnoth, 1997, p. 299). This drive-based (push) satisfaction is also called motivational or need satisfaction. This study treats goal or motivational congruence as the antecedent of satisfaction as an emotion in accordance to cognitive appraisal theory (authors, 2013).

#### *A model of delight and satisfaction*

Delight is defined as an aroused positive emotion coexisting with satisfaction (Alexander, 2012; Denning, 2011). The study of delight is an emerging research area in marketing and tourism and is important theoretically (Crotts, Pan, & Raschid, 2008; Loureiro & Ribeiro, 2014). The standard model of customer delight [abbreviated as ORV model after its authors (Oliver et al., 1997)], examines the effects of delight on WOM and repurchase intentions (see Figure 1). In this model, the only mechanism to activate delight is a surprise stimulus. The model is based on the dimension approach to emotions rather than CAT (please refer to Authors 2013 for the differences between these approaches). The model has been applied in the contexts of online retailers (Finn, 2006), rural lodgings (Loureiro, 2010), and B2C websites (Finn, 2012 903) to ascertain the impact of delight on loyalty intentions and to confirm that a surprise stimulus is an essential antecedent to delight of travellers (Crotts & Magnini, 2011). However, a number of alternative antecedents to delight apart from surprise leading to 'real joy' versus 'magic joy' have been discussed (Kumar, Olshavsky, & King, 2001), joy from personal involvement with an experience (St-James & Taylor, 2004), and delight because of previous knowledge and interest (Jones & Reynolds, 2006). There may be multiple paths leading to delight and some may be elicited without surprise (Ma, Gao, Scott, & Ding, 2013).

If delight can be elicited without surprise, then there is a consequent problem of distinguishing between satisfaction and delight in the ORV model (Alexander, 2010). In the ORV model, satisfaction is regarded as a function of disconfirmation and positive affect, while delight is a mix of surprise and positive affect. Delight is distinguished from satisfaction by the existence of surprise. However, in the situation where delight is elicited without surprise as suggested by other findings, then its separation from satisfaction is problematic. Some marketing papers treat delight as an extreme of satisfaction (Ngobo, 1999), while others consider them as two distinctive concepts (Finn, 2005). This is an important issue since without clear distinction between the concepts of delight and satisfaction their respective impacts on loyalty intentions are unclear. For example, the distinctive effect of delight on behavioral intentions was not found in a study in the context of a restaurant setting (Bowden & Dagger, 2011). However, by using CAT it is possible to distinguish delight from satisfaction based on their different subjective antecedents.

#### *Cognitive appraisal theory and appraisal dimensions*

Cognitive appraisal theory (CAT) was initially proposed by psychologists to understand subjective causes of the elicitation of a specific emotion for the sake of predicting and adjusting behaviors, especially negative ones (Lazarus, 2001; Roseman & Smith, 2001; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). CAT proposes that emotions are formed as a result of a process of appraisal of what an experience/stimulus can do for one's well-being (Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001). These appraisals are similar to an individual's interpretation of their experience, but have not been discussed significantly in the study of tourism experiences (Ritchie, Tung, & Ritchie, 2011). Once known, the behavior related to the emotion elicited by these appraisals can then be predicted and regulated by adjusting the appraisal dimension evaluations. The superiority of CAT in offering explanations to both antecedents and consequences of emotions has led a recommendation to apply this theory in marketing and tourism (Watson & Spence, 2007). However, CAT has been used in only a limited number of empirical studies (Hosany, 2012).

The investigation of emotions using CAT requires identification of appraisal dimensions used in a particular context (Roseman, 2001). The appraisal dimensions that have received a strong consensus as being able to differentiate emotional reactions are: goal congruence which predicts the valence of the emotion, and appraisals affecting emotional intensity called



goal significance including the dimensions of novelty, goal relevance (including goal importance and goal interest) and the degree of goal realisation (Johnson & Stewart, 2005; Scherer et al., 2001) (Ellsworth & Smith, 1988a; Lazarus, 2001; Manstead & Tetlock, 1989; Omdahl, 1995; Reizenzein, 1994; Roseman, 1991; Ruth, Brunel, & Otnes, 2002; Scherer, 1988; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Of course, the nature of the person's goal is also significant to the emotion elicited by the situation. If it is a helpful goal, the pursuit of which is good for the person's well-being, then the goal congruency evaluation is likely to elicit happiness as a positive emotion. However, if it is a goal that the person tends to avoid, then the goal congruence evaluation is more likely to generate relief as another kind of positive emotion. Therefore, we may classify goals into an appetitive or aversive category. Thus customer delight and satisfaction can also be conceptualized by the appraisal patterns on the set of related dimensions. Figure 2 illustrates the elicitation process of specific emotions based on some common appraisal dimensions.

#### *Conceptual framework and hypotheses*

The authors have developed a conceptual framework on which to base this study (see Figure 3). In this diagram, the circles represent constructs from the original ORV model, while the squares indicate the appraisal dimensions that are relevant to delight and satisfaction based on CAT. The boxes framed by both circles and squares represent constructs that overlap between CAT and the ORV model. The shaded circles representing arousal and positive affect are latent variables not related to CAT. Based on the conceptual framework, the corresponding hypotheses are as follows (Figure 4):

H1: Under the condition of goal congruence (appetitive goals) that determines the valence of emotions as positive affect, delight is a function of an appraisal of unexpectedness on the dimension of novelty (H1a); an appraisal of a high degree of goal realization on the dimension of goal realization (H1b); an appraisal of goal importance on the dimension of goal relevance (H1c); an appraisal of goal interest on the dimension of goal relevance (H1d).

H2: Under the condition that satisfaction is an emotion, satisfaction is a function of an appraisal of goal congruence (appetitive goals) on the dimension of goal congruence (H2a); an appraisal of a moderate/low degree of goal realization on the dimension of goal realization (H2b). While, satisfaction is insignificantly related to an appraisal of unexpectedness on the dimension of novelty (H2c); an appraisal of goal importance on the dimension of goal relevance (H2d); and an appraisal of goal interest on the dimension of goal relevance (H2e).

H3: Under the condition that delight and satisfaction are two distinctive constructs: delight is significantly related to behavioral intentions including intentions to engage in WOM and revisitation (H3a); Satisfaction is significantly related to behavioral intentions, including intentions to engage in WOM and revisitation (H3b); Delighted people significantly demonstrate higher degree of behavioral intentions including the intentions to engage in positive WOM and revisitation than satisfied not delighted people (H3c).

## **Methodology**

This research views the theme park in a hedonic service context wherein consumers pay for a unique consumption experience and evaluate the experience mostly on their emotive responses, and as a situation in which consumers use an experiential perspective to anticipate and experience consumption (Pikkemaat & Schuckert, 2007). Consumers form affective expectations about how consumption of the theme park makes them feel (Lin, Morais, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007), experience positive or negative emotions as a result of the consumption and these expectations, and evaluate the discrepancy between the experienced and anticipated emotions (Phillips & Baumgartner, 2002). As emotions have been shown to play an important role in the quality of people's experience in a theme park, the decision to select a theme park as the research context for a study on consumers' emotional responses is supported (Milman, 2009; Reiter, 2004)..

A survey instrument was designed in line with the quantitative research design to test the hypotheses noted above. Happy Valley, a theme park in Shanghai, was selected as the research site for this study based on the criteria of accessibility and affordability for data collection. The Happy Valley theme park is the most successful theme park brand in China, and has three sites in the most developed cities across China. Happy Valley Shanghai was opened on July 28, 2009. A survey questionnaire was designed based on previous research and subject to clarification of the constructs, operational definitions, variables, and measurement scales. A Chinese version of the questionnaire was then developed because Chinese people were the survey population. This was done through the translation/back translation method (Singh, 2007). A pre-test eliminated misunderstandings (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001) and improved content validity.

Two rounds of pilot tests were conducted to test the reliability and validity of the measurements of the variables (Finn, Elliott-White, & Walton, 2000). Internal reliability of

the constructs can be assessed using Cronbach's alpha and the validity of the scale assessed by determining convergent, discriminant and normality validity (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Based on the results of the pilot tests, the questionnaire was modified for the formal survey: an on-site interview questionnaire survey. Structural Equation Model (SEM) including Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (EFA & CFA), as well as a Wilcoxon Rank-sum analysis method were used to analyse the data.

## **Results**

In the formal survey that took place in the first week of March 2012, 700 respondents participated in the interview survey. After deleting cases with missing data, there were 645 valid sample cases. There were more female respondents than male, at 56.5% vs. 43.4%. However, the difference in percentage has been reduced compared with the two pilot tests. The age groups of 25-34 and 35-44 accounted for 72.4% of the total respondents, which complied with the visitor profiles of theme parks in terms of visitors' age as reported by a recent survey sponsored by International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) (Milman, 2009). The educational level of respondents was similar to the two pilot tests, in that most of them (93.3%) had high school or upper level of education. The comparatively well-educated visitors tended to have average or higher levels of household income. Almost half of respondents reported household income from 6000-10000RMB/month. This is average in the eastern part of China, which is a relatively well-developed and wealthier region. The percentage of lowest and highest income in the total was close, and accounted for the least parts. The distribution of household income was then close to the average (see Table 1).

From the two pilot tests, the measurement model of exogenous and endogenous variables were verified for the final survey. By using the EFA results of the first pilot test, the measurements were modified by clarifying the operationalization meanings of the constructs, merging and deleting some indicators and streamlining the scales. By using CFA, the strength of measurement was testified by examining convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity. Some minor changes were made by comparing fitness indices of competitive measurement models to gain the best measure scales for the final survey.

The reliability of each construct was confirmed before conducting CFA. The measure of each construct was reliable as the scores of Cronbach  $\alpha$  were above 0.8 for each construct. The

total  $\alpha$  score of the exogenous constructs was .884, and that of the endogenous constructs was 0.952. The convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model was verified by conducting CFA as well. The measurement model of exogenous variables was verified by excellent fitness indices:  $\chi^2(71)=103.271$  ( $P=0.008$ ), RMSEA=.027, NFI=.989, NNFI=.995, CFI=.996, GFI=.978. The factor loadings of each variable were larger than 0.7, with AVE scores above 0.7 and composite reliability above 0.8 which demonstrated strong convergent validity (see Table 2). The discriminant and nominality validity of constructs were also supported as the squared AVE scores were larger than correlation coefficients of pairs of constructs (see Table 3). The measurement model of endogenous variables were justified as well by accepted fitness indices:  $\chi^2(59)=232.398$  ( $P<.001$ ), RMSEA=.068, NFI=.980, NNFI=.980, CFI=.985, GFI=.947 (see Table 4). Discriminant and nomological validity was confirmed (see Table 5).

A model that combined antecedents of delight and satisfaction was specified and tested (see Figure 4). The fitness indices were excellent:  $\chi^2(174)=258.973$  ( $P<.001$ ), RMSEA=.028, NFI=.990, NNFI=.996, CFI=.997, GFI=.962. Delight was different from satisfaction in terms of the appraisal dimension of goal importance. Unexpectedness and goal interest impact on both delight and satisfaction. However, the regression coefficients presented in the model were not sufficient to distinguish delight and satisfaction in terms of the degrees of goal congruence, unexpectedness, and interest. In this case, a rank-sum test was conducted on the antecedents, that is, appetitive goal congruence, unexpectedness, and goal interest, so as to further define the differences between the groups: delighted vs. satisfied not delighted visitors.

Before conducting the rank-sum test, cases were divided into independent groups by the factor scores of the latent variables of delight and satisfaction. Four groups of respondents were obtained by cutting off samples by the mean scores of the two variables. There were 311 cases that fell into the category of both delighted and satisfied respondents, while 149 cases were found to be satisfied but not delighted. There were 25 cases that reported delight without satisfaction, which was theoretically unreasonable. The existence of these cases could be due to measurement error; however, the number of the cases accounted for only a very small part of the whole sample set. Finally, there were 160 cases that reported neither satisfaction nor delight. Two groups, both delighted and satisfied cases and satisfied without delight cases, were selected to compare their differences in terms of degree of appetitive goal congruence

(AGC), unexpectedness (UE), and goal interests (GIn) respectively. The two groups were independent of each other, which met the statistical requirements of rank-sum test.

The significant differences between two groups on the degrees of AGC, UE and GIn were then tested. Given the z value of the probability, the null hypothesis of the test was rejected. This indicated that two groups were different in degree of AGC ( $z=-4.6681$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Also, the level of unexpectedness and interest was significantly different between the two groups ( $z=-.3775$ ,  $p<.001$ ;  $z=-6.7418$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The group of delight respondents had higher degree of goal congruence ( $M_{CD}=250.165$ ,  $M_{CS}=189.453$ ), unexpectedness ( $M_{CD}=246.66$ ,  $M_{CS}=196.78$ ), and goal interest ( $M_{CD}=258.93$ ,  $M_{CS}=171.15$ ) than the group of satisfied respondents (see Table 6). As a result, delighted respondents were found to be different from satisfied respondents, in terms of their degree of appetitive goal congruence (goal realization), unexpectedness (surprising consumption), and goal interest. H1 and H2 were then supported.

The effects of delight and satisfaction on revisitation and recommendation intentions were estimated, together with the antecedents of delight and satisfaction. Model 2 established a complete model of antecedents and consequences of delight and satisfaction (see Figure 5). The fitness indices were:  $\chi^2(304)=602.835(P=0.0)$ ,  $RMSEA=.039$ ,  $NFI=.986$ ,  $NNFI=.992$ ,  $CFI=.993$ ,  $GFI=.934$ . The normed  $\chi^2$  was  $1.983 < 2$ , which suggested the model fit was excellent. Satisfaction impacted on revisitation and recommendation intentions significantly ( $\beta=.62$ ,  $t=13.310$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and ( $\beta=.56$ ,  $t=11.558$ ,  $p<.001$ ). However, delight was found to have an insignificant impact on the two intentions ( $\beta=.03$ ,  $t=.665$ ,  $p=0.695>.001$ ;  $\beta=.06$ ,  $t=1.222$ ,  $p=.344>.001$ ). The other insignificant path was goal importance to delight ( $\beta=0.01$ ,  $t=.031$ ,  $p=.828>.001$ ).

The respective impacts of delight on revisitation and recommendation intentions were examined by attenuating the effects of satisfaction on intentions, in order to further articulate the consequences of delight. First, by controlling the linear effect of satisfaction on the two intentions, delight became significantly related to revisitation intentions ( $\beta=.476$ ,  $t=11.956$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and recommendation intentions ( $\beta=.436$ ,  $t=10.831$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Second, quadratic effects of satisfaction on the two intentions were examined. However, the sample data did not support the quadratic effect of satisfaction on either revisitation intentions ( $\beta=.052$ ,  $t=1.427$ ,  $p=.161>.001$ ), or recommendation intentions ( $\beta=.035$ ,  $t=.936$ ,  $p=.355>.001$ ). To the

researchers' surprise, delight was found to have negative quadratic effects on both revisitation intentions ( $\beta=-.143$ ,  $t=-3.783$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and recommendation intentions ( $\beta=-.113$ ,  $t=-2.909$ ,  $p<.001$ ) (see tables 7 and 8). H3a and H3b was supported.

Afterwards, a rank sum test was undertaken to examine if the degree of the two intentions of delighted group was higher than those of satisfied but not delighted group. Delighted respondents were found to demonstrate higher level of revisitation intentions than satisfied respondents ( $M_{CD}=241.376$ ,  $M_{CS}=207.799$ ,  $z=-2.742$ ,  $p<.001$ ), while it was also the case for recommendation intentions of delighted and satisfied group ( $M_{CD}=242.542$ ,  $M_{CS}=205.366$ ,  $z=-.0440$ ,  $p<.001$ ) (see Table 9). Thus, H3c was supported.

### **Discussions and conclusions**

This study was designed to distinguish the emotions of satisfaction and delight by their differences in the appraisal patterns suggested by CAT, and to examine their respective impact on loyalty intentions. Satisfaction as an emotion is elicited when the experience outcome is congruent with the respondent's goals. Satisfied but not delighted visitors, compared to visitors who feel delighted, demonstrate a relatively lower degree of goal realization, and attach less goal importance to their experiences. However, surprising consumption and personal interest influence feelings of satisfaction and delight. Delight is differentiated from satisfaction in four ways under the condition of appetitive goal congruent: (1) visitors' degree of goal realization by the theme park experience; (2) their level of surprise; (3) their level of interest in theme park activities; and (4) whether visitors attach importance or special meanings to their theme park experiences. These differences in visitors' appraisals of their theme park experience account for feelings of delight or satisfaction. Different evaluations of these dimensions lead to different arousal levels and differentiate delight, an aroused positive affect, from satisfaction, a positive affect. Table 10 illustrates different appraisal patterns of delight and satisfaction on the set of appraisal dimensions discussed here.

The difference in the degree of goal realization between delighted people and people who are satisfied but not delighted suggests more intense emotions are likely to be elicited when expectations are exceeded rather than when the expectations are merely met. This supports studies on motivational satisfaction and needs satisfaction. The more people's motivations are realized, the more satisfied they feel (Kao, 2007; Kao, Patterson, Scott, & Li, 2008). The

direct impact of surprise on satisfaction found in this study is in disagreement with the ORV model. This supports other findings inconsistent with ORV, and also supports the notion that surprise influences both satisfaction and joy (Bergeron, Roy, & Fallu, 2008; Vanhamme, 2000). Again, these results challenge surprise as the only mechanism to separate delight from satisfaction.

No significant relationship is found between satisfaction and goal importance. This suggests that people who do not attach special meanings to their theme park experiences are more likely to generate the positive affect of satisfaction rather than delight when their expectations are met. Purchase importance is recognized as a moderator to the effect of satisfaction on loyalty intentions in different contexts (Chen & Tsai, 2008; Dong, Ding, Grewal, & Zhao, 2011; Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004; Martin, Martin, Stumbo, & Morrill, 2011; Nyer, 1997a; Xue & Zhou, 2011; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). This means that the more important a visitor perceives their consumption experiences to be, the more loyal to products and services these visitors will become under the condition of satisfaction. The current results establish no connection between importance and satisfaction, but do find a link between importance and delight. The effect of importance on loyalty intentions is mediated by delight, when the direct impact of delight on intentions is established. Therefore, this finding argues that goal importance acts on loyalty intentions, not by the path of satisfaction, but rather through delight, which is an emotional response.

The significant effect of interest on satisfaction is also established. Prior findings have established a relationship between interest and satisfaction; for example, consumer's interest in a retailer moderates the effect of satisfaction on their WOM and re-patronage intentions (Jones & Reynolds, 2006; Jones & Suh, 2000). People who are interested in and have ego involvement with a leisure activity, such as diving (Ince & Bowen, 2011), and visiting theme parks and dining out (Havitz & Mannell, 2005; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; McQuarrie & Munson, 1987), are more likely to experience flow and optimal experiences and generate pleasurable feelings from their experiences (Brown, Havitz, & Getz, 2006; Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Novak, Huffman, & Duhachek, 2003). In the current study, an individual's interest in the experience influences both delight and satisfaction, similar to surprise stimuli.

The current study extends previous literature by suggesting commonalities and differences between delight and satisfaction in terms of subjective antecedents. The elicitation of delight

and satisfaction share some common appraisal dimensions, and differences on these dimensions predict delight or satisfaction. However, the two concepts may be considered to overlap to some extent as shown in Figure 7. This figure is a three-dimensional diagram that integrates the two dimensions suggested by ORV based on the dimension approach: valence (positive), arousal (surprising), and a third dimension developed and tested in this thesis based on CAT: the appraisal dimension affecting emotional intensity. The dimension of goal congruence and novelty in CAT align with the valence and arousal dimensions of the ORV model.

The impacts of delight on revisitation and recommendation intentions are established by two lines of evidence. First, in this study, delight is found to influence behavioral intentions in parallel to the linear effect of satisfaction. Delight and satisfaction are moderately correlated, and most of the variance in behavioral intentions is explained by satisfaction and not by delight. However, the impact of delight on loyalty intentions becomes significant through altering the linear effect of satisfaction on intentions. Previous studies have adopted this same schemata to establish the relationship between delight and behavioral intentions by controlling the linear and nonlinear effect of satisfaction on intentions (Finn, 2005, 2012). The non-linear effects of satisfaction on both revisitation and recommendation intentions are not found in this study, because the pattern of satisfaction impact on behavioral intentions may vary in product categories and service contexts (Dong et al., 2011). The second line of evidence regarding the consequence of delight on intentions is the variances in the level of intentions between delight and non-delight groups. Delighted visitors show higher levels of revisitation and recommendation intentions than the group of satisfied but not delighted respondents. Therefore, this research supports the conclusion that delight is an antecedent of loyalty intentions in parallel with satisfaction. These results also support the claims of 'broaden-and-build' theory (Fredrickson, 2001, 2004) that behavioral intentions are the consequences of emotions that support the continuing pursuit of a successful goal.

Unexpectedly, delight is also found to have a negative quadratic effect on intentions. In other words, an increase in the level of delight does not translate to a corresponding proportional rise in loyalty intentions for theme park visitors. This finding is similar to a decreasing effect of the higher satisfaction levels on intentions (Finn, 2012; Ngobo, 1999) which indicates the effect of delight on intentions may reach a ceiling that prohibits further enhancement. Quadratic effect of delight on behavioural intentions was also found among



repeated guests in a very recent study on impacts of delight on attitude loyalty (Kim, Knutson, & Vogt, 2014). Delight is therefore better treated as a state superior to satisfaction, and not part of a continuous emotional spectrum that has a linear positive impact on loyalty. Once delight is elicited, an emotional bond with the experience is established and loyalty intentions are developed. However, extreme delight does not necessarily lead to higher loyalty intentions. Delighted serves as a necessary condition for increasing behavioral intentions, but is not sufficient in itself.

For the practitioners, this study reconfirms who are more likely to be delighted or satisfied by pleasure-driven consumption experiences, and that it is important and necessary for managers to pursue people's emotional responses together with cognitive evaluations to ensure WOM advertising and revisitation. Based on our finding, people who are likely to be delighted are those who attached importance to, interests into or attention to the experience, while satisfied customers are those who have little interest or involvement in the consumption. The different emotional outcomes actually can be predicted by the characteristics of goals, as well as the behaviours related to the goals. Loureiro et al. (2014) find out very recently a frequent user of retailers or a utilitarian value oriented customer are more likely to feel satisfied but not delighted. Our finding reconciles their arguments by indicating the characteristics of the goals among frequent users as less involved. In all, the objective of management, especially business for hedonic consumption is to evoke positive emotions or positively excite the consumer, in order to bring about favorable conduct towards the products and services of the organization. Thus, emotions may constitute an interesting measurement of the evaluation on experience together with satisfaction.

There are some limitations to this study that suggest avenues for further research on consumption emotions. This research examined the antecedents and consequences of delight and satisfaction only in the context of theme parks, and only among Chinese visitors. To test its general significance, it is necessary to apply the model in other hedonic contexts such as restaurants, recreational businesses, in different types of theme parks, and in different cultural populations. Delight is found to have a negative quadratic impact on behavioral intentions in this sample data, which needs further exploration in other contexts. It would be useful to examine the antecedents of negative emotions such as anger/disgust/outrage to see if appraisal dimensions relevant to emotional intensity operate to distinguish these intense

negative emotions from dissatisfaction. The impact of appraisal dimensions and negative surprising stimulation may therefore require further study using appraisal dimensions.

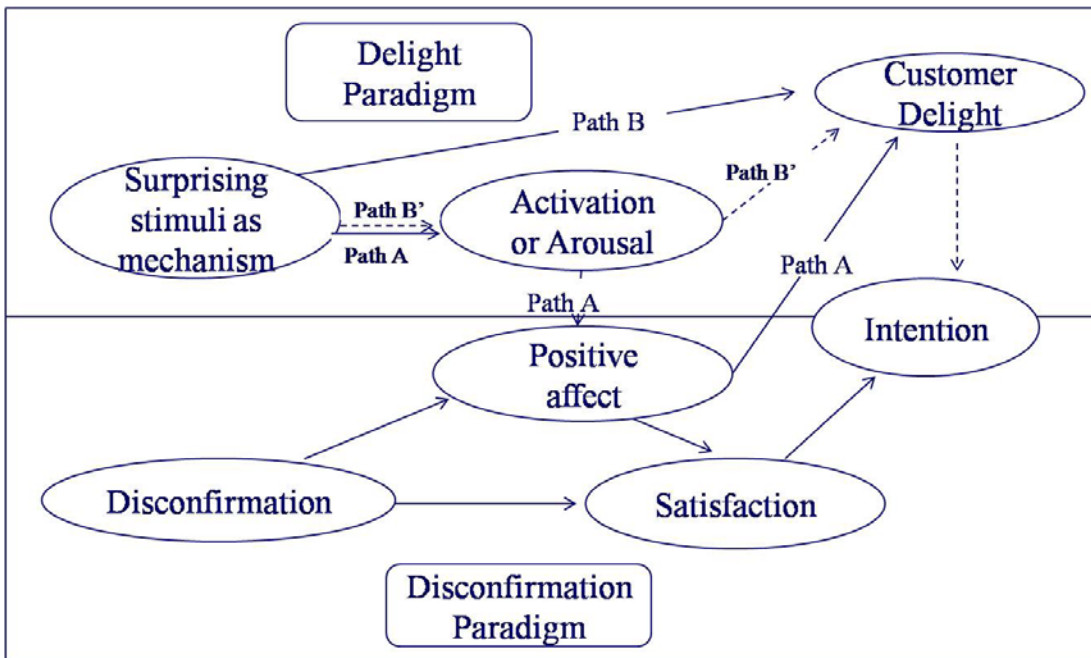


Figure: 1 ORV model

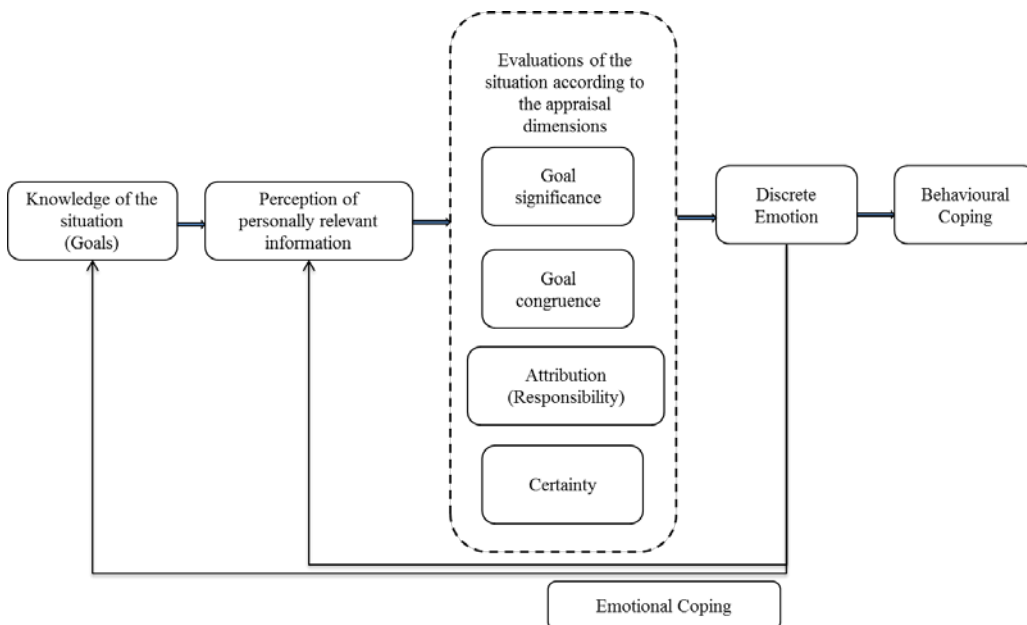
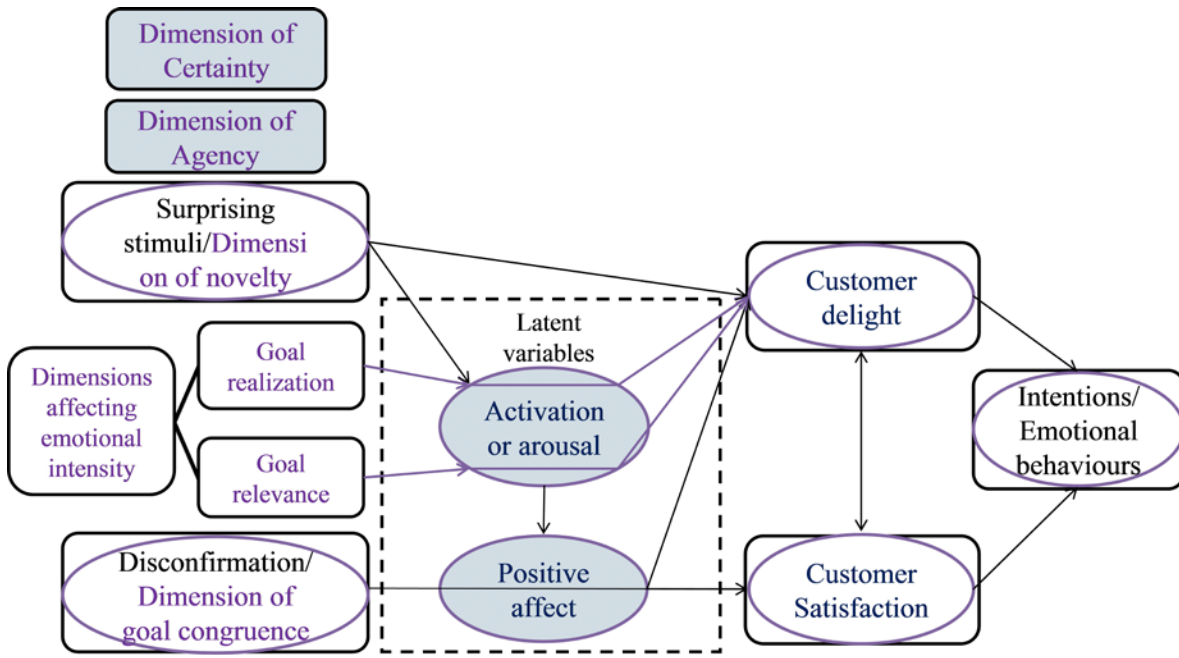
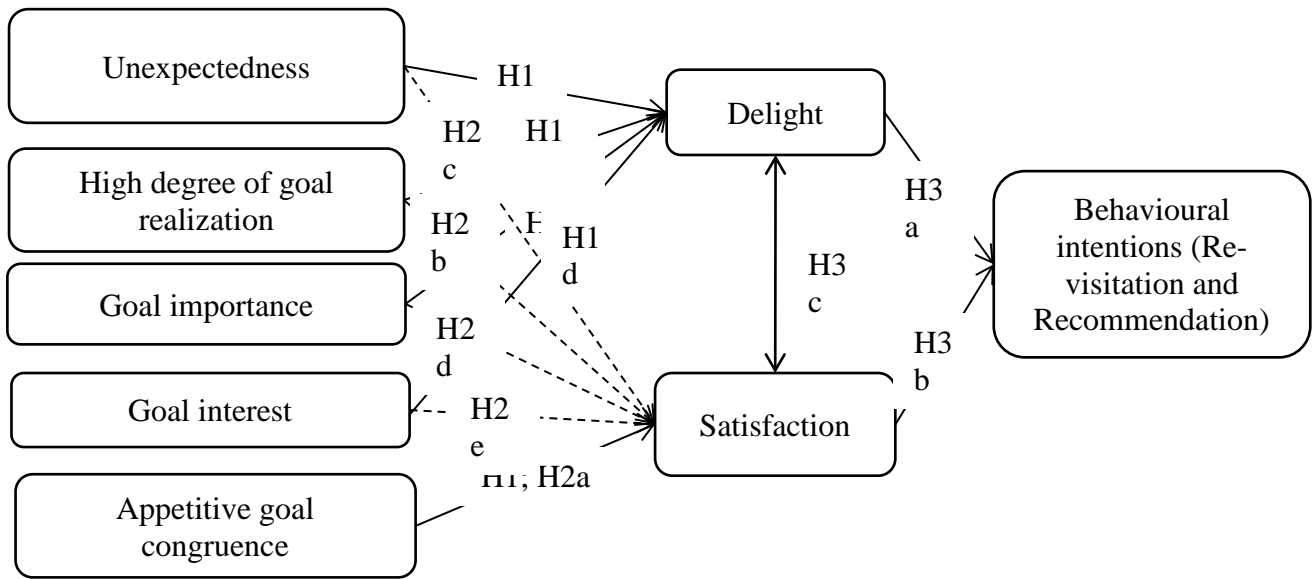


Figure 2 The CAT process of the elicitation of emotions (Johnson & Stewart, 2005)



**Figure 3** The conceptual framework based on CAT and the ORV model



**Figure 4:** The hypotheses of the study

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the formal test

Demographic characteristics of respondents	Frequency	Percent%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	365	56.6
Male	280	43.4
<b>Age</b>		
18-24	91	14.1
25-34	297	46.0
35-44	170	26.4
45-54	69	10.7
55 and above	18	2.8
<b>Education</b>		
Below high school	43	6.7
High school	158	24.5
Associate degree or TAFE graduate	209	32.4
Bachelor degree	227	35.2
Postgraduate	8	1.2
<b>Household Income RMB/month</b>		
Below 3000	69	10.7
3000-6000	103	16.0
6000-10000	323	50.1
10000-15000	93	14.4
15000 above	57	8.8
Total	645	100

\*1.0AUD≈ 6.5RMB Average household income of Shanghai residents /month=RMB8000; Shanghai Municipal Government Annually Report, 2011

Table 2 Convergent validity of endogenous constructs in formal survey

Factors	Standardized loadings	AVE	Composite R
Appetitive goal congruence (AGC) $\alpha=.893$		.747	.898
outcome conduciveness/X1	.749		
motive congruence/X2	.915		
intrinsic pleasantness/X3	.918		
Unexpectedness (UE) $\alpha=.950$		0.870	.952
feel surprised/X4	.917		
feel astonished/X5	.988		
unexpectedness/X6	.890		
Goal relevance & importance (GIm) $\alpha=.965$		.875	0.966
matters to me/X7	.948		
means a lot to me/X8	.949		
important to me/X9	.906		
relevant to me /X10	.938		
goal interest(GIn) $\alpha=.933$		.781	.934
fun-not fun /X10	.835		
appealing-unappealing /X11	.899		
boring-interesting /X12	.893		
attention devoted/X13	.906		

Table 3 Nomological validity and discriminant validity of exogenous constructs

	AGC	UE	GIm	GIn
AGC	0.864			
UE	.248	0.935		
GIm	.251	.227	0.884	
GIn	.602	.270	.292	0.933

The scores in diagonal line means the square root of AVE  $p < .001$

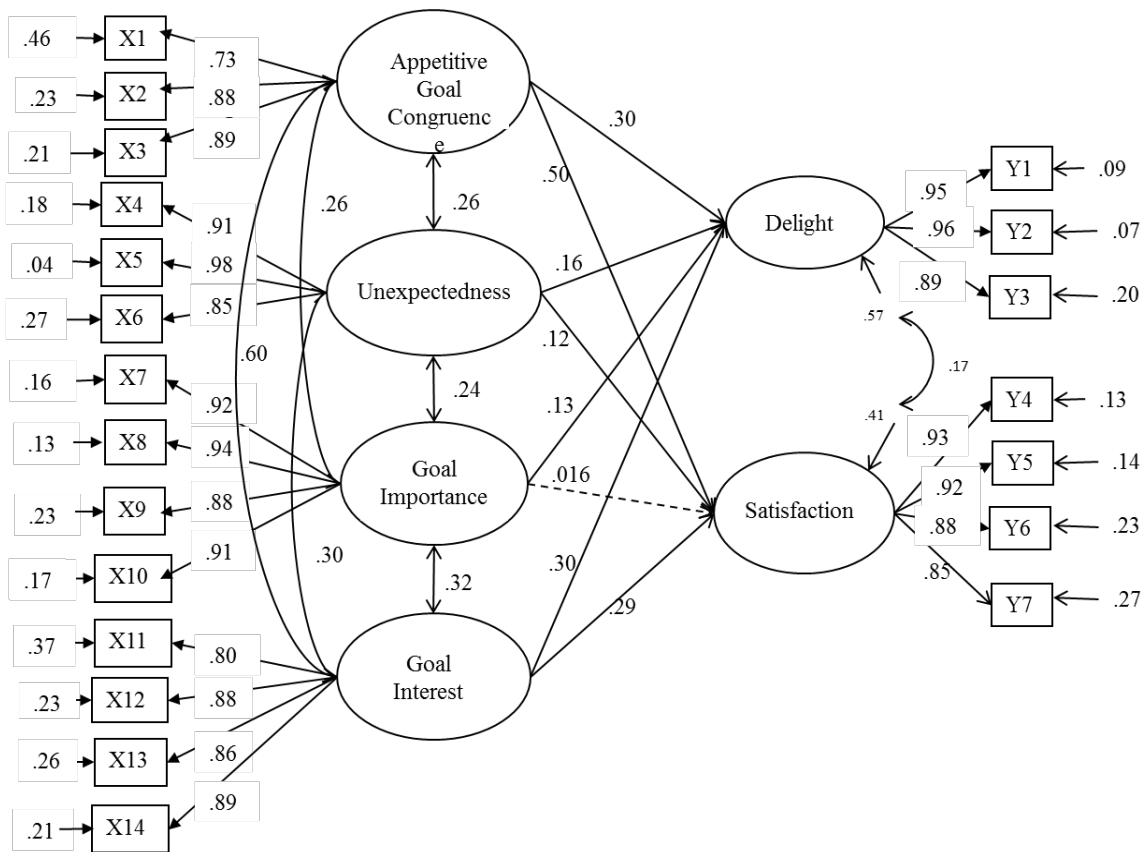
Table 4 Convergent validity of endogenous constructs in formal survey

Factors	Standardize d loadings	AVE	Compo site R
Customer delight (CD) $\alpha = .961$		.895	.962
feel elated during the visit/Y1	.962		
feel enthusiastic during the visit/Y2	.973		
feel excited during the visit/Y3	.901		
Satisfaction as an emotion (CS) $\alpha = .956$		.849	.958
The experience was satisfying to me/Y4	.948		
I'm happy with the experience /Y5	.943		
The experience was as good as I expected /Y6	.901		
I felt comfortable with the experience /Y7	.893		
Re-visitation intentions (BI-Rev) $\alpha = .964$		.904	.966
I will revisit the park in the future/Y8	.933		
I'm likely to buy the multi-entrance ticket to the park/Y9	.981		
The park would be prior choice if I went to a theme park again/Y10	.938		
Recommendation intentions (BI-Rec) $\alpha = .962$		.901	.964
I will recommend the park to someone else/Y11	.922		
I'm likely to talk about how happy the experience was to others/Y12	.977		
I would mention the park if someone else wanted to go a theme park/Y13	.947		

Table 5 Nomological validity and discriminant validity of endogenous constructs

	CD	CS	BI-Rev	BI-Rec
CD	.946			
CS	.661	.922		
BI-Rev	.472	.702	.951	
BI-Rec	.433	.638	.747	.949

The scores in diagonal line means the square root of AVE  $P < .001$



**Figure 5 The combination of results of H1 and H2**

**Table 6 The rank-sum results of delighted and satisfied groups**

	Groups	Number of cases	Mean Score	Z Score	Significance
Factor_AG	Delighted	311	250.165	-4.6681	<.001
	Satisfied	149	189.453		
Factore_UE	Delighted	311	246.66	-3.775	<.001
	Satisfied	149	196.78		
Factor_GIn	Delighted	311	258.932	-6.7418	<.001
	Satisfied	149	171.154		

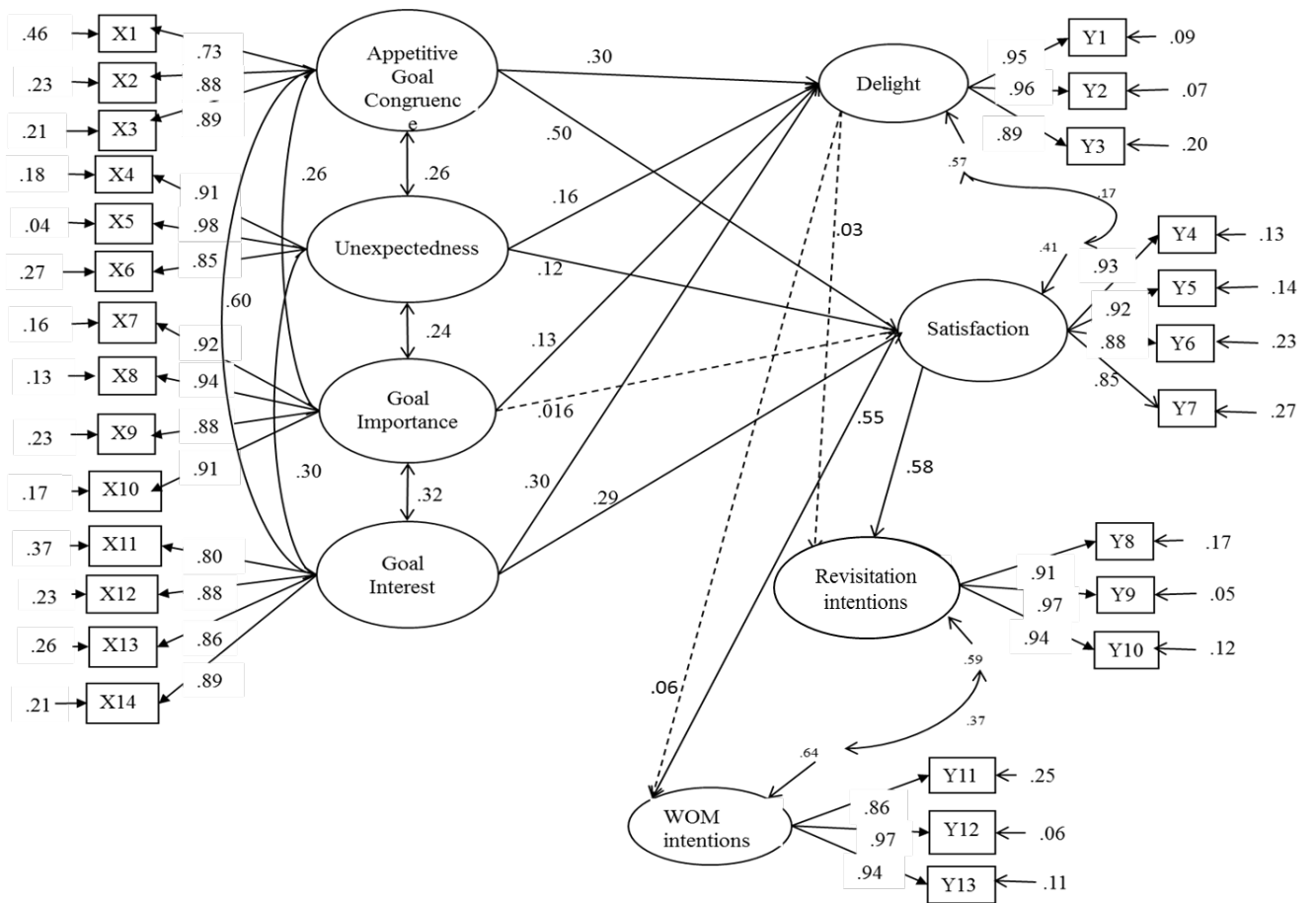


Figure 6: Appraisal antecedents and behavioral consequences of CD and CS

Table 7 The linear and non-linear effects of delight and satisfaction on revisitation intentions

BI-Rev	CD	CS	Quadratic
<b>Linear</b>			
$b_i$	0.479	-0.015	
t value	<b>11.956</b>	-0.421	
Beta ( $\beta$ )	<b>0.476</b>	-0.016	
<b>Linear and CD quadratic</b>			
$b_i$	0.424	-0.011	-0.012
t value	10.034	-0.325	<b>-3.783</b>
Beta	0.418	-0.012	<b>-0.143</b>
<b>Linear and CS quadratic</b>			
$b_i$	0.478	-0.024	0.003
t value	11.943	-0.688	<b>1.427</b>
Beta ( $\beta$ )	0.475	-0.027	<b>0.052</b>



Table 8 The linear and non-linear effects of delight and satisfaction on recommendation intentions

BI-Rec	CD	CS	Quadratic
<b>Linear</b>			
b <sub>i</sub>	0.372	-0.01	
t value	<b>10.813</b>	-0.332	
Beta	<b>0.436</b>	-0.03	
<b>Linear and CD quadratic</b>			
b <sub>i</sub>	0.335	-0.008	-0.008
t value	9.162	-0.256	<b>-2.909</b>
Beta	0.389	-0.01	<b>-0.113</b>
<b>Linear and CS quadratic</b>			
b <sub>i</sub>	0.371	-0.016	0.002
t value	10.791	-0.506	<b>0.936</b>
Beta	0.435	-0.02	<b>0.035</b>

Table 9 Rank sum results of delighted and satisfied groups on behavioral intentions

	Groups	Mean Score	Z Score	Significance
Factor_BI-Rev	Delighted	241.376206	-2.742	<.001
	Satisfied	207.798658		
Factor_BI-Rec	Delighted	242.541801	-3.440	<.001
	Satisfied	205.365772		

Table 10 Appraisal patterns of delight and satisfaction on the set of appraisal dimensions

Appraisal dimensions		Appraisal pattern of delight	Appraisal pattern of satisfaction	Variances
Novelty		Highly unexpected	Moderately or low expected	Degree
Dimensions affecting emotional intensity	Goal realization	High	Low	Degree
	Goal importance	Goal important	Goal unimportant or indifferent	Present/Absent
	Goal interest	High interest	Moderate or low interest	Degree
Goal congruence		Appetitive goal congruent	Appetitive goal congruent	Same

Summarized by the author

The dimension affecting emotional intensity  
(goal relevance & realization) in CAT

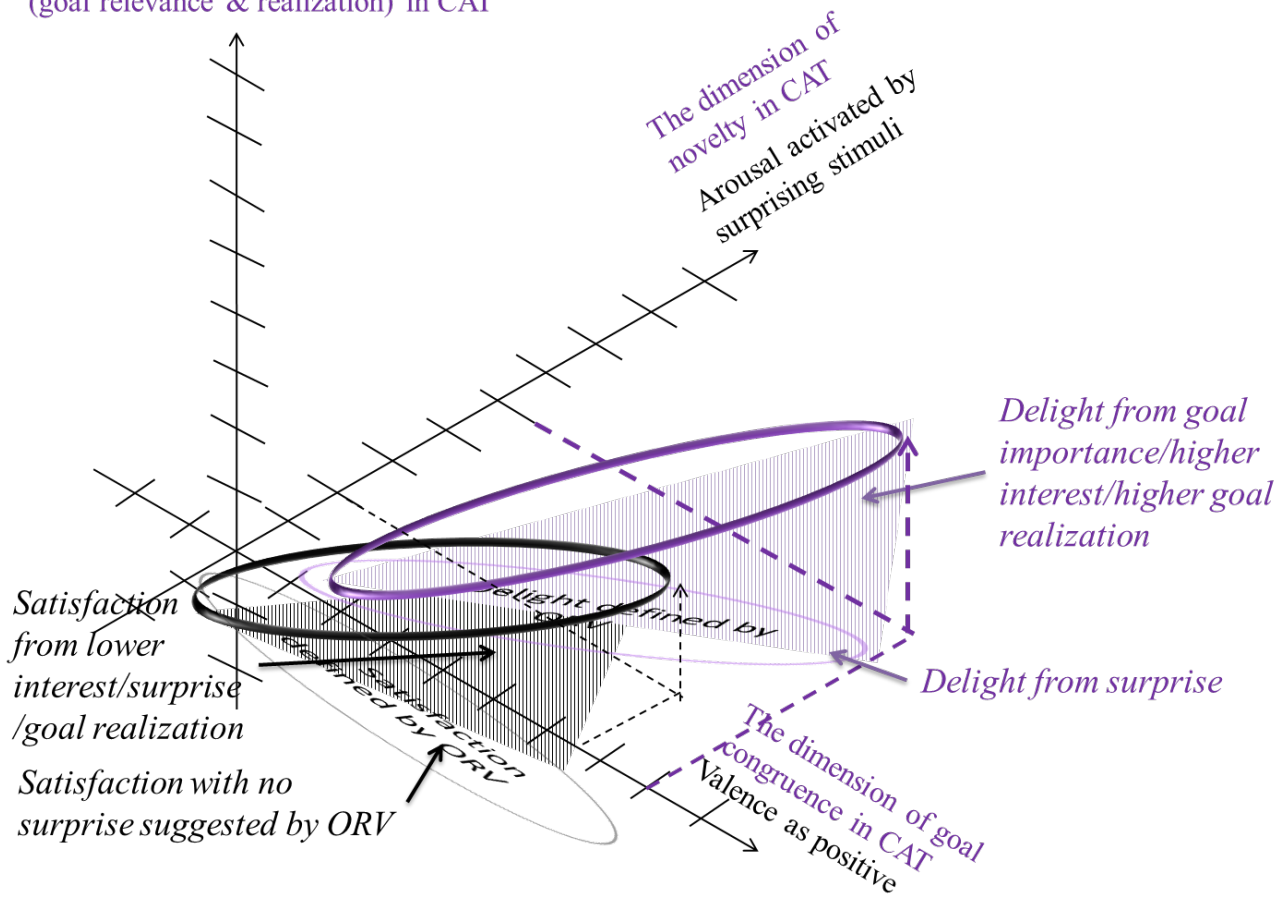


Figure 7 A distinctions between delight and satisfaction in a 3D model

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