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**Experience as a competitive advantage
in the movie theatre industry**

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Index

Introduction	4
Acknowledgments	6
Theoretical Background	7
Experience marketing and consumer experience	7
Designing the movie going experience.....	12
The Italian market of movie theatres	17
Movie-Going Experience: Factor's definition	20
The case study analysis.....	20
<i>Palazzo del cinema Anteo</i>	21
<i>Cinema Arcadia di Melzo</i>	24
<i>Cinema Bianchini</i>	27
The factors of movie-going experience	30
Methodology.....	39
Introduction.....	39
Sampling.....	40
The interview process.....	41
Gathering data.....	44
The analysis process	46
Results and Analysis.....	48
Introduction.....	48
Individual Factors Results.....	48
<i>Technology</i>	48
<i>Comfort</i>	50
<i>Aesthetics Screening Room and Movie Theatre</i>	52
<i>Spaces</i>	54
<i>Dressing</i>	57
<i>Aggregation Spaces</i>	58
<i>Staff</i>	60
<i>Events</i>	62
<i>Services</i>	64
<i>Memorabilia</i>	66
Category Analysis	68
<i>Age</i>	68
<i>Job</i>	72
<i>Gender</i>	74

<i>Attendance</i>	75
<i>With Whom</i>	77
Cross-data Factor Analysis.....	80
Types of consumers: a hypothetical model.....	87
Discussion and Conclusion	91
Introduction.....	91
Discussion and conclusion.....	91
Managerial Implications.....	97
Limitations and further research opportunities	98
Graphs, Figures and Tables	100
Graphs.....	100
Figures.....	100
Tables.....	101
Bibliography and Sitography	102
Sitography.....	105

Introduction

The base of this study regards the exploration of the movie-going experience as a possible competitive advantage in the Italian market for movie consumption. In particular, it focuses on a better understanding of the phenomenon by analyzing the level of importance and the motivations behind the consumer behavior on the experiential side of movie-going, giving important tools to movie theatres for crafting a better consumer experience and gain a loyal customer-base. The motivations that moved the researcher towards this direction of study refer to the difficult situation that movie theatres are facing now, with new competitors chipping away customers from the cinematographer and the pandemic situation just accelerating the process of shifting habits of consumers, more interested on the home video experience. The recent shrink of the theatrical distribution window was another step towards the erosion of the exclusive right of new movies screening at the cinema, with many streaming services already offering new content without giving it a theatrical release, and this situation calls for a new evolution step of theatres for their survival. The researcher sees in the movie-going experience the main competitive advantage that the movie theatre can exploit for his survival and to which they should focus in order to adapt to the new movie watching market, already shaped by the arrival of streaming services. Successful examples can be found internationally, such as the American Alamo Drafthouse or the Grand Rex of Paris, but also in Italy offers examples such as Palazzo del Cinema Anteo, Cinema Arcadia of Melzo or The Rocky Horror Picture show in Cinema Mexico in Milan. These movie theatres with their offer tailored to specific types of movie-going experiences they built a loyal customer base that enjoy attending their screenings regardless the disruptions in the market of movie going experiences.

In order to support this evolution, offering tools and help to the movie theatres, the objective of this study is to understand if the Italian market is interested in the movie-experience as main focus of their movie watching and which experiential factors that movie theatres can offer are defined more important by the Italian movie consumer. This will help in the understanding of the phenomenon and explain in which way the movie-going experience can be used as a competitive advantage to create a loyal customer base. This objective is achieved by the use of qualitative interviews, which permit the research to understand not only the level of importance of pre-determined experiential factors, but also the motivations behind their

answers in order to have a general view of the consumer relationship with the movie-going experience.

The study is divided in five different chapters. The first one defines the literature related to the experiential marketing and consumer experience, the base subject of the thesis, followed by the literature regarding the design of experience in movie contexts, and an overview of the movie distribution system in the Italian market. The second chapter instead focus on the definition of the experiential factors that will be presented during the interviews to the sample, thanks to a brief analysis of three heterogeneous examples of movie theatres that use, as a competitive advantage, the movie-going experience. Once defined the experiential factors, the third chapter explains the methodology and analysis with which the study is conducted, which is comprised by semi-structured interviews and a qualitative analysis regarding the motivations of the answers, while the fourth concerns the presentations of the results of the interviews, taking in account both the quantitative and the qualitative data concerned the movie-going experience. In the last chapter the discussion of the results and the conclusion are drawn, followed by the managerial implications, the limitation of the study and the opportunities for further research.

Thanks to this study, it was possible to find if the movie consumer is interested in the experiential movie consumption and which factors are considered the most important for their consumer experience in a movie theatre. The qualitative results of the interviews gave also important insights in how the features mentioned are modifying the consumers experience, offering a tool for movie theatres that want to use these features as competitive advantages.

Acknowledgments

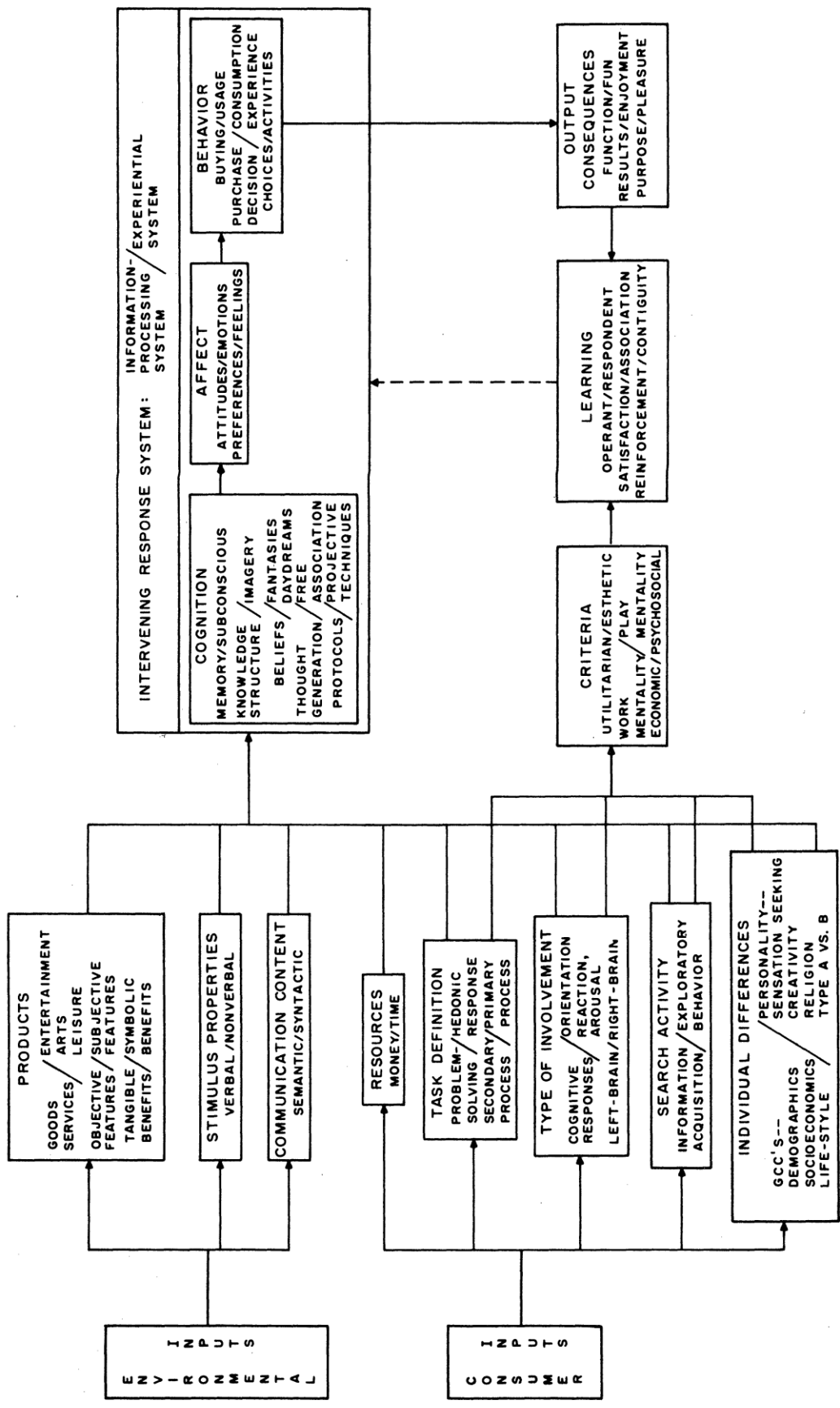
My heartfelt thanks go to my family, that supported me during all my period of studies; to my partner that gave me the strength and support in completing this research; to my friends which gave me some useful advices; to the staff of Spazio Cinema, Arcadia Cinema and Cinema Bianchini for the help they provided for the research; to all the people that gave their availability for the interviews, which without their help this research would not be completed.

Theoretical Background

Experience marketing and consumer experience

Although some traces of experience marketing can be found in the prior literature, the first researchers that brought attention to the topic were Holbrook and Hirschman that advocate for a deeper understanding of the Hedonic Consumption (Holbrook Hirschman, 1982). They propose a change in focus towards the experience that comes from the consumption and in their paper they defined some proposition related to the experiential perspective. These propositions focus on the importance of emotional desires in contrast with utilitarian motives in the choice of products in some instances and propose that hedonic consumption is tied to imaginative construction of reality. This paved the way to the thinking of entertainment as a product which choice is controlled by emotional and subjective motives that may fulfill a desire of escaping the reality, in contrast with the rationality that was the foundation of the consumer behavior in the prior literature. This perspective is reinforced by their paper on the 3 "Fs" (Holbrook Hirschman, 1982) in which Holbrook and Hirschman defined a model for the experiential consumption in contrast with the rational one. In the model new concepts are highlighted in the consumer behavior for experiential products, such as the symbolic meaning and its subjective features, the non-verbal stimuli and the syntax of the communication. This is connected also to the motives that are driving the consumer in the choice of experiential products, more focused on the experience itself than the utilitarian objective of the consumption, in search for fun, amusement, fantasy, arousal, sensory stimulus and enjoyment. From this model Holbrook and Hirschman derived the 3 "Fs", Fantasies, Feeling and Fun, as the experiential aspects of the consumer consumption.

FIGURE
 CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE INFORMATION-PROCESSING AND EXPERIENTIAL VIEWS
 OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR



NOTE: The slash marks indicate a comparison between the information-processing view (left side) and the experiential perspective (right side).

Figure 1: Holbrook and Hirschman model (1982)

The concept of experience marketing has evolved then from the 3Fs theorized by Holbrook and Hirschman to the 4 Es of Pine and Gilmore, that in their works on the experience economy they define as Entertaining, Esthetic, Educational and Escapist (Pine Gilmore, 1998, 1999). In their theory they see an evolution of the objects of consumption from commodities to goods to services and now promoting the advent of the experiences as the new economic actor in the frame. The characteristics changes from fungible and natural (commodities) to tangible and standardized (goods), to intangible and customized (services) and in the end to memorable and personal (experiences), applying this scheme also to the relationship between producer and consumer, defining the customer of this new era as a guest while the producer as a stager. They then define the 4 realms of experiences, the 4 Es, in a scheme that distinguish them by the amount of absorption/immersion and the active/passive role of the consumer. These concepts can be used by businesses in order to make “entertainment for customers, by allowing them to escape from reality, by educating them and giving them aesthetic objects or places to see” (Pine Gilmore, 1998), giving companies a way to exploit the emotions related to the consumption of experiential-based products.

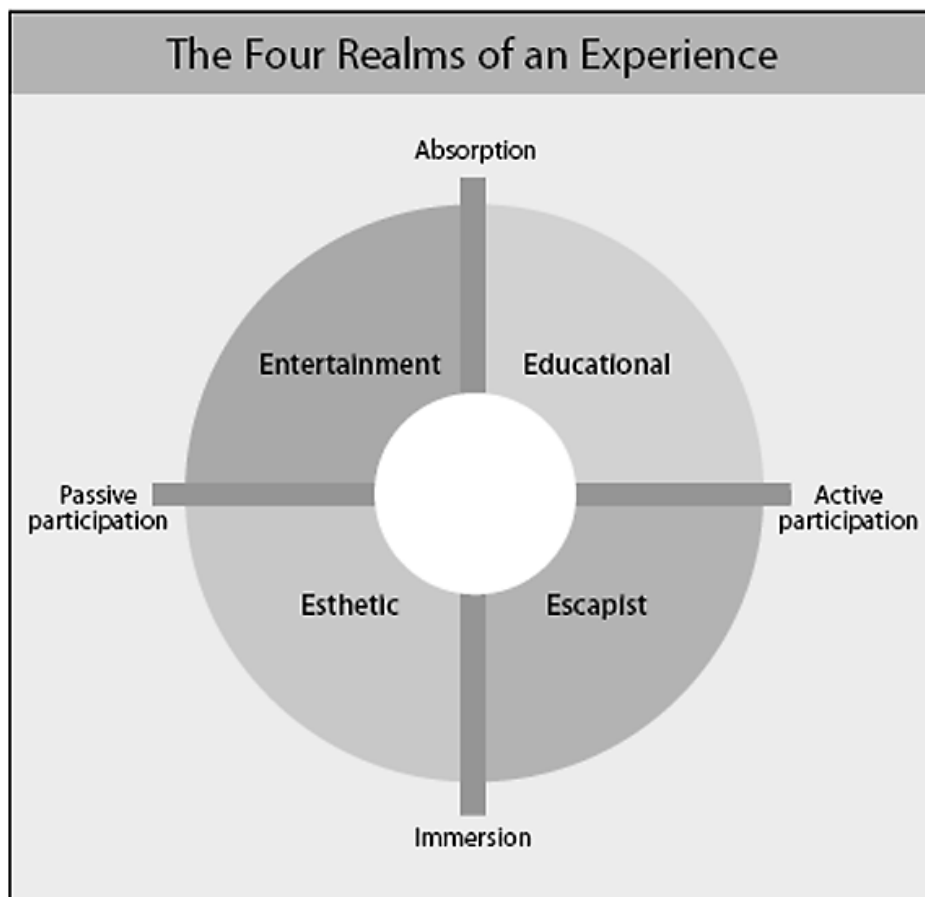


Figure 2: The 4 Es model by Pine and Gilmore (1998)

Drawing upon the works of Holbrook and Hirschman, Schmitt contributed to the importance of experience marketing by defining the concept of SEM and Ex-Pros (Schmitt, 1999). SEM are Strategic Experiential Modules that are the aspects of experience with which marketing can work in order to enhance the experiences of the consumers and to elicit emotional responses to products. The researcher defines 5 different SEMs, that are already similar to the 3 “Fs” theorized by Holbrook and Hirschman (Holbrook, 2000): Sense, Feel, Think, Act, Relate, with Schmitt advocating for a synergy and combination of all of them for a holistic and stronger effect. In order for the marketing to work with these modules Schmitt talks about the concept of Ex-Pros, or Experience Providers, that can be compared to the tools of the marketing mix, such as products, identities, communications, environment, people, websites and cobranding. Selecting the right Ex-Pros can provide the stimulus for the customer experiences that we want them to have.

Many other research started to give importance to consumer experience in different industries and sectors, from branding (Filser, 2002, Gentile et al., 2007, Brakus et al., 2009) to retail (Arnold et al., 2005, Verhoef et al., 2009, Grewal et al., 2009), from services (Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010) to cultural fields (Oliver et al., 1997, Petkus, 2004) and tourism (Leighton, 2007), but another important contribution on the experience concept comes from the researches and works of Cova and Carù that, after revisiting the idea of consumption experience, provide more material on the topic of consumer immersion in an experiential context (Carù and Cova, 2003, 2006, 2007). Their analysis starts from a reconsideration of the subject of consuming experience in which they make a distinction between consuming experience and consumer experience, starting their argument from the flow concept of Csikzentmihalyi (1997, 2000) and the 4 phases of consumption experience (Pre-consumption, Purchase, Core Consumption and Remembered Consumption or Nostalgia) defined by Arnould et al (2002): consumers pass through many experiences during their daily life and only the ones which requires maximum skills and maximum challenge can be defined as flow experiences or peak experiences. Challenging the North America idea by which every experience must be memorable and extraordinary, as defined by Pine and Gilmore (1998, 1999), Cova and Carù define our daily life as a mix of intense or flow experiences and less intense or ordinary experiences, the latter not being under control of the market but up to a more personal consuming experience (Carù and Cova, 2003). This dichotomy defines the difference between consumer experience, that happen when the consumer has a relation with the market and then can be controlled by the companies, and consuming experience in which

the consumer has non-market interactions with products or services. With this idea in mind the researchers define our daily life as a continuum of experiences in which experiential marketing get to work with the ones related to the consumer experience realm without forgetting about the more mundane and not intense consuming experiences.

Following the works of these researchers, many others provided definitions for the term of marketing experience: Snaker and Zadjam define it as “new way by making the customers living the experience through the creation of the emotions with the goal of creating them in order to enjoy the experience” (Snaker Zadjam, 2010); Hauser focus more on a practical definition defining experiential marketing as actual customer experiences with brand/product/service that drive sales and increase brand image and awareness (Hauser, 2011); Yuan and Wu put the accent on the experiential marketing as a marketing tactic, designed by a business to stage the entire physical environment and the operational processes for its customer experience (Yuan Wu, 2008). With all these definitions Same (2012) tried to make order and eliminate the confusion around the distinction between Experience marketing and Experiential marketing, defining the first as “the strategic marketing of relevant experiences” while the second as “the tactical tool that explains how to do marketing experientially” (Same, 2012), a distinction similar to the Schmitt concepts of SEMs and Ex-Pros.

The confusion around the term experience is affecting also the literature regarding consumption experience and the many different way it was addressed by researchers, from service experience (Vazquez et al., 2009) to shopping experience (Arnold et al., 2005), from brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009) to aesthetic experience (Charters and Pettigrew, 2005). Chaney et al. (2018) expose the problem related to the many articles referring to consumption experience and their indecision on treating it as a cognitive process (Novak et al., 2000, Brakus et al., 2009) or affective process (Menon and Kahn, 2002), but gives a possible solution by defining two different perspectives of analysis for further research regarding the experience topic: the zoom-out perspective takes in account the concept of consumption experience at a macro-level, where it is decontextualized and give possibility to define a general and unified framework, while a zoom-in perspective refers to analyzing the consumption experience in specific contexts at a micro-level (Chaney et al., 2008).

Even with all this confusion, it remains sure the importance given to the role of the emotions in the consumer choice of products and the experience can be seen as a marketing perspective worthy of a try in businesses that focus on experience-based products.

Designing the movie going experience

The adjective cultural, by definition (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020), is attached to whichever product is related to art, theatre, literature, music and more. Movies, seen as a form of art, can be considered then as cultural products that can be marketed to potential consumers.

Marketing of cultural products is seen as similar but not the same as the marketing of other types of products because it focuses more on other aspects than the products itself: Diggle define it as the distribution and the diffusion of a product with the best economical results possible, giving marketing the role of working with other variables than the product itself (Diggle, 1986). Colbert defines the cultural product as made by 4 different components: the product, the spin-off products, the connected services and the consumer experience (Colbert, 2009). Movies, since they are defined as cultural products, can be split into these variables and marketing, following the idea of the movie product as something as given, work with the components different from the product itself. When focusing on the last variable it is possible to talk about marketing of the movie experience, that takes in account hedonistic and affective processes that consumers have when they make contact with the cultural product (Yannik St James, 2009). This idea corroborates the literature about Experience marketing that put the accent on the emotional and subjective aspects that determine the choice of the consumers in experience-based products.

Movie theatres are theatres in which people pay to watch movies (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020), so they are providers of a cultural experience-based product and they are subjected to the same constrains and factors when a consumer have to decide which experiential product are they going to consume. In his works Casetti define the concept of filmic experience as a “particular modality through which the cinematographic institution allows the spectator to perceive a film and to re-elaborate the perception into knowledge and competence” (Casetti, 2007), and divides his components in device, images, observer, social encounter and payment. Importance is given then to the apparatus by which the experience is lived by the consumer, the movie theatre, which gives spatial definition to the filmic experience, while the “mental” definition is left to the “frame” or situation in which the consumer does the act of movie watching. From the 80s the movie theatres had already to evolve, and the filmic experience

changed from a concept of “attendance” regarding movie watching in a defined space, to an idea of “performance” in which the movie theatre had to offer something more and put at the center the consumer and his personalized experience with the arrival of new media entertainments (Casetti, 2009). There is then a higher importance given to the movie theatre offer, asked to be an extraordinary experience in order to avoid the commodity trap, as LaSalle and Britton advocate (2003), and be relegated to the simple movie watching, nowadays offered by many other devices and frames. The experience then can become an element of differentiation of the movie going and so memorable customer experiences may be considered an important driver of choice for the customer of a movie theatre.

Regarding the designing of memorable experience, Arnould and Price gave some insights on the phenomenon defining some aspects of the extraordinary experience in their works that analyze a full river rafting experience from the pre-trip planning to the recollection phase post consumption (Arnould and Price, 1993). In their work they found that an important part of the experience refers to the narrative created with the helps of themes that holistically make the experience memorable. This affects the satisfaction of the consumers, thanks to the role of the guides as orchestrators of the narrative the consumer going to experience, an aspect found important in the successive works of Carù and Cova (Carù and Cova, 2007). This supports the idea that treating the movie-going experience as something memorable for the consumer means to establish a narrative made by different elements and features that helps the consumer feeling the “magic” of the cinema in his complete journey to the movie theatre.

While this work gave support to the importance of designing a memorable experience, the logic behind it is theorized by Lanier and Halton in which they see three important variables that helps in the success of experiential marketing of a service: Symbolic resources, the symbolic aspects of a product that can be made understand and enjoy by tangible and material aspects; Engaging Transactions, that helps the consumer remain with the flow of the offer and live the experience; Internalized value, value inside the mind of the consumer that is affected by personal connection with the offer, by the extraordinary characteristics of the experience and by the social connectivity the offer provides (Lanier Halton, 2009). The researcher focuses on the importance of creating a holistic effect in a way that make the consumer think that everything “fit” together, helped by themes or set of meanings that the providers of the experiences have decided, in order to create a dramatic effect that remains in the mind of the consumer. The dramatic effect concept is used also in the works of Voss and

Zomerdijk in which they study the design of experience-centric services (Voss Zomerdijk, 2007, 2010).

Pine and Gilmore have already talked about the importance of the places where the company stage their experience (Pine Gilmore, 2002), providing tips and tools for this new offering frontier, but it is the study of Voss and Zomerdijk that provided some literature on how to design an experience-centric service. In their works they analyze many cases of companies that works in experiential services and interviewed consulting agencies that provide services on this topic, in order to understand some common features in the design and innovation of this type of services. They highlight the idea that the experience of the customer is seen by many companies as a customer journey that spans a longer period of time and consists of multiple components and multiple touchpoints. Innovation then take place at each of these touchpoints, defined as the point of contact between the company and the customer before, during and after the service. They also defined other 5 areas that influence the customer experience that the company can control: Physical Environment, in order to design the spaces for the customer journey; The Service Employees, that can engage and make memorable the experience for the consumer; The Service Delivery Process, to manage the flow of the experience with its start, end and peaks and not making the costumer disengage, keeping the dramatic effect of the experience; Fellow Customers, exploiting the power of socialization and being part of a community; Back Office Support, having the same mindset in all the service line and not only in the front-office. With their works they highlight the importance of the context in the experience driven services, in which the experience is a determinant factor in the customer value proposition more than the service attributes and price charged for these services and companies can encourage customer loyalty by creating emotional connections through engaging, compelling and consistent contexts (Pullman Gross, 2004).

From their humbler perspective of consuming experience, Carù and Cova tackle the problem of the design of the experiences by focusing on the concept of immersion, defined as embodied experience with the idea of total elimination of the distance between consumer and the situation (Carù and Cova, 2007). They propose a model in which the major objective of the consumer experience is to build one's identity passing through subjective experiences, stemmed from the immersion in the experiential context. The model highlight the importance of the context for helping the immersion of the consumer and the researchers gives some rules for the design of it: the context must be enclavized with specific boundaries, as to help consumer break in a different space from their daily life; The context must be secure and

closely monitored, to reduce the concerns for customers that try to escape from daily life problems; The context must be thematized, so that the consumer can ascribe some meaning to the experience. The theme must be staged and dressed in a way to stimulate the senses and with the use of the narratives it will make the consumer immerse in the context and create a memorable experience (Carù and Cova, 2007).

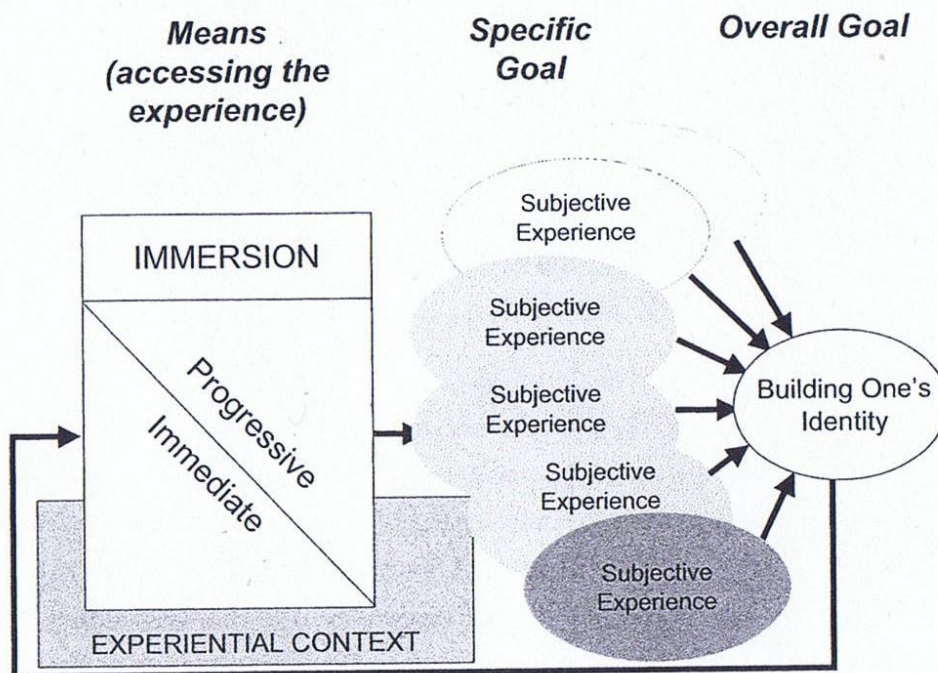


Figure 3: Carù and Cova model of consumer immersion (2007)

The idea of a closed experiential context is shared also by the Casetti filmic experience, which define the movie experience as “situated”, seeing the film in a specific place and in a specific frame of action, but also “enclosed” by both physical and mental boundaries defined by specific circumstances and spaces (Casetti, 2007), in which the consumer can immerse himself having its own experience. The context of the movie theatre is also defined as a “dark cube” from Froeber and Thomaschke (2019) where the cinematic and aesthetic experience is enhanced respect to the home-video experience, where distractions and boredom are more frequent. This definition is in line when considering the movie theatre as an enclosed space dedicated to the immersion of the consumer.

An important difference in the immersion concept comes from the idea that immersion can be immediate, like a dive, for consumers that are already familiar with the context or progressive and partial for who instead is new to the experience proposed. This idea is confirmed by the study made by Caru and Cova on how to facilitate the immersion in an experiential context

(Carù and Cova, 2006). In the study the researchers found out, other than also a confirmation to the concept of continuum of experiences, that novice consumers of a particular experience are going through a series of appropriation operations (nesting, investigating and stamping) which make them immerse in the context, with these operations being helped by some service elements that the company can design. In their works then Carù and Cova enunciate some tactics to facilitate the immersion of the consumers: the design of support systems is important for giving consumers the basics for understanding the theme of the experience, such as guides and referents; the use of collective actions will give the consumers mutual learning and shared emotions, providing them with communities and rituals to which they can belong; giving customers space for self-determination, a way for them to appropriate the experience and give it a personal meaning, by training the consumer and giving him the tools to then discover the experience in autonomy, a central idea in the concept of edutainment (Carù and Cova, 2007).

When applying the concept of immersion to the movie theatre environment, it is possible to link it with the level of satisfaction that consumers have of their movie-going experience. Fornerino et al. (2008) noticed that the feeling of satisfaction of the consumer experience in the movie theatre environment comes from the level of immersion offered, with the mediation of emotions and social interactions. In the model they devised, the connection with the experience and the disconnection with the real world, that define the level of immersion, brings stronger emotions to the consumers and they lead positively towards better customer satisfaction. This supports the idea that movie theatres can improve the satisfaction of their consumers by designing the experiential environment in the best way to help the customer immersion.

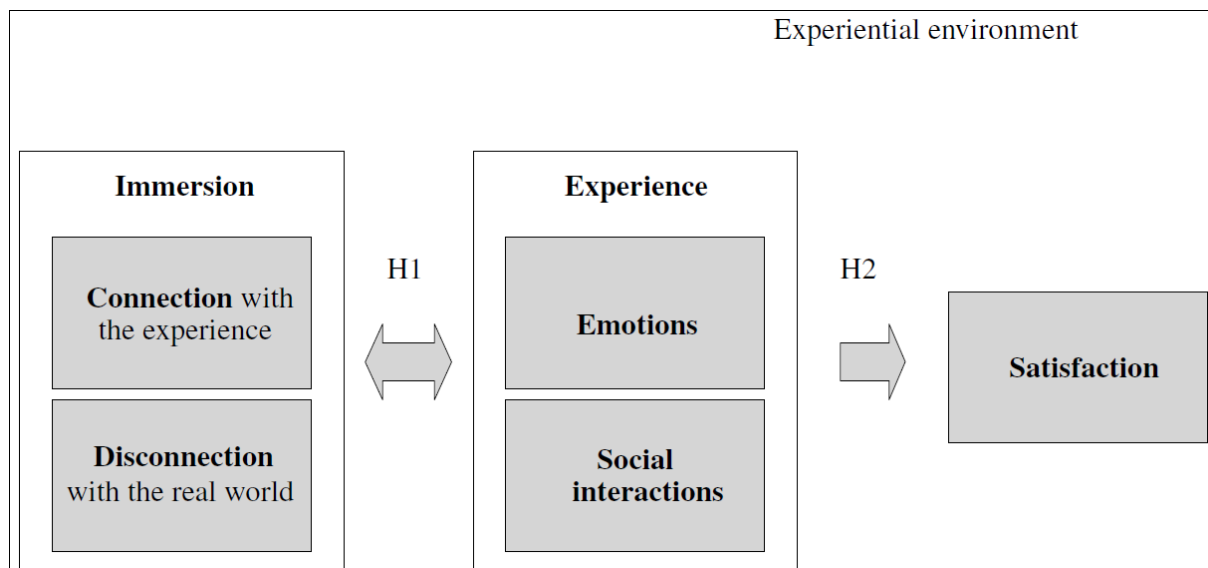


Figure 4: Fornerino immersion-satisfaction model (2008)

These studies and propositions give strength to the idea of movie theatres as experience providers with movies as the main product, that necessitate to design their experience in the right way in order to help the customer feeling immersed and satisfied. Works in the variables other than the product such the context in which the experience take place may provide ways to make the consumer a loyal customer of the movie theatre, making the movie-going experience a memorable event to taste.

The Italian market of movie theatres

Understanding how the Italian movie distribution market works is important in order to make the reader well known with the context in which this research is developed. Although some examples of interesting movie theatre experience come from other countries (Alamo Drafthouse, Cinema Rex of Paris), this paper focus on the Italian landscape with its own system of distribution and cinemas, being its main objective the understanding of the availability of a particular business idea for the italian consumer. The main data come from the Annual Reports of the Competition in the Movie Distribution Industry made by the AGCM. In the reports it is possible to understand the various forces that drives the movie distribution industry and their relationship between them, namely the national distributors, the regional agents and the owners of movie theatres. National distributors have the distribution rights of the movies for the national territory and make contracts with movie theatre owners (when they are big enough and have more contractual power) or with local/regional agents that have deals with theatres in their territory. They provide the copies of the movie to the

theatres and decides not only the opening date but also the marketing actions for the movie itself, that will be common for all the movie theatres involved with the distribution of the film (AGCM, 2018, 2019). This reinforces the idea that the bottom line of the distribution has limited flexibility regarding the product they are proposing to the consumers, leaving them to work with different aspects of the offer to stand out from the frame and get a competitive advantage.

The movie theatres can be divided by their dimension: Monosala are movie theatres with one screen, Multisala up to seven screens and Multiplex have more than seven screens. Based on this division, the reports delineate also a hierarchy of power in which Multiplex, being usually part of major theatre chains, are the major players in the market and have enough power to deal directly with national distributors without intermediaries such as the agents. These agents generally have the exclusivity of the distribution in a particular territory, and this gives them high bargaining power against the independent movie theatres, which have to pay a percentage of the tickets sold to the intermediary. This situation drove the creation of circuits that brings together many independent movie theatres so that they could have enough power in order to deal directly with national distributors and cut agents off the distribution line. The panorama of movie theatres then shows itself as movie theatre chains, with UCI Cinemas and The Space as main brands, and conglomerates of independent movie theatres, under the main banners of Circuito Cinema and UniCi, making up the 70% of the total Italian movie theatres market, leaving the last 30% to independent screens (AGCM, 2018). Another division mentioned by the reports is by the type of movie screened: some movie theatres prefer to screen art movies, defined as cinema d'essai, while others prefer a more commercial programming of their showing (AGCM, 2018). It is possible to note that since commercial movies need to reach the biggest number of consumers, they are usually showed in Multiplex and Multisalas, while art movies, being also cheaper to buy for the movie theatres owners, are generally being shown in the Monosalas. Although this is a rule of thumb, it is possible to find exceptions in the market with Multisalas that are keen to show also art movies or Monosalas, having the monopoly of a particular territory, that prefer to show commercial movies.

Looking at the competitive market of movie theatres in Italy it is possible to note a general distinction between the various competitive advantages that make cinemas interesting for the consumer to visit. Multiplexes entered the Italian market in the 90', with the advent of the Warner Village Cinema that started the era of the multi-screen cinemas, bringing the movie going American experience in the Italian soil by focusing on the competitive advantage of

quantity and variety. Mono screen cinemas in order to survive against these new players evolved towards the concept of quality and elitism of the art movies, proposing to their target audience not-commercial products, more related to festivals and movie making as an art form. Between these two extremes the concept of movie experience for the consumer started to grow towards the facets of a real competitive advantage (a process that it is still ongoing), making some movie theatres stand out from the fray. This paper will focus on these cinemas that are using the movie experience as a competitive advantage in contrast with the concepts of quantity, variety or quality of the product itself, making this particular evolution of theatres less limited by the movies they screen to make consumers loyal.

Movie-Going Experience: Factor's definition

The case study analysis

In the environment of the movie theatres an important part is defining a competitive advantage that differentiate the cinema from the main competition, mostly if the theatres are located in the same area competing for the same customers. One way to differentiate is to point towards the consumer experience instead of focusing solely on the movie product itself to attract customers, which paved the way to the appearance of many examples of success in the movie theatre industry. For the study of the phenomenon, to understand how it works and which are the main features of this competitive advantage a case study approach is used for this paper first objective, being the subject studied a contemporary evolution of movie theatres in which the researcher has no control, filling the main role of observer (Yin, 2014). Although the competitive advantage can be generalized in focusing on the movie consumer experience, each movie theatre has its own unique identity that gives them a differentiation from other consumer-centric cinemas, discouraging the choice of a single case for the analysis (Yin, 2014). In order to understand the phenomenon and to be able to interview the Italian movie consumer about this type of movie theatre, the research will focus on some exemplar cases, taking as case study movie theatres with heterogeneous movie experience ideas, and try to find the common features that can be ascribed to the Movie Experience competitive advantage, helped by the literature on the experience marketing and interviews with the movie theatres.

After a careful selection of the possible case studies, the choice fell into 3 movie theatres in the metropolitan area of Milan. The choice was motivated by:

- 1- Their competitive advantage based on their idea of movie experience and not focused just on the movie product to attract customers.
- 2- The ubication in Italy since the project refers to the Italian market.
- 3- The ubication in the city of Milan, one of the biggest cities of Italy and with many different movie theatres that are competing for the same pool of consumers, enhancing the birth of unique and different movie experience formats.
- 4- Their availability for the project, even in a difficult time such as the pandemic one.
- 5- The heterogeneity of the experiences offered by the cinemas, so that each case study will provide a different take on the movie consumer experience.

The movie theatres chosen for the analysis are the following: Palazzo del cinema Anteo, focusing on the value of the movie experience as a cultural enrichment and growth of the consumer; Cinema Arcadia of Melzo, with the idea of movie-going experience based on the escape from the reality and commercial fun of the consumer; Cinema Bianchini, an association that organizes movie screening events that highlight the historic location in which the consumer is going to watch the movie chosen.

A first contact was made with these movie theaters to understand their availability for the project and a phone call interview with the managers was held as the primary source of information related to the movie theatre. The difficulties of travelling during pandemic times made impossible to visit the structures and limited the help provided by the movie theatre management and face to face interviews with customers of the theatre, adding value to secondary sources for gathering more information such as company websites, articles and other documents available on internet. The primary source of information remained the interview though, in which the managers explained the story of the movie theatre and their idea of competitive advantage, offering an understanding of their model and its main features related to movie experience.

After the definition of the elements in common between these 3 case studies, the project followed in researching what are the main factors that are more appreciated by the Italian consumers thanks to a series of qualitative interviews. From the interviews it was possible to define which are the main components of these movie experience ideas that can be used in the future by other movie theatres that want to use movie experience as a competitive advantage.

Palazzo del cinema Anteo

Seen as an excellence in the panorama of the movie theatre industry, Palace of cinema Anteo became well known for focusing on the consumer from the beginning of its journey started in 1979. Lionello Cerri, Maurizio Ballabio and Raimondo Paci bought off a screen room with a stage and a video room in order to have a multi-cultural space in which not only movies were screened but other cultural events would take place. With the name of Anteo MusiCineTeatro the cinema became famous for its choice of screening just art movies and started to attract customer more interested in the cultural purpose of the movies. That was also a differentiation choice given by the crisis of the 70s of the movie theatres, during which they had to compete

with the tv to attract the consumer, showing movies not commercialized enough to be showed in the private channels.

After having created a base of customers, Cinema Anteo decided to work on the consumer and making them loyal to the cinema, evolving following their needs and putting them at the center of the project. During the years new screens were added, more comfortable seating was made available, new spaces in which people could gather were created with in mind the idea of defining a cultural area for the Milan citizen that could get a personal growth from the movie environment. The last renovation of the 2017 defined the appearance of the Palazzo del Cinema as it is known now, with all the services that is offering tailored for their idea of the cultural consumer experience.



Figure 5: Palazzo del cinema Anteo

The palace offers nine different screening rooms with various technologies available that are ideal for various kind of events, from the vision of movies and documentaries to meetings and personal screenings. For this particular need it is made available the Sala Ciak, a screening room designed as a living room with sofas, tables and other little details for the best personal screening experience: the customers can book the screening room and decide what movie to see with friends or loved ones. Some screening rooms instead have adjacent spaces and dedicated foyers for the organization of special events or as a simple area in which people can

gather and talk about movies. A particular screening room of which Anteo is proud of is the Sala Nobel, in which is possible to watch a movie and at the same time have a gourmet dinner thanks to the partnership of Eataly, a high-end seller of Italian food products. The proposition of this experience is in line with the type of customer that attend to Anteo: a customer interested in the cultural experience seeing the movie going as quality invested time for their personal growth and not just as mere escape from reality.



Figure 6: Sala Nobel

The movie experience of the Palace of Cinema Anteo reflects the idea that going to the movies is an action of cultural enjoyment and growth of the individual, similarly to other type of education entertainment that can be found in museums or exhibitions. Rules applied in the cinema reflect this kind of proposition, in which no food is allowed inside the screening room and no other kind of disturbances are made that would distract the consumer from the enriching experience of movie watching, such as break times, phone permissions and talking during the vision. All the services and the spaces are tailored for a cultural educative experience, proposing Anteo as a place of learning for the Milan consumer, differentiating themselves from mainstream cinemas, which base themselves solely as the place in which seeing the latest movies. With this idea in mind, Anteo offers various services that give the opportunity to learn to their customers: cultural special events are organized in the spaces of the cinema, such

exhibitions, conferences, interviews and special screenings; Courses of cinema are offered by the movie theatre and institutions of Milan in the structure for the consumers; a library as a public space offers a wide variety of books for personal use of the customers, independently from the buying of a movie ticket. The spaces in which these services are settled are places in which everyone can enter and have access, an environment thematized with memorabilia and gathering places such as Caffè Letterario and Osteria del Cinema that provides option for enhancing the movie experience with food served in a cultural setting.



Figure 7: Osteria del cinema

Cinema Arcadia di Melzo

Born in 1997 thanks to the effort of the entrepreneur Pietro Fumagalli and architect Giancarlo Marzorati, with the help of cinematography expert Vittorio Storaro, Arcadia Cinema is regarded by the movie theatre industry as an excellence in the multiplex Italian panorama thanks to its distinctive offer of a quality consumer experience that favors the immersion in the movie environment. Their focus is on the idea that the consumer must find a fun and entertainment moment in their life by going to the Arcadia Cinema and distinguished himself from other multiplexes on using the latest technological upgrades that the market can offer to foster the spectators' feeling of evasion from the reality.

Technology then takes an important part in the process of immersion of the consumer during its screen time and Arcadia made a name in Europe for having the best the market can offer: Sala Energia, the biggest of 5 screen rooms they have, was recognized as best screen room in Europe in the 2017 thanks to his 30m wide screen Harkness Perlux and its Dolby Atmos sound, 630 seatings available to watch movies with also IMAX technology, 4K movie projector and availability for 70mm format screenings. From the start Arcadia Cinema always educated the consumer on its quality experience and it is one of the main attractions for their customers, knowing that technological advances bring more to the movie screening and differentiate from the competition that tends to focus just on the movie products.



Figure 8: Cinema Arcadia, main hall

Following the concept of movie experience as a way to escape reality and have fun, cinema Arcadia always tried to immerse the consumer not only with the latest available tech but also with the design and the dressing of the cinema itself, proposing an area for the moviegoer in which he can enter in contact with the movie world: the entrance and corridors are filled with movies memorabilias and a dressing that reminds the costumers of the famous blockbusters; the futuristic and modern design space is correlated to the technological screen rooms in which the movie is shown; A kids area and a library complete the structures available in the movie theatre, reminding to the consumer that Cinema Arcadia is a Multiplex in which fun, and

entertainment mixed with pop culture reside. In line with the idea of thematic movie experience Arcadia cinema offered many important special events in which a theme defined by a specific release or a movie cult was at the center stage: for the release of Dunkirk a full event was organized with many actors dressed as second world war soldiers going around the theatre, organizing stunts and providing memorabilia photos; for the release of Tenet a 70mm special screening was held; for the Star Wars release stunts, actors, games and a live orchestra playing the star wars theme were part of the thematic event.



Figure 9: Logan thematic event, Cinema Arcadia

Arcadia from its birth decided to differentiate themselves trying to be more than a conventional multiplex, understanding the consumer experience as the main competitive advantage for the Milan area full of competitors. They stuck to the core of an experience that favors the immersion of the consumer in the movies as a way to escape from the every-day life, transforming the going to the movies in a wow-event. They do it with the use of themes, special events and with the latest technology that help the spectator immerse in the films. In this way, by being coherent with this kind of choice, they attracted a loyal customer base than knows about the quality of the movie theatre and their interest in creating an amazing experience for them.

Cinema Bianchini

When in the 2015 the Milano Card group, the Milan tourism company, started to manage some cultural and historical location hidden in the city, they initially thought about organizing visits in a traditional way, with guides and exhibitions, in order to make people know about these little gems of Milan City center. The rooftops of Vittorio Emanuele Gallery, in front of Duomo square, can be visited thanks to a route with stations in which visitors can enjoy the Milano skyline, while Ca' Granda Archive, an historical library of the 17th century, is open to public with a special visit called "The secret path". Understanding that tourists were more interested in seeing the Duomo Cathedral or many other Milan historical landmarks, Milano Card group in the 2017 decided to organize special movie screenings on the rooftops of Vittorio Emanuele Gallery to give another reason to come to Milano citizens. The success was immediate and all the screenings were sold out by people attracted not only by the movie shown but also by the particular location in which they would experience the show. With the help of Vanitas Club, an association dedicated to the organization of experiences, Cinema Bianchini was born and started organizing under his banner movie screenings in Milan historic and particular locations, with movies provided by Medusa Films and Mediaset, Italian movie production companies with Milan headquarters.



Figure 10: Cinema sui tetti, Cinema Bianchini event

Cinema Bianchini does not have its own building and cannot be cataloged as a conventional movie theatre, but it is a reality that exploits fully its historical locations as a driver of

experience to help the immersion of the consumer in what they are seeing, with their primary objective not in just showing new movies to Milan citizens but in making people enjoy a completely different experience, transforming it in the main driver for the consumer to attend to their special screenings. This is achieved through special events done regularly and organized in a way to help the consumer immerse in the historical location, with thematized services offered and cultural experiences tailored for the location. Exemplar is the event of the secret archive of Ca Granda during which classic old Italian movies are shown paired with the evening visit of the archive, the cripts and secret passages of the monument, or the Cozzi pool 30s themed experience in which staff, location and dinner served were thematized following the architectural period of the pool. Other location used are the rooftops of the Vittorio Emanuele Gallery, where stations are arranged with seatings and screens, a boat on the Milano Darsena and a Drive in at the Idroscalo, where the fully 50s experience was prepared.

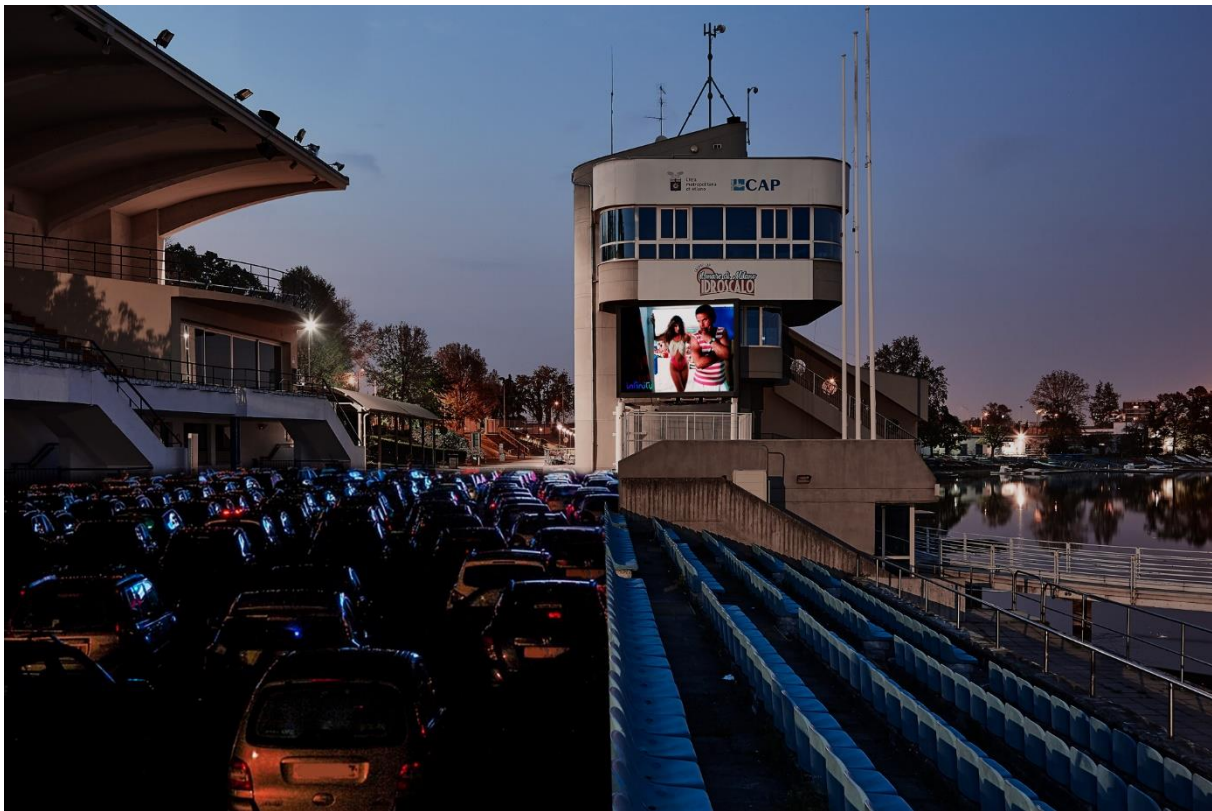


Figure 11: Drive-in Milan Idroscalo

When compared to other movie theatres Cinema Bianchini has a competitive advantage in focusing on the consumer experience proposing a thematic experience that gets its main force in the value of the location. In this way, the customers are immersed in an environment different from the ordinary that helps them escape into another world while they are watching a movie.

His success is confirmed by the continuous sold out of their events and a loyal base of consumers that continues to participate despite the price or having already seen the movie.

Palazzo del cinema Anteo, Cinema Arcadia and Cinema Bianchini are three heterogeneous but explicative examples of movie theaters that propose to their consumers an experience not just based on the movie product showed during the screening. All the case studies had a distinctive idea of consumer experience that differentiate them from the competition, gaining a loyal customer base thanks to their distinctive competitive advantage. Palazzo del cinema Anteo considered itself more as a cultural area than a movie theatre, in which, using movies as a vehicle of culture, wanted to educate costumers and made them live an experience of cultural enrichment. It promoted this idea with their choice of programming, their cultural events and with its cultural thematic places such as the library, expositions areas and dinner places adapt for a more exclusive cultural experience. Arcadia cinema instead decided to focus on the immersion of the consumer in the movie environment, trying to provide an experience of escapism from the reality and focusing on the commercial fun derived by the movie industry. The proliferation in the calendar of movie events with easily recognizable themes helped the movie theatre with the immersion of the consumer giving the opportunity of organizing special and thematic events, which make the customer forget about the reality from the moment he enters the theatre. A feat not only possible thanks to the movie theatre structure and the thematic services offered but also thanks to the technological advancements that Arcadia cinema is proud of showing: their high-tech screening rooms with high definition of vision and sound effects facilitate the consumer immersion during the movie projection, making him forget to be in a screening room. In this way Cinema Arcadia created a loyal customer base that comes to the movie theatre for a high-quality experience that is beyond the simple enjoy of the cinematographic product. Cinema Bianchini chose the path of customer experiences based on the location in which the pictures are shown, proposing its screening events on historical and cultural places in Milan that enrich the movie watching experience. Using the particular locations that are under the management of the Milano card group, Cinema Bianchini differentiated themselves by offering unique experiences in special places which add something more to the vision of the movie, making it for the consumer a pleasant event to attend. The special screenings are generally enriched not only by the setting but also by thematic services that add values to every night the consumer participates, creating a loyal fan base that waits for the new event to pop up and book a seat. In this way Cinema Bianchini detached themselves from the limits of the novelty of the movie product to enter the fray of the

entertainment business providing to the consumer a location to experience than just a movie to watch.

The next step for this research is understanding the common features of movie theatres that focus on the consumer experience as competitive advantage. These three examples provide different ways on exploiting the consumer experience to differentiate from the competition: Anteo works on the cultural experience provided by the movies, Arcadia focus on evasion and thematic immersion of the consumer, Cinema Bianchini exploits the characteristics of the locations to enrich the movie experience of their customers. From the analysis of these three types of experiences is possible with the help of the previous literature to find common features that can define which factors are most used by movie theatres that concentrate on improving the movie-going experience. Although arriving to a perfect definition of all the features related to experiential movie theatres requires many more examples to be analyzed, due to the multitude of ways in which consumer experience can be enriched, with the help of the literature and previous research it is possible to draw a general set of factors useful for the purpose of this paper.

The factors of movie-going experience

The first area to explore when analyzing the movie theatre experience is undoubtedly the location in which the movie is shown, the movie screening room. Considering watching a movie at the theatre as a part of a consumer experience journey (Voss, 2007), although there are many debates where the start of it would be, it is sure that the screening room is the place in which the experience created by the movie theatre reaches its peak. The screening room must be equipped and structured to show the movie in a way to not disturb or make the person lose its dramatic effect (Lanier, 2009), making him stay immersed in the environment and make a flowless transition into the vision of the movie and for all its duration. To achieve this objective the coziness of the consumer is important to not disrupt the flow with negative distractions (Carù and Cova, 2006) and many movie theatres started focusing on the comfort as one of their most distinctive features increasing the size and the quality materials of the seatings, providing the right temperatures inside the rooms and adjusting the lights for a better eye comfort. Movie theatres interested in improving the consumer experience follow these standards of coziness, an important factor to facilitate the immersion of the consumers during the screening. Another feature of the screening room that gives opportunity to enhance the feeling of immersion of the consumer refers one of the traits of the filmic experience, namely the *device* by which the movie

is shown (Caselli, 2007). 4K definition, big size screens, improvements in the sounds are all supports that enrich the customers experience and provides another step towards the full immersion searched by spectators that want to evade from reality, making more real what it is shown on screen than what we left behind entering in the movie theatre (Caselli, 2007). Many Multiplexes focus a lot of their movie experience on the technological advantages that they can provide in order to differentiate themselves from the competition and to attract customer away from their streaming services, limited by the technology available in their houses. The consumer is driven then to the movie theatre searching for an experience that gives the possibility to watch a movie with the best technology available in a comfortable place, immersing themselves in an environment adapt to the vision of the movie. Important part of the movie consumer experience is also given to the physical context in which the movie is screened, where the consumer has the experience of a place before even having the experience of the movie (Caselli 2009), that can enrich the vision of the film thanks to its value for the immediate immersion of the spectators. The value of the location then becomes important, with the movie theatres dedicated to the consumer experience providing a great immersive environment that makes the movie watching more enjoyable and memorable for their clients, distinguishing themselves from the competition. The literature already provided many studies towards the value of the location in experiential matters (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, Gilmore and Pine, 2002, Caru and Cova, 2006, 2007, Voss, 2007, Zomerdijk et al, 2010) and the previously analyzed example of Cinema Bianchini shows that the location provides a distinctive value addition to the experience of the movie consumer, with their model focusing on the organization of screening events in historical and particular settings as one of the main factors of success. Movie theatres so, when built from the scratch or renovated, have in mind the design they want to give to the screening rooms to favor the enjoyment of the movie by their customers, giving birth to big rooms, colored or thematic patterns and particular dispositions that gives an esthetic enjoyment for the consumers waiting for the movie to start.



Figure 12: Cinema Arcadia, Sala Energia

The experience of the movie theatre consumer, although it has its highest peak in the moment is viewing the chosen movie, starts from the moment in which the person decides to go to the cinema and factors related to the movie theatre itself will affect its choice and mood of enjoying the movie-going experience. From the entrance to the arrival to the screening room the consumer pass through a series of environments and makes actions that start defining its experience, from buying the ticket to waiting for friends and family. Caru and Cova define the experience of the consumer as a continuum flow that has peaks and downs, defined by impulses coming out from the context in which the consumer is immersed (Carù e Cova, 2006, 2007): from the entrance to the screening room the spaces of the movie theatre send experiential impulses to the costumers and give them clues and signals (Voss, 2007, Zomerdijk et al, 2010) related the experience they are going to feel. In this way the immersive context becomes defined by the movie theatre building, expanding it out from just the screening room and interacting with the consumers as soon as their eyes sets on the building appearance. Designing the movie theatres building and its aesthetics gives the opportunity to affect from the beginning the mood of the customers, attempting to make the entrance to the movie world more appealing for the spectators. Cinema Arcadia defined its movie theatre to resemble a modern and futuristic environment which hints the spectator that there he will escape from reality entering in another world, while Palazzo del Cinema Anteo resemble the historical movie palaces well known before the advent of the multiplexes, in order to give the spectators the feeling of entering cultural place full of cinematographic history, a temple in which movies are loved. Consumer immersion is also supported by the dressing of the movie theatres areas that convey

their personal idea of movie experience: while commercial multiplexes opt for a fun and pure entertainment dressing with posters, statues, cardboard cutouts and other objects that reminds of the latest blockbusters, movie theatres that focus on a consumer experience dedicated to the cultural edutainment fill their spaces with classic memorabilia from old school movies, books and other cultural objects. In order to help the consumer feeling immersed in the environment the movie theatre does not stop on just defining its aesthetics but also decides which spaces will be included inside the building: choosing the right spaces becomes an important support to the thematic experience because they give more clues to the movie-goer, participating in the definition of the context in which the consumer is immerse. Following this reasoning it is possible to understand more clearly the choice of not having a popcorn area, symbol of the movie going consumerism, in Anteo Cinema, which is trying to convey the idea of the movie-going as an action of learning from which the spectator should not be distracted by other actions. Literary Cafès, open library, foyers, special screening rooms for courses of cinema and other conventions give the Palazzo del cinema Anteo a cultural center feeling, while Cinema Arcadia, trying to be a place of entertainment and escapism from the reality, provided himself with a Mondadori store, a popcorn area, a kids area and a big open space in which thematic events can be held, everything dressed with blockbuster memorabilia and objects with wow factors such a self-playing piano or a giant statue of a T-rex.



Figure 13: Cinema Arcadia, prop in the hall

An important step that has to be made for the consumer immersion is to give him a set of signals and clues that support the customers in understanding the context in which they step in. The movie theatre provides a guide and references to the spectator in order to enclavize the context and thematize it, giving a meaning to their movie experience (Carù and Cova, 2006). Thematization and definition of references then have the important role to guide the consumer in their experience towards the screening room, preparing him to enjoy a memorable movie watching evening immersed in an environment that he cannot find anywhere else. The creation of special thematic events provides meanings and motives to the consumer to remember the night at their movie theatre, fostering a connection with the environment and making them more loyal to the theater, knowing they have gained something more than a simple movie night. It can be done at a more superficial level such as thematic dressing of the spaces, to more in depth with the definition of thematized activities that involves and immerse more the consumer in the movie environment. Cinema Bianchini use special screening thematic events as primary driver for its success in correlation with the value of the location where the events are held: for some events it is establish a thematic connection with the screening location that is reflected in the environment and the activities that can be done during the event, such as a visit of the archives and crypts before the show or the style 30s dinner event in the historical pool. Cinema Arcadia use its spaces for setting the mood of the consumers and prepare them from what they are going to see during the special events they provide, with thematic activities, stunts and interactions that makes them remember and enjoy the experience, even when the movie does not live up to their expectations. Cinema Anteo offers activities and events more linked to the cultural engagement and educational learning in correlation with their idea of movie going experience: courses on cinematography, retrospectives and exhibitions, special classic screenings, cultural festivals and many other cultural activities are designed for the customers. Many movie theatres realized the importance of the organization of such thematic events, but it is when they focus on consumer experience in order to distinguish themselves that the thematization becomes one of the main factors to drive consumers.

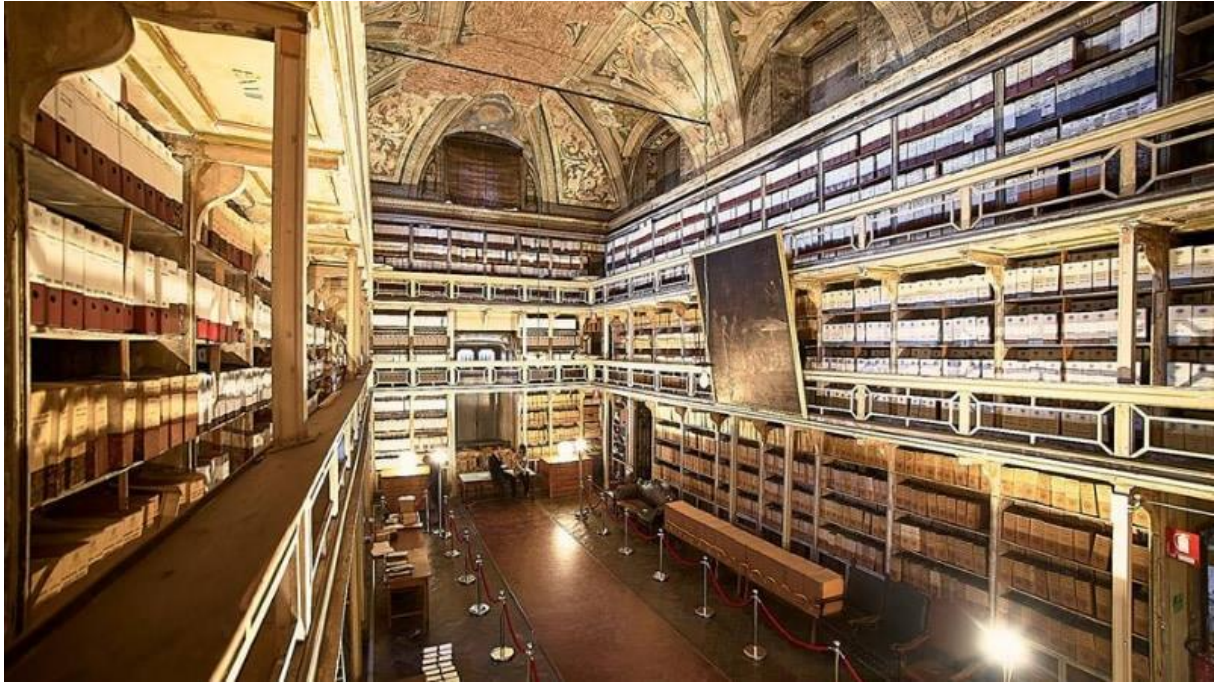


Figure 14: Archivio di Ca' Granda, Cinema Bianchini location event



Figure 15: Cinema Arcadia, Logan photography event

The experience of the consumer does not end with the conclusion of the screening but enter the next stage of with the remembered consumption experience and nostalgia experience (Arnould et al, 2002, Carù and Cova, 2003, 2007), in which the consumer relives the past thanks to the use of memorabilia, objects that remind the spectator of the event he attended and support the remembrance of it, pleasant or unpleasant it was, creating an emotive link between the provider of the experience and the customer. The set of meanings created by the movie theatre

and by the consumer subjectivity can be then transferred in the object the customers are taking home, from a simple ticket to a special edition poster or more, acting as an amplifier for the emotions they lived during their time at the movies. This can highlight the experience of the consumer and also attract collectors of memorabilia, choosing a specific movie theatre to obtain an item that makes them feel to be part of a community of people that enjoyed the experience together.



Figure 16: Cinema Arcadia, Film memorabilia Dunkirk event

Part of the motivations to go watch a movie refers to the feeling of enjoying something with friends, family or a community of peers. The social aspect of the experience becomes important for customers that comes with the idea of passing an evening with their friends, family or even enjoy the crowded places of the movie theatre spaces. In the mind of the designers of experiences the social aspect is important to enhance the overall feeling of the events and screenings so then theatres try to provide spaces for the consumer to aggregate themselves and pass time discussing and satisfy their social needs. Movie theatres then can improve their customer experience providing places with community functions inside the building and letting them exploit these spaces for giving opportunities to socialize, sharing the experience with their peers: this can be done providing the consumers with areas with seatings and other amenities such as waiting area with sofas and chairs, cafès and bars, restaurants in which people can aggregate pre or after the show. While Bianchini not having its own building limits the availability of these places, it is common for movie theatres to have locations dedicated to

gatherings and customer social needs, even more in the movie theatres dedicated to movie consumer experience.



Figure 17: Cinema Anteo, library

More know respect to the social aspect of the experience is the effects that the interaction between consumer and staff has in the enjoyment of the product, in this case the movie going experience. Studies and research (Voss, 2007, Lanier, 2009, Carù and Cova, 2006, Zomerdijk et al, 2010), confirmed also by the interview with the movie theatres of our case study, show that the interaction with the staff is a factor well appreciated by the customers, seeing the presence of the owner in the theatre as a signal of effort and passion by who provide the experience and creates a stronger link between the movie theatre and its loyal base.

From the analysis of the literature, it is possible to determine some common factors ascribed to the design of experiences for consumers and the proposition of a competitive advantage focused more on the consumer experience. These common factors have found a confirmation in the three cases of movie theatres that have a defined idea of movie experience, focusing on them in order to differentiate from the competition, some more prominent than others and declined in different ways. These factors are defined as follows:

- The comfort of the screening room
- The technology used in the screening room
- The design and aesthetics of the screening room
- The design and aesthetics of the movie theatre
- The availability of thematic and cultural spaces in the movie theatre
- The permanent dressing of the movie theatre
- The special events organized by the theatres
- The thematic activities organized by the theatres
- The offer of memorabilia for the costumers
- The availability of aggregation places
- The presence and interaction with the staff

The first three factors relate to the screening room, while the following three can be ascribed to the structure of the movie theatre as a whole. The following three are factors connected to the idea of themes as a powerful support that improve the experience of the consumers, while the last two interest the social aspect of the movie going experience. There can be found many other ways to provide an improvement in the consumption experience of movie products, given the great diversity of examples with their unique offerings, but most of them fall into the categorization we already provided or are too unknown by the target of the interviews to provide a satisfying answer. In the next chapter it will be presented the methodology by which we will discuss these determined factors with a sample of the Italian population using qualitative interviews, to understand the level of importance each feature has in the experience of the Italian movie consumer.

Methodology

Introduction

Having found the main factors of a model that concentrate on the consumer experience in the movie theatres, it is the time to start collecting data on the interest and importance given by the Italian market on these factors. Movie theatre attendance has already been tested on the drivers of consumer behavior on movie theatre choice (Morris, 2014, 2015, Fasolo, 2017), but while these studies focused on the functional side of the movie going experience, this research tries to understand the ideas and values of the experiential factors that affect consumer decision making when going to the movie theatres. The research objective is to understand if the Italian consumer gives enough value to experiential-driven factors so much that a movie theatre model focused on movie-going experience can be successful in the Italian market. It is necessary then to gather the data of importance for each one of the factors previously defined for the Italian consumer, showing not only if there is interest in the experiential side of the movie consuming, but also which factors affect them the most. A second purpose of this research is given by the understanding of the behavioral choices made by the Italian movie-goers, with particular interest towards the experiential factors that drive their movie theatre choice. The choice of a qualitative approach in the data gathering answers to both the main research objective and the second purpose of understanding the results the study will find on the field, giving an explanation to the behavioral choices of consumers particularly referring to the experiential drivers of the decision making. In this way the results can be presented taking in account other variables that affect the choice of movie theatres, finding trends and type of consumers that will help future managerial decision related to targeting and decision making.

This chapter is dedicated to the presentation of the methodology of the study regarding the gathering of the data used for answering the question of this research. A series of possible tools and methods are presented, and it is explained the choice of some that resulted more adapted to our thesis, with the description of the problems regarding data gathering and their solution. At the beginning it is described the methodology on sampling choice, how the data are collected and how they are stored for the successive analysis. Then the chapter will continue with the description of how the data will be analyzed, explaining why certain type of methods are used and what the research wants to achieve using them.

Sampling

This research is defined following the purpose of understanding if movie theatres that focus on experience as main competitive advantage may be successful in the Italian market. Italian consumer then is the primary subject of this study and defines the sample that we are going to interview to gather data about the consumption of movie products. Although going to the movie theatre is an activity accessible to almost everyone in the market, there are some people that dislike and never go the movies. Because of the existence of this segment the research will avoid to insert people that never attend the movie theatres or do it very rarely: this distinction from the whole population is necessary because it is important that the consumer has an idea of its preferable movie-going experience, something that people who do not attend movie theatres do not know and, even though experience-driven cinema could attract them to attend more often, may give us data that are useless for the research. Another distinction is made for practical reasons in relation to the geographic distribution of the sample: the data gathering will be done during the difficult situation of the Covid pandemic and it becomes difficult to obtain data from areas different from the one in which the researcher reside. In this way it will be possible to use its network to reach the defined number of people to interview. The geographic location of the sample then will be circumscribed by the metropolitan area of Venice, helping in this both with the gathering of the sample and with the definition of examples to propose to the subjects of the research during the interview.

The sample will be divided in demographic characteristics such as age, gender and job, and behavioral characteristic such as frequency of attendance to movie theatre and with who they attend mainly. The main division that will provide a base on the number of cases for the sample will be age, with the following segments: 18-30; 31-45, 46-60, 60+. This segmentation is considered the most appropriate with each segment having their own times, behaviors and opportunities to attend and with different drivers that affect their movie theatre choice. As an example, young people can visit the movie theatre at different times during the day similarly to the older generation, since they have more free time given by the status of students or retirees, while the adult segment has more constrains given by family matters, worktimes and functional factors and treat the cinema going more as an event that need planning and more effort (Fasolo, 2017).

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
3-4 pm	D	D	D	D	D	D/C/B	D/C/B
5-6 pm	D	D	D/A	D	D	D/C/B/A	D/C/B/A
7-8 pm	D/A	D/A	D/A	D/A	D/A	D/C/B/A	D/C/B/A
9-10 pm	A	A	A	A	A	C/A	C/A

A=students
B=Families with kids
C=families no kids
D=Elderly

Table 1: Different day and time attendance of different consumers (Fasolo, 2017)

The objective is to reach a good number of interviews for each age segment defined, enough to provide satisfactory results, with the idea of using theoretical sampling (McGivern, 2005) to select candidates, offering variety and equality on the other type of segmentation defined, in order to have a general overview of Italian movie-goer population. Because the research it is done during the pandemic situation, for practical reasons the sample will be reached through the method of network sampling (McGivern, 2005), attempting to reach the more varied sample possible and selecting the subjects to avoid the production of useless data.

The interview process

Being the objective of the research not only to gather data on the subject but also to understand better the motives behind the answers provided by the Italian consumer a qualitative approach results the best option for the comprehension of a phenomenon such as the movie-experience (Corbetta, 2014). The movie-going experience is made but many variables that are affected by one's subjectivity and, in order to categorize and understand the importance of it, a quantitative approach would not suffice, leaving behind real reasons behind answers from the consumers. Having then some factors predetermined that will be standard for every person in the sample but with many possible and unique motivations behind the answers to them, the most adapt technique for gathering data is the semi-structured interviews, a method that falls between structured and non-structured interviews (McGivern, 2005, Corbetta, 2014). The interview will have some arguments and topics that need to be touched, but it is given flexibility to the interviewer on how to propose them to the subject, which will be free to give answer and their unique motivation behind the value they give to experiential factors. Structured interviews provide limitations defined by the survey given to the subject, that leave the possibility of

misinterpretation of questions and it could not provide enough space for the answer to the interviewee, while instead non structured interviews are more adapt for in-depth exploration of topics and are more time consuming than useful for the study (McGivern 2005, Corbetta, 2014). However, semi-structured interviews provide adaptability and the opportunity for the interviewer to explain, show examples and clarifies questions, without the limitation given by a survey, while setting the boundaries with a list of arguments that needs to be touched in order to not digress into topics not defined by the researcher and get important insights on the arguments defined. The interviews, for practical reasons due to the pandemic situation, are held by call or videocall which give more flexibility to the subject to choose their own preferable time, lasting in average half an hour depending on the availability of the subjects.

The interview will start with an introduction of the study presenting the researcher, the objective of the thesis and why the subject was chosen for it. In this way the subject can understand better what is the scope of the research and it will reduce the distance between interviewer and interviewee, establishing trust and helping the flow of the interview (McGivern, 2005, Corbetta, 2014). Following the introduction of the study, the first question “what does it mean for you the movie-going experience and why you go to the movie theatre” serve to give an first insight on the consumer and his main important experiential factors and way of thinking, giving first data to the interviewer that can then adapt the rest of the interview by choosing the rights examples and words when the experiential factors will be proposed. A consumer that attends cinema d’essai frequently and avoids American style multiplex tend to have more difficulties in understanding examples based on commercial blockbuster experience but has familiarity of experiential factors related to cultural consumption of the movie product. In addition, this first general question takes the role of funneling (McGivern, 2005) the consumer into the main part of the interview dedicated to the experiential factors defined by the researcher.

In the main part of the interview, after an explanation of the value scale used for the analysis, the consumer will state the importance in their movie-going experience and how much each factor changes it. The factors are defined as follows:

- **Technology:** It refers to the technology of the screening rooms, with particular interest towards the video and sound technological advancement.
- **Comfort:** It refers to the upgrades on the comfort experience that the consumer may find in the screening room such as seating, temperatures and use of lights, and it is not

related to functional comfort defined by easiness of reaching the movie theatre such as presence of parking spots, distance from home and location area.

- Design and aesthetics of the screening room: It refers to the experiential pleasure received by the consumer on the architecture, design and esthetical choices of the room, something that people can notice before the start of the screening or after while they are leaving the room.
- Design and aesthetics of the movie theatre: It refers to the experiential pleasure received by the consumer on the architecture, design and esthetical choices of the building as a whole, related to how it is presented, how it is structured and the style of the building.
- Spaces available in the movie theatre: it refers to the availability of other spaces with functionalities other than the screening of the movie. In movie theatres dedicated to the experience as a cultural growth of the spectators it is easier to find libraries, literary cafés, Exhibition spaces, while in theatres more connected to the idea of pure fun and entertainment popcorn areas, fast foods, arcades and games rooms are more common to find.
- Dressing of the movie theatre: it refers to the way movie theatre equip their spaces in order to help consumers start immersing in the movie environment once they enter in the building, and it is illustrated with examples such as posters, cardboards, classic movies images, libraries and more.
- Presence of thematic or cultural events: it refers to events proposed by the movie theatre that add a theme to the experience giving it more value for the consumer. The examples go from cineforums, festivals and marathons to special screenings in which the theatre is even dressed following the established theme. The level of effort required by the consumer is lower than a thematic service.
- Presence of thematic and cultural services: It refers to services offered by the movie theatre that helps the consumer immerse more into the established theme and the movie environment, requiring generally an action from the spectator to help this immersion. The proposed examples vary from cultural ones such as courses about cinema, exhibition visits and Q&A with movie producers to commercial ones such as participations to pre-shows, thematic games or consumption of themed food offerings. The level of effort in terms of money, time and energy spent by the consumer is higher than a simple thematic event.

- Memorabilia: It refers to the objects that the consumer obtain during his movie-going experience and attach personal memories of the experience, attaching emotions and feelings to it. The examples given to the subjects of the interview span from a simple movie ticket to more complex and specific objects such as gadgets, movie posters and more.
- Availability of aggregation spaces: it refers to the spaces that have, as well as other functionalities, the one dedicated to socialization, places in which people can connect and satisfy the need of social interactions. Examples proposed are foyers, restaurants, bars and waiting rooms with seatings available.
- Presence and interaction with the movie theatre staff: It refers to the interaction between the staff and the public and its importance for the consumer movie-going experience. The staff is defined by the ticket seller, the owner of the cinema and everyone that is paid by the theatre to welcome the costumers.

At the end of the interview the demographic data of the interviewee are collected such as name, gender, age, profession, and behavioral data such as frequency of attendance and with whom they attend to the movies. A recap of the answers is told to the consumer at the conclusion of the interview, asking him if he wants to confirm it or modify it in any way. After the confirmation, the interview is considered concluded.

Gathering data

At the beginning of the interview it is asked to the subject the consent for the interview to be recorded. With an affirmative answer, the interview is stored for being analyzed in a second moment and get insights on the values of the consumer, completing the answers given by the interviewee. In this way even counterintuitive answers will find an explanation, being part of behavioral reasons made by the subjects of the interview. The most salient insights of each interview are collected in a word document for further analysis.

For each factor a value scale is used, from 1 to 4, to determine the importance of the factors in the movie-going experience of the consumer. The scale it is explained during the interview in order to clarify to the consumer the scope of the analysis and the way his answers will be collected, helping them also to reply in the correct way for the analysis. The values are defined as follows:

Level 1 – The factor does not modify the consumer experience and it is treated with indifference: the presence of it does not contribute to a better or worse experience for the movie attendee.

Level 2 – The factor is of little importance for the consumer experience and is treated as a simple value addition: the presence of it does change the experience but it is not defined as relevant in their movie-going experience.

Level 3 – The factor is important for the consumer experience: in the decision-making process of choice of movie theatre, the consumer take in account this factor in order to choose where to watch the product.

Level 4 – The factor is very important for the consumer experience: the consumer need that particular factor to enjoy the movie theatre experience, surpassing the value given by just the movie product itself.

All the answers are collected in this manner in an excel file in which every subject is defined by its demographic and behavioral characteristics, so that the data can be analyzed taking in account these other variables, divided as following:

- Gender: Masculine, Feminine
- Age: 18-30, 31-45, 46-60, 60+
- Professional situation: Student, Employee, Freelancer, Retiree
- Frequency: Rarely, Average, Often
- With whom: Alone, Family, Partner, Friends

Name	Screen room factors			Movie Theatre factors			Thematic factors			Social factors		
	Technology	Comfort	Aesthetics	Spaces	Aesthetics	Dressing	Events	Services	Memorabilia	Aggregation Spaces	Staff	
Leonardo	3	3	2	4	3	1	3	1	1	4	2	
Arianna	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	
Beatrice	1	1	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	
Alessandro	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	
Massimiliano	3	2	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	1	
Francesco	3	3	2	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	1	
Lorenzo	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	
Davide	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	1	
Giovanni	3	2	3	4	4	2	3	4	3	3	1	
Tommaso	2	2	2	3	1	1	4	3	2	2	2	
Francesco	3	2	1	3	2	4	3	3	1	1	2	
Giorgia	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	3	
Davide	4	2	1	3	1	3	2	1	2	1	1	
Marco	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	
Eleonora	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	2	3	
Martina	2	3	1	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	1	
Filippo	3	3	1	3	3	2	1	3	3	2	3	
Cristina	2	3	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	
Nicola	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	3	2	
Lisa	4	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	
Francesco	4	3	3	1	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	
Marta	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	3	2	3	1	
Silvia	3	3	1	4	1	3	3	3	2	2	2	
Maria	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	4	2	
Deborah	3	2	2	3	3	3	1	3	3	2	1	

Figure 18: Example of the table used for the data gathering (the columns related to demographic and behavioral classes are hidden)

The analysis process

Once the data are collected the analysis will answer the main question of the research. Being interested in understanding how much important the factors are for the Italian consumer a first control will be done on the amount of every value for each factor for the whole sample. In this way it is possible to see if each factor is deemed important by the consumers, based on the number of answers that are related to level 3 of importance or above. When this amount exceeds the number of levels 2 of importance or lower, then the experiential factor is considered important by the sample interviewed for their movie-going experience. Having done it with all the factors, the main question of the research can be answered, knowing if there is a general interest in experiential movie-going between Italian consumers and which parts of it are keener to be appreciated. Once this first analysis is done, the answers for each factor will be observed taking in account the different demographic and behavioral classes previously established. In this way the analysis will show if some factors are more important for some specific categories, giving insights and directions for movie theatres that wants to focus on experiential factors to attract people on which type of consumers are more interested in a particular feature they want to add to their offer.

Once having understood which main factors are taken in consideration by the consumer for their experience, the next analysis will focus on realizing if there are similarities between answers to various factors, providing the same level of importance between them. In this way it will be possible to recognize some patterns and the presence of trends and behavioral groups of consumers, providing support for the qualitative analysis that will come out from the interview's insights. It could be intuitive, for example, to think that people inclined to give importance to the thematic events will give importance also to the thematic services, both of which are helping the consumer immerse in the movie environment. This can lead to the definition of a category of consumer keener to treat the movie experience as a moment of full immersion in the movie environment.

As previously mentioned, a qualitative analysis of the interviews will be done in order to recognize patterns and type of consumers, giving a sense to the answers provided, defining why and in which way factors are considered important for the movie-goer. This analysis will explain the results obtained by the previous analysis and give a narrative to the phenomenon of the movie going for each factor, valuing the understanding of behavioral choices and what the movie theaters can do about it when proposing this movie experience to the Italian

consumer. In the next chapter the results of these analysis will be presented and it will give not only the answer to our research question, but also a picture of the movie-going consumer attitude towards the movie-going experience, letting us understand how the Italian consumer value going to the cinema and if the functional factors continue to dominate the scene or it is possible an evolution towards movie theaters more focused on experience than movie products, with the consumers interested in benefitting from it.

Results and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the presentation of the research results obtained by a total of 74 interviews, with the exposition of the factor importance given by the defined sample. As previously explained by the chapter dedicated to the methodology, the data were collected during semi-structured interviews, with the transcription of important insights connected to the motivations regarding the value the consumer gave to the experiential factors examined for their movie-going experience. The chapter is divided in three parts, from which the analysis focus on different perspectives of the data. The first part is dedicated to the analysis taking in account each factor individually, showing the frequency distribution of the importance level given by the sample to that experiential factor. Together with this analysis the results are motivated by the qualitative insights obtained from the interviews, in order to give an understanding of the consumer thoughts related to that particular experiential factor. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the factors category by category, in order to see if specific groups have preferences towards particular experiential factors, helping understanding more about the behavior of specific classes of consumers. The third and last part is dedicated to defining if there are specific patterns between factors with a cross data analysis, completing the presentation with insights that motivate and explain the possible similar level of importance given by consumer to different factors.

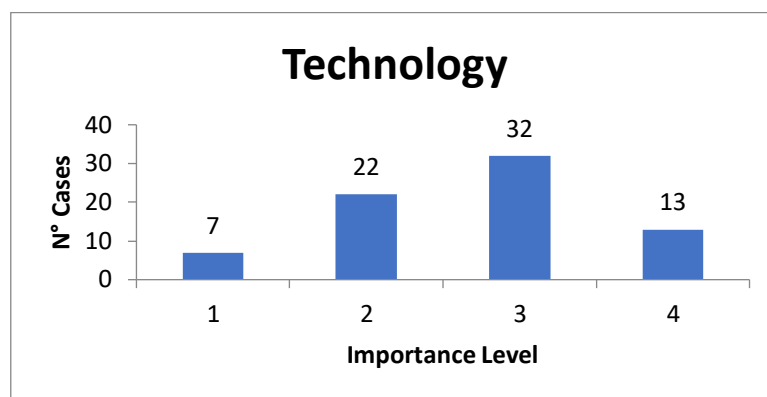
Individual Factors Results

Technology

The first factor brought forward to the consumer is one of the aspects of the screening room defined as technology. During their experience the room in which the vision of the movie is consumed is where the emotions reach the maximum peak, the climax of the preparations that a movie theatre does in order for the consumer to feel immersed. Once inside the screening room, the experiential factors related to the comfort and the technology used take the wheel of their experience, enhancing the pleasure of the movie product and impact his feelings. The technological advancements that a movie theatre makes use of are means that support the immersion of the consumer inside the movie world, making him detach from the reality if there

is no disturbance in its use. When the factor is proposed during the interview, it is referred to technological advancements of the screen, such as width and high-definition specifics, and of sound, with Dolby technology posed as main example. The examples mainly used are referred to the movie theatre already analyzed such as Arcadia Cinema and movie theatre of the venetian area that promotes the use of advancement technologies to attract customers, such as IMG Candiani with their Dolby Atmos and Uci Cinemas Luxe Marcon with their high definition, Screenx and Dolby Surround.

It was important to clarify to the interviewee that the enhancement of the experience provided by the technology from the movie theatre start from a basic level of quality in which the consumer does not have disturbances in the vision of the product by technical deficiencies, such as bad audio quality, problems in the screen and other difficulties not appropriate for the minimum requirements of product enjoyment. The moment the minimum technical requirements are not met by a movie theatre, this factor overshadows all the others and pollutes the experience of the consumer, increasing its importance disproportionately and becoming a bias for the research. When it is difficult to see a movie due to technical difficulties, the consumer gives importance to technology more than any other aspects of its experience by default, since it becomes the primary problem to their enjoyment of the experience.



Graph 1: Technology factor results

Technology is one of the aspects deemed important by the consumer for their experience. It is considered salient by 45 out of 74 consumers because it is seen deeply linked to the movie product and one of the main motives by which consumers decided to see movies on the big screen instead from their tv that lacks the advancements to make the experience more immersive and enjoyable.

"I go to the movie theatres because I want to experience the new movies in the best way possible"
(Alessandro)

The most common answer on this factor, third level of importance, reflects the preference of a movie theatre with advanced technological feature related to the movie it is going to be watched: If the movie demands for being enjoyed the fullest an important technology for sounds and definition, generally Hollywood blockbusters or movies with focus on cinematography component, the answers convey a necessity in searching for a movie theatre with this experiential factor.

"I try to have a good home-video experience, but certain movies must be watched at the movie theatre, especially the ones with many special effects" (Francesco)

"There are movies that are best enjoyed with the technology, because they were made for that technology that you cannot have possibly at home" (Marco)

For movies in which the technology is not important for the fruition of the film, the consumer stay more on the level 2 of importance, being a value added but not being discriminant in movie theater choice. Even though the factor and movie product seems to be well connected, some consumers dedicated the highest level of importance to it, going beyond the predominance of the movie product in their decision process: these consumers motivated this choice by defining technology available in the screening room as a necessary ingredient for their enjoyment, being a factor of difference between their homes and the theatre or being a very important component for feeling immersed in the movie environment.

"If the theatre does not offer me the best (tech) available, what's the point? I can simply watch the movie at home, when it comes in streaming, saving money and having a good home video quality." (Mirco)

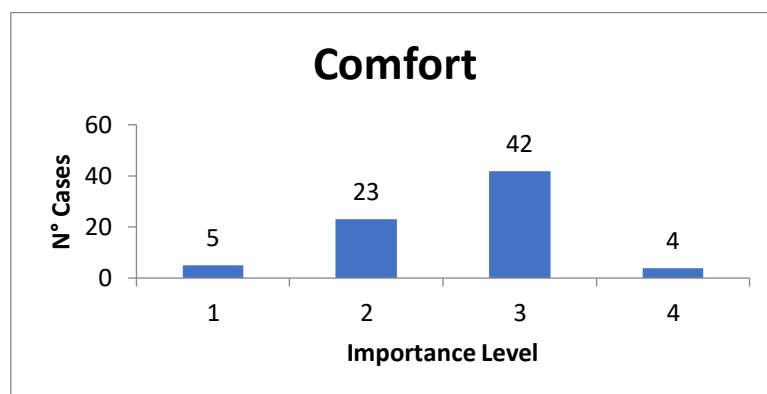
Another motivation given for a level four of importance is the attendance to a cinematography school and so technology becomes an important factor for this kind of consumer, but the number of answers linked to this motivation is not enough to be defining for the sample.

Comfort

When talking about what is the main factor that influence the consumer experience in a movie theatre, many respondents touched the comfort factor as the top of mind in this category. The connection is immediate since an important aspect of the enjoyment of the watching a movie at the theatres is doing it in a place that guarantee a higher level of comfort than your standard living room. Comfort in the screening room then is one of the experiential factors that is most

common between consumers thanks also to the many promotions and improvements made by movie theatres on this aspect: the premium seats that is offered by multiplex is part of a plan to increase one enjoyment of movie-watching, translated in the promotion of VIP Seats or extra comfortable and spacious chairs that offers mini tables and similar features. The comfort factor is referred to also the temperature of the movie theatre and the use of lights that do not fatigue the spectator eyes before the start of the projection, all features that enhance the experience of the consumer and helps him feel like at home in a cozy, safe and warm environment in which he can dedicate completely to movie-watching.

When the comfort factor comes into the stage, a distinction between some type of comfort factors is clarified to the interviewee: the research is referring, as comfort factor, only to the feature that improve the experiential comfort inside the screening room, excluding so the movie theatre features related to parking spots, easiness of use of the ticketing system, position of the movie theatre and urban connections with it, all features that may be defined by the consumer as comforts as well. In this sense, the examples most used by the interviewer then are the availability of special seating that improve physical comfort, the use of the right temperature in the environment for increasing thermal comfort and the use of particular lights for reducing the strain in the eyes before the start of a movie.



Graph 2: Comfort factor results

Data gathered shows an intuitive result in which the majority of the respondents (46 out of 74) considers the comfort factor as an important part of their movie-going experience. When choosing a movie theatre the seating and other elements that improve one's comfort inside the screening room come in place during the decisional process, giving proof to the well-known idea that enhancement in comfort is a factor searched by consumers. Although the factor is defined as important by most of the sample, only few talks about it as predominant over the importance given to the movie product in their experience. Primary motivations from the

respondents were based on the fact that the movie is still the major component of their experience, making the consumer be more flexible about his comfort experience if the movie is really valuable.

“If I am interested in the movie, I can bear a little bit of discomfort in the end” (Silvia)

The main motivation for its importance is given by the idea of immersion and not disturbance in the screening room: together with the technological aspect, the comfort factor helps the consumer to immerse and concentrate in his experience without distractions that he could have at home, improving his feeling of being at the movies.

“In the screening room I can concentrate on the movie, at home instead I have too many distractions and I tend to not follow the movie too well” (Stefania)

The movie theatre becomes for the consumer the place of the fruition of movie products and in its description the comfort factor is part of it as a major motive for the spectator to prefer the screen room than his own house, at least for the majority of the consumers. Even the respondents that did not give a determinant importance to it, letting other factors determine their choice of movie theatre, recognize its value in their experience, mainly in a positive way. When the movie product instead is considered the one and only real experiential factor, even watching it in a not comfortable environment is not important since all the experience for the consumer comes from what it is shown on the screen. Only few people of the sample are in line with this level of importance for the comfort factor.

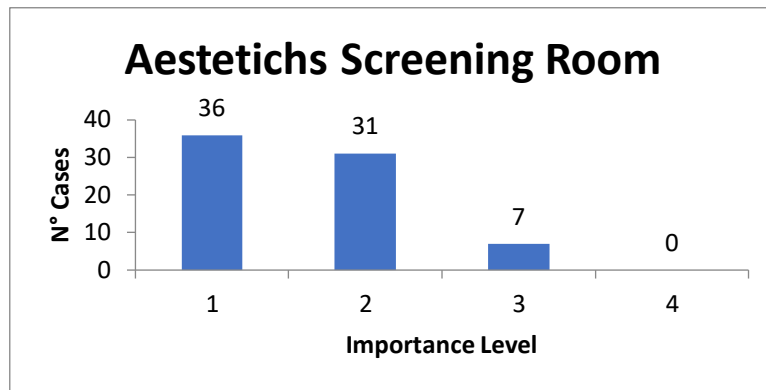
“The movie must be watched in a not comfortable seating, otherwise you do not focus on the movie, but on sleeping” (Stefano)

Aesthetics Screening Room and Movie Theatre

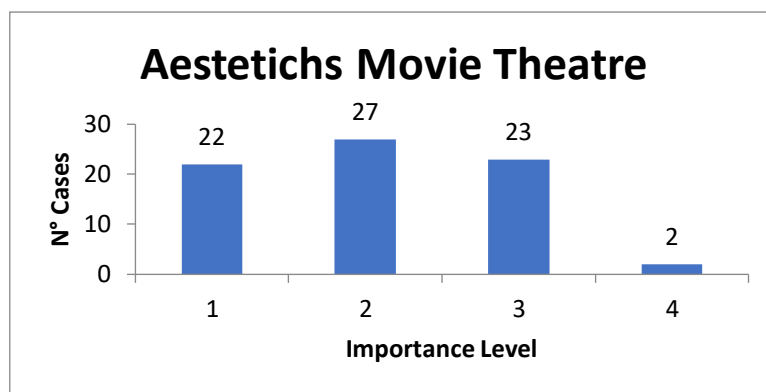
When approaching a movie theatre the consumer is welcomed by the appearance of the building, which can be a factor of experiential pleasure if it pleases the customer's taste. It can change the perception of the overall experience, even if just by a small fraction, and enhance their movie-going in that particular movie theatre. The building then is seen by the consumer both for its design properties and aesthetic appearances, that can be carried on with a defined style also inside the screening room itself, pleasing the eyes before the start of the movie.

When the factor is proposed to the interviewee it is first asked the importance of this feature inside the screening room, defined as the design and the aesthetic pleasure that can be derived

by the consumer once he enters it, then in a second moment the factor is referred to the whole building, from its exterior to the design and aesthetics of the internal spaces available to the public. Examples posed were referred to differences in appearances between the movie theatre of the venetian area, helping the consumer understand the importance they give to this feature for their movie-going experience.



Graph 3: Aestetichs Screening Room factor results



Graph 4: Aestetichs movie theatre factor results

Both of the aesthetic and design factors are deemed as not really important for the sample, with the former found important just by 7 respondents and the latter by only 26 out of 74, with a predominance of consideration of it as a value addition to the experience that revolves more around other factors than the appearance of the movie theatre itself: the customer notes a difference in its experience, but it is soon forgotten and becomes of little importance.

“Well, I notice the appearance of the theatre once I am there, but then I get tickets, I go inside the room and watch the movie.” (Sara)

While the aesthetics of the screening room is defined as not or of little importance by almost all the respondents, the aesthetics and design of the building as a whole found some consumers interested in it. The motivation resides mainly in practical explanation given by the same

respondents: once you are in the screening room, it takes little time before everything goes dark and the movie products takes the main stage of the experience, avoiding concentrating on the aesthetics designs of the room.

“At a certain point the lights go out and the movie start, and the aesthetics do not matter anymore for me” (Elisa)

For the movie theatre building instead the motivation regarding the little importance given to it refers to the amount of time is spent in the building, with many consumers entering the theatre just for the time to get the tickets and sitting in the screening room, more focused on the movie ahead then the appearance of the building. The importance starts to rise if the consumer arrive has more time in the hands to pass in the building or if he is a frequent attendee, hence frequently noticing the building in which is spending time watching movies.

“I like to look around while waiting for my friends and if there is something wrong, I tend to notice it and annoys me” (Lorenzo)

Between whom notice the design of the building there are some differences, such as simple aesthetic pleasure or of remembrance of the past when movie theatres in the cities where smaller similar to personal spaces, giving importance to nostalgia effect related to when they were younger.

“I like more that movie theatre because it reminds me of when I was going younger and there were not so many rooms and things to do inside. It was part of the city, more intimate and not like the big multiplexes that there are in the outskirts” (Luisa)

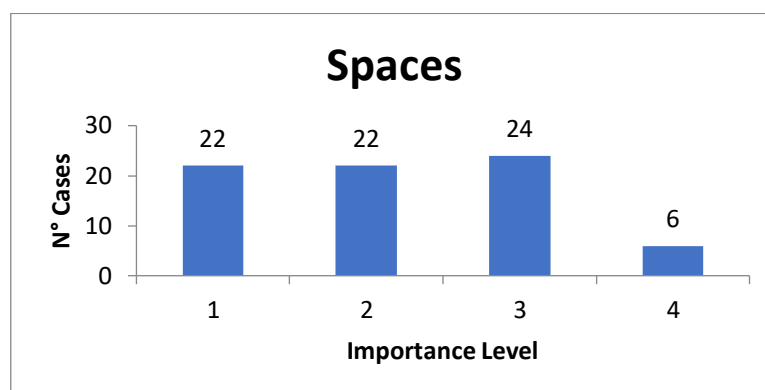
“I study architecture, of course I like a nice building” (Giovanni)

Spaces

Movie theatres are buildings that can offer different spaces with other functions than just screening the movie to consumers. The owners may add spaces with different services trying to improve the life of the customers and make their movie-going experience close to a full-time event in which many other needs can be satisfied, being them correlated to movie experience or not. Traditional movie theatres are known for being place with the only function of movie screening, so they are made mainly by a ticketing area, the screening rooms and the area connecting these two spaces. In order to attract more people to their building and provide more options to the consumer and improving their experiences, new spaces are added with different

functions. The choice of which spaces are made available inside is left to the movie theatre owners, that decide which type of experience they want to offer to the customers and which idea of movie experience they are advocating for: movie theatres promoting the movie experience as a fun and pure entertainment moment are more keen to have a popcorn area, an arcade, a fast-food or a bookshop, spaces and services related to the idea of going to the movies with the objective of entertain the consumers; movie theatres interested in the experience as a moment of cultural growth of the individual has preferences in making available a exhibition area, a literary café or a library, spaces belonging to a cultural enjoyment of the movie-going. When these spaces are offered by the movie theatre the consumer may recognize the different offering as part of its experience and if they share the same idea of movie-going, it could improve its overall experience: the consumer searching for a pure entertainment experience could appreciate the presence of spaces linked to the american way of movie consuming, doing actions such buying popcorns, eating before or after the screening to have a more complete day at the movies, relaxing with arcades while waiting for the movie to start.

When the factor is presented during the interview, examples are made referring to the movie theatres in the area, with IMG Candiani offering a bookshop, a bar and a popcorn area and making comparison with Cinema Dante that does not have other spaces than the ones dedicated to the fruition of the movie. Other examples are given by describing the spaces available in the movie theatres previously analyzed for the definition of the experiential factors for this research.



Graph 5: Spaces factor results

The results reveal a general disinterest in the availability of these spaces in the movie theatre for the consumer movie experience, as only 30 cases out of 74 found this feature important for their movie-going experience. A motivation given by many interviewees refers to the movie experience functional perception: going to the cinemas has the primary function of watching a

movie, other spaces that does not improve the consumption of the movie product are taken in little consideration. In the movie experience perception of these consumers, a ticketing area and the screening room are the main spaces that are deemed important.

“For me, the movie theatre can be made by the ticketing area, the screening room and the aisle connecting them. I do not even notice other spaces.” (Massimiliano)

“I am visiting the bookshop sometimes, but it is always because it is a bookshop, not because it is part of my movie experience. When I go to see the movies, I never stop by.” (Antonio)

Another point sustained by the customers interviewed is related to the location of the movie theatre: if the theatre they go the most is situated in the city center, there is no need for these other spaces to be situated inside the building, provided by the cinema itself, because once they go out of the structure they have many possibilities to satisfy their other functional needs: many respondents that wants to complete the evening with a dinner just walk outside the theatre to reach their preferable destination.

“When I have to eat something, I just step outside the movie theatre and I go to my favorite place with my friends. Or maybe I just try a new place somewhere else, but there is no need for me to remain inside the cinema, I find what I need outside.” (Francesca)

On the contrary, consumers that visits most the theatres that are in outskirts or industrial areas, mainly multiplexes, enjoy and give more importance to the availability of such spaces, such as the pub under the movie theatre of Uci Luxe Marcon. This is connected to what consumers thinks the movie experience is for them: when defining the movie-going experience as a complete event, not made just from the movie watched but together with other activities, the spaces start to get important and are treated as value addition to the movie day. Dinner places, bookshops, exhibition areas, arcades, all of them are seen as part of the movie theatre becoming a “place where the consumer pass a nice time”, entertaining and enriching himself with not only the screening of a movie, but also with other valuable activities for him, being pure entertainment or cultural growth for the individual.

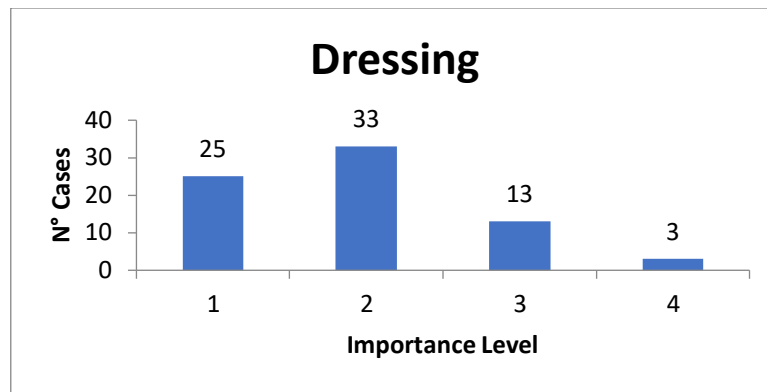
“It is important that there is the pub under the cinema, so every time I do not have to take the car again and go around to find places. Instead, I just walk down and end the evening with a nice beer.” (Mirco)

“I tend to arrive early at the theatre, so while waiting I like to go around, visiting the bookshop, have a coffee, and pass a nice time until some of my friends show up” (Lorenzo)

Dressing

When entering the movie theatre, consumers can already start his own immersion in the environment by noticing the dressing of the surroundings, from the ticketing area to the screening room. This may help him understand being a different environment from the everyday life, related to the movie-going idea the movie theatre wants to offer. The researcher defines the dressing factor with the way spaces and areas are set up and decorated so that the customer can already feel being “at the place where the movies are shown” from the moment he set foot into the building. The dressing is another way to convey to the consumer which kind of experience the structure is going to offer them: multiplexes more connected to the idea of fun and entertainment are staging their environment with blockbusters memorabilia, posters and cardboards, giving off the vibe of a space dedicated to the evasion from the daily routine in which you can forget about life problems; movie theatres that are interested to offer an experience connected to the cultural enrichment of the individual tends to be more somber in the staging, with additions that reminds a cultural approach to the movie culture, such as books and posters of movie cults of the golden age of cinematography.

When the factor is touched by the interview, the interviewer clarified the aspect of the dressing by making the distinction between permanent and temporary dressing. The word permanent refers in this case to the dressing that is generally present in the movie theatre on a regular basis and not made for an special occasion related to particular events, a dressing that the researcher defines as temporary: even if they change every week, the presence of the posters are a constant reminder for people visiting the multiplexes, while a statue of a T-Rex presented in the context of a special screening of Jurassic Park is a temporary memorabilia that once the event is over it will be put away. In this case, it is asked to the interviewee the importance they give to the permanent dressing in the movie theatre.



Graph 6: Dressing factor results

The dressing is not considered important by the majority of the respondents, with only 16 consumers giving importance to the factor, with motivations similar to the ones used for the design and aesthetics of the movie theatre. Many consumers notice this feature, but it is never considered a discriminant for their experience, giving it the rate of a simple value addition. A good portion of the sample not even notice the factor, more interested in just buying the ticket and seeing the movie, regardless the environment around them.

The few people that find important this factor for their movie-going experience motivate their answers by giving importance on the effort put by the movie theatre in this factor: if the movie theatre manifest its interest in making the consumer more immerse by planning and staging the places in a way that the effort can be recognized, then the consumer greatly appreciate this interest knowing the movie theatre care about this aspect of the consumer experience.

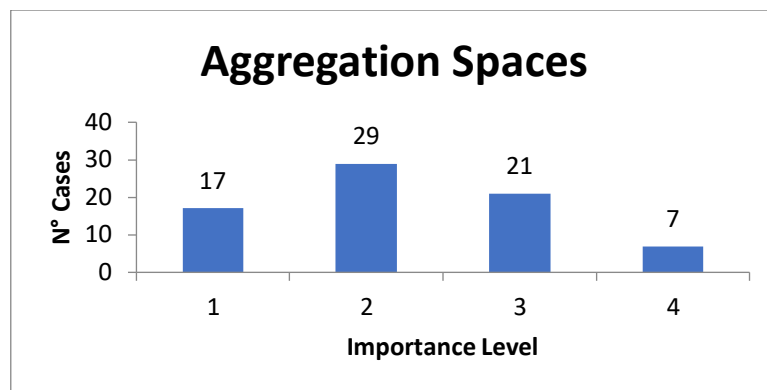
“When there is logic and passion in the dressing of the environment, it is something that I appreciate greatly, otherwise if it is something done with superficiality, then it may annoy me. It shows care.” (Francesco)

“If the dressing is well done and has a sense into it, it becomes important because I am happy that the movie theatre thought about this aspect.” (Beatrice)

Aggregation Spaces

Going to the movie theatre for the participants usually does not revolve just around watching a movie, but many consumers point out the interest in the movie-going experience as a social event that they can attend with friends and family, using it as a collective experience to satisfy their social needs, independently by being connected to movie watching at all. Movie theatres then, recognizing that part of the movie experience refers to socialization, make available spaces in which customers can gather and discuss about movies and other topics, addressing

this social need from the consumer and trying to improve their experience. When the topic is touched during the interview, it is clarified that the area inside the cinema that the researcher is focusing on with this factor are the ones in which the social function is present, such as waiting rooms with seating, foyers, libraries with tables and forth. Restaurants and café inside the movie theatre space can be considered places where the social function is satisfied, having tables and seating where people can gather around eating food.



Graph 7: Aggregation Spaces factor results

From the results it is possible to note that this factor is not considered important by the majority of respondents in a similar fashion as the results regarding the availability of other spaces, in fact only 29 consumers out of 74 deemed it of importance for their experience. This factor is considered more as a value addition than a real necessity for the consumer experience: the consumer does not need a specific place to satisfy its social need, being able to discuss and talk directly at home or along the way with their peers about the movie. The factor is also suffering from the same limit that the space factor is having with people that goes to the movie theatre situated inside the cities: who has more options outside the movie theatre, does not find important having spaces inside the theatre for its social function.

“Discussing is part of my experience, but I do not need specific places to do that, I just talk on my way home for example.” (Federica)

“I do not mind at all ending up on the street after the movie, I can stay hours talking outside of the building. If I need to discuss in a warm place, I just go to home or to another place.” (Alessandro)

“The movie watching is an individual experience, places full of people do not really attract me.” (Mariano)

The histogram results are slightly more tilted towards considering important the factor I comparison to the results for other spaces. The reason is given by some respondents of the

sample attached to the idea of movie going as a personal growth done by experiencing the event in a collective way and giving importance to the exchange of opinions after the show.

“I always go with someone to the movies, I like to talk with them, I like to exchange opinions. In this way there is a value in the movie watching, by the discussion with your peers. If there are places immediately after the screening room, I tend to use them with my friends.” (Luciana)

A minor number of consumers motivated the importance of this factor by having spaces to use for completing the movie event day by discussing the movie, and this can be assimilated to the answers for the importance of other places that we have already discussed, referring to the location of the movie theatre in the outskirts of the cities and considering the movie going as a full event.

Staff

The staff factor is referred by the researcher as the modification of the consumer movie experience by the presence and the interaction with the staff of the movie theatre, defining the staff as all the people that work in the building with the objective of welcoming and has some social interaction with the customer, from the ticket seller to the owner of the cinema. The relevance of this factor came by the idea that nice interaction with the staff can improve one’s mood and therefore its perception of the experience, together with creating a connection between frequent attendees and passionate staff that will foster a better experience for the consumers. It is asked than if this factor is deemed important to the interviewee and in what measure it modifies his customer experience.



Graph 8: Staff factor results

The majority of the sample gives little importance to the staff factor appreciating the courtesy of the staff, but without making this feature determine their movie theatre choice, with only 24 respondents making in a determinant factor for their movie consumer experience. There is a

sort of necessity by the majority of the sample for the presence of the human touch in the movie theatre, but it is asked not more than actually being professional and do their job. When the staff goes out of the boundaries, for some respondents the experience is worsening, mainly for consumers that does not goes often to the movie theatre and does not value much the social aspect of the movie-going experience.

“The staff have to sell me the tickets and stop, I do not like when they are too much talkative. Of course I appreciate courtesy but they just have to be professional” (Francesco)

“I never thought about this aspect. I notice courtesy and a smile but does not really change my movie-going experience. For sure it is not something I think about when choosing the theatre”. (Federica)

The importance on this factor is given by people that does not share the same views or same type of experience, giving to this factor a sort of randomness in appreciation without letting a particular category of consumer taking over the others. The main motivation resides in the consumer attitude for the social aspect and how much the courtesy is appreciated, a variable in which factors such as the job, the everyday life and more other not taken in consideration by this study could have been determinant. An interesting motivation regarding the importance of the staff factor focus on not letting the staff ruin the experience more than actually enhance it, with casual consumers more interested in not ruin the “magic of the movies” during their few appearances at the movie theatre, and frequent attendees that appreciate the professionalism of the staff they will meet often.

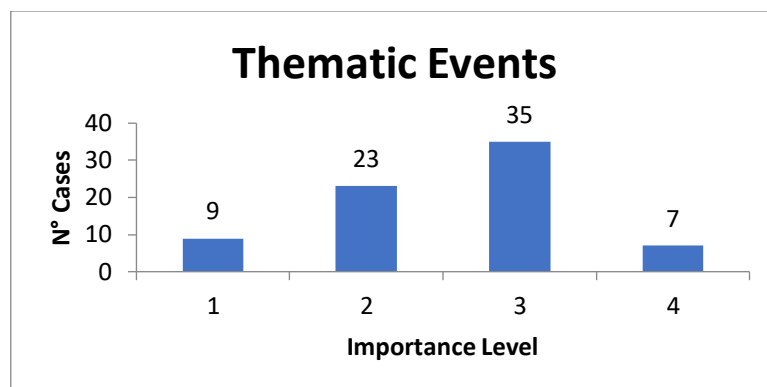
“I hate when the staff comes immediately after the end of the movie, practically asking us to leave with the eyes. I want to enjoy the end credits of a movie, they can wait.” (Antonio)

“If the guy selling you the tickets is not polite, you are already starting bad the night at the movies. Generally, I will think double before going back to that cinema if I know the person is still there.” (Paola)

The only component that seems to enhance the movie-going experience is when the staff make the consumer notice that they share the same passion and put efforts in their experience. Staff courtesy and professionalism then seems to become factors that needs to be present instead of being a plus for the experience of the consumer, not really representing a real improvement for their experience for the majority of the sample.

Events

Between the various methods that a movie theatre can adopt to make the consumer feel more immersed in the movie environment, the establishment of a theme is one of the most effective. In this way the movie screening obtains more meaning, enhancing and improving the consumer experience by giving more value to its movie-watching. With the thematic definition consumers will consider the movie not only as the individual value of the movie itself, but in connection with other products or experiences related to the theme established, making comparisons and reflections with previous thematic experiences. Movie theatres can define a theme giving a series of stimuli and signals to the consumer, which will receive them from the surroundings using primarily the organization of special events, thematic experiences giving more meaning to the movie consumption of a particular screening. The examples provided to the interviewee goes from multi-screening events such as festivals, cineforums and movie marathons, to more complex and unique special screening events dedicated to movie premieres. With these events, a theme is added to the screening making it more memorable for the consumer's mind, which will make the event more valuable by immerse themselves into the movie environment defined by the movie theatre. This immersion in the theme can be supported by the organization and the temporary dressing of the building, which make the customers feels entering in a dedicated thematic experience together with feeling to be part of it itself, adding a bit of the "magic" that themed park tends to have.



Graph 9: Events factor results

This experiential factor is regarded as important by the majority of the respondents (42 out of 74), with many consumers thinking about the offer of thematic experience in considering which movie theatre to attend. This importance is given by the interest for the commercial consumer to be more immersed in the movie "magic" to escape from the routine and have fun, while for the

cultural consumer to enjoy the multi-screening events connected to a theme in order to reflect and learn more about it.

"I love movie itineraries given by the movie theatres, they help to make sense and give me more to appreciate what I am watching." (Antonio)

"It is a nice environment to be in, gives something more from the whole experience." (Giorgia)

Defining a theme gives one more reason to actually move from the house and reach the screening rooms, adding value to the experience and more motivation on the enjoyment of the time spent in the building.

"The event is something new to try out, something extraordinary that does not happen every day. If there is an event, I am interested at least to trying it out." (Guglielma)

Respondents cite the interest in the novelty, to try out the events, and motivate their importance by the attachment they have towards particular themes offered by the movie theatre. This opens up to the explanation of the few answers that gives the factor a very important value: in themed experiences, one full enjoy the immersion in the environment if it actually has interest in the thematization offered prior the decision to go to the event, with very few people interested in "trying" new themes out. In this way the factor becomes a source for competitive advantage between theatres very connected to the movie screened by them.

"Yes, I would decide to go to the movie theatre with the event organized, but I would never go to spend money on something I do not like. For me events are important when I am in interested in the movie screened." (Maria)

Respondents of the sample that gave little or no importance to this factor motivates their answers by defining their experience more connected just to the vision of the movie, feeling that the addition of a theme does not really add value enough to make it a discriminant for the movie theatre, a decision process more affected by other functional or experiential variables. Some answers are even given on the negative side of these events from respondents that value the movie-going experience as a more individual experience where the important is to enjoy the movie without disturbance, categorizing the thematic factor sometime as bringer of annoyances such as more peoples in the room.

"I do not like when there are too many people in the room. These events generally bring more of them into the movie theatre, so I try to avoid that specific day" (Francesco)

There is also a distinction that was made by the consumers once interviewed on this factor, with their answer that change depending on the type of event offered: the cultural consumer is more interested in themed multi-screening events such as festivals or cineforums, because they know this will be an educational experience, while they associate the thematic special screenings with the American way of enjoying of the movies, and they tend to avoid theatres that offer this kind of thematization; on the contrary, people interested in a more fun environment are attracted by the thematization of the movie theatre, more connected to their idea of movie experience as a fun and entertainment moment of escapism from the daily routine.

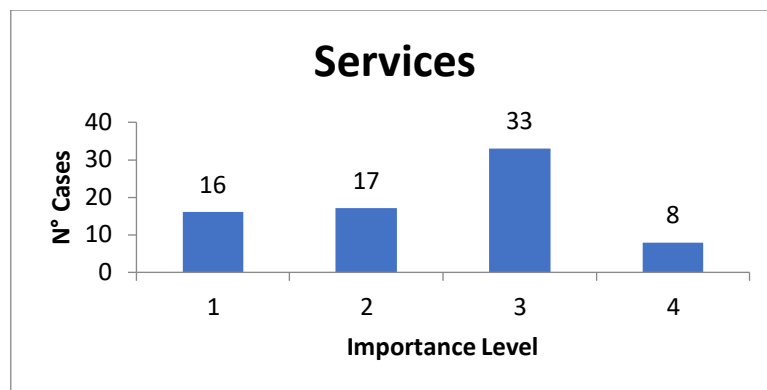
“I found this commercial events just a marketing tactic that does not interest me, but I like to go if there is something to learn from it, usually it happens when I go with my friends at the festivals or cineforums” (Luciana)

Nonetheless, even if it is seen in a negative way, the factor for these people is always a determinant for their movie theatre choice.

Services

Movie theatres, to improve the consumer experience, can delve more into the thematization by offering services connected with their idea of movie experience for their customers. While events are a thematization that does not require too much effort from the consumer to feel immersed inside the movie environment, with the interactions more limited to the role of an observer, the proposition of services requires more effort and in exchange of resources such as money or time, the customer is supported in its immersion in the theme defined by the movie theatre. There are many different services offered by the movie theatres, but they are generally connected to their idea of experience they want to proposed to customers: a commercial multiplex, more linked to the fun and entertainment, is more interested to offer services that enhance the feeling of escapism and fun, such as games, pre shows with the participation of the costumer, thematic food experiences and other kind of entertainment before the start of the screening; if the movie theatre is more connected to the personal growth of the individual through the fruition of the movies, services such as cinematography courses, lessons on critique, guided tours of exhibitions and renting of books, gourmet food experiences and screening rooms are more connected to that idea of movie-going experience.

To clarify to the consumer the nature of these services, they are defined as activities or objects that made the customer interact and use more of his resources (money or time) in exchange of the feeling of being more immersed in its movie-going experience and adding value to it. While attending an event involves little interaction and can be seen as a background of his experience, participating in its activities support more the consumer immersion but require more time and money from the customer.



Graph 10: Services factor results

This factor is considered by the majority of the respondents an important factor for their movie-going experience, with 41 out of 74 consumers giving a level of importance high enough to affect their movie theatre choice. Services are seen, as similar to the events, as a welcomed addition that adds motivations for someone to visit the movie theatre, even more if this special feature is connected to the movie they are going to watch. Motivations given by the respondents define the services as a thing that add value to their experience, choosing to attend, as was with the thematic events factor, the movie theatre with the services linked to their taste.

“If there were some theatres that does something like this (the services), I would try it out for sure, after all there is nothing much to do in the city” (Gina)

During the interview it appeared that this factor is affected by the same limitations and importance motivations as the thematic event factor: many answers remain on the level three of importance because thematic and cultural services are deeply connected with the movies programmed by the theatres, and the answers that deemed the factor as not important are coming from the consumers interested mainly on just the vision of the movie. It is possible to notice a bigger amount of respondents that are completely indifferent to this factor than the thematic events, and this is due to the amount of energy the customers has to use to use these services: while a thematic event has a low level of interaction and gives a sort of choice for the consumer to decide if he want to feel immersed on just notice it, the services requires more

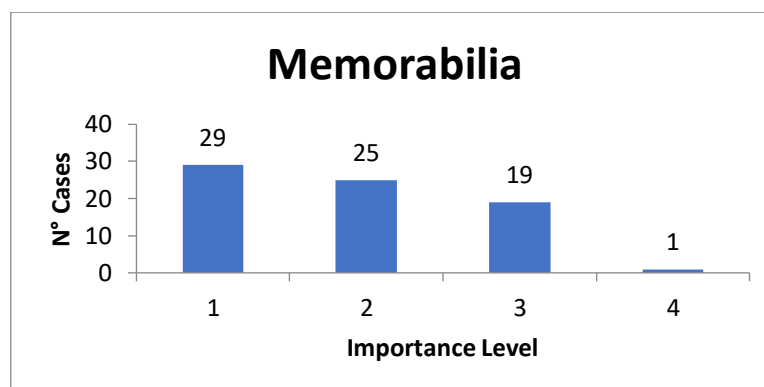
planning in order to use them, such as pre-shows in which the customers have to come an hour earlier of the screenings, or the use of money to buy thematic food and spend more time in the theatre consuming it.

“I do not have time for using these services, I would like to, but finishing late at work I just have the time to get the tickets and enter in the room to watch the movie. They are not really important for my movie experience then I imagine.” (Luca)

“In my experience I have never tried any of these services, and I do not feel the need. I would have to plan, spend money on them, not something that makes me really want to try out. I am happy with what I have.” (Sandro)

Memorabilia

The consumer experience is composed by different stages, one of them being the post purchase experience, the last step of the customer experience. For the movie experience, this translates into the remembering of the movie night for the consumer. Once the movie product is consumed the experience does not stop there but thank to objects and memorabilia, it is possible for the consumer to remember the emotions he felt during the experience and re-experiencing them by tapping on his memories. The object that the customer obtains at the end of his experience at the movies have this function, and they can take different forms, from the simple ticket for the screening, to gadgets, posters and even books sometimes related to the movie just enjoyed. In this way for the consumer there is a value addition to their movie-experience, not only made by the material gain obtained by attending the movie theatre, but also because the object act as a stimulus for his own memories of the experience. During the interview then it is asked to the sample the importance of these memorabilia in their movie-going experience and what is the relation they have with them.



Graph 11: Memorabilia factor results

From the results it is possible to notice a general disinterest in the importance of memorabilia, with the majority of the sample not caring about what they receive at the movie theatre other than the essential experience of watching a movie and only 20 respondents finding it an important feature of their experience. Consumers mainly receive the movie tickets as memorabilia, but they tend to throw them away considered the little value this object holds in their minds, not needing a support to remember the experience other than their own memory.

"If the experience is memorable, I remember it regardless the memorabilia" (Mirco)

The majority of the sample does not consider this factor when choosing a movie theatre, with even some respondents complaining about the more consistent memorabilia because they just take space and do not know where to put them. Who gave little importance, although they manifest an improvement of their experience when they get the memorabilia after watching a movie they liked, never think about the obtaining of the object when choosing the movie theatre.

"Sometimes the ticket is ugly, keeping it is just a nuisance, even more with posters and gadgets, I do not know where to put them. If every time I go I would receive something, I would be submerged" (Arianna)

On the contrary, some consumers find it an important factor for their experience for various reasons. One of the motivations can be found in the collector's nature of some of the respondents, interested in remembering the movie night by collecting the tickets and conserving them at home.

"I like collecting the movie tickets, putting them in a book and write down a review about my movie- experience. This helps me making the movie-going valuable for me." (Beatrice)

Other motivation is that for some consumer the memorabilia is part of the full package of the movie-going experience, more attached to the consuming aspect of the experience connected to the idea of going to the cinemas for fun and entertainment: people connected to this idea of movie-going do not go often to the movies, so they are keener to collect a memory from it. Who goes to the movies for an individual cultural growth see the memorabilia as something not connected to their experience and it is found important only as a thank you for the movie makers.

"Sometimes if I liked the movie, I stop in the shop inside the theatre and buy the book from which the movie is based. I like to think is a way to thanks the creators of the story." (Maria Teresa)

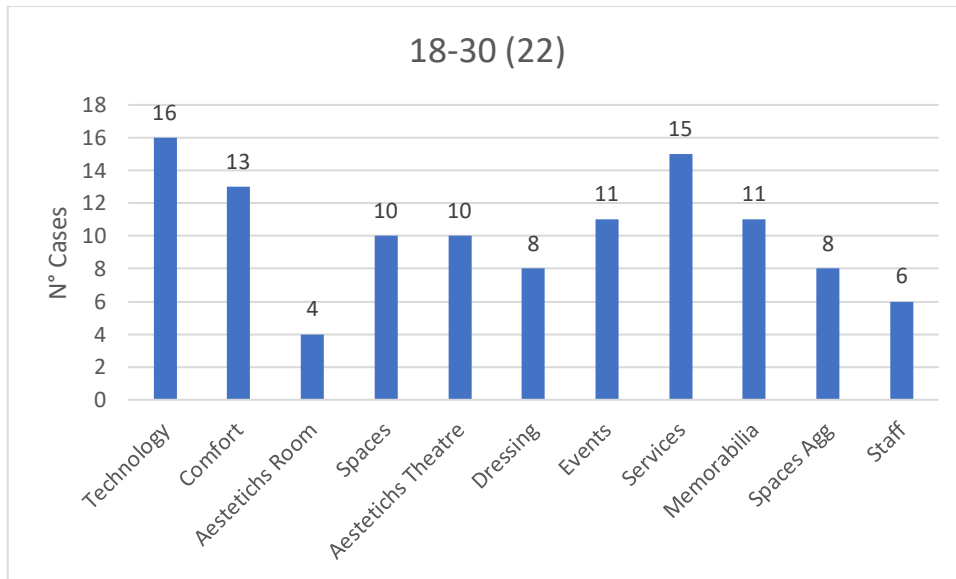
Category Analysis

In this second part of the chapter, it is important to understand if the factors defined previously hold some importance to certain demographic and behavioral categories of consumers, with the idea of understanding better the motivations and the movie experience of the segments defined. This will be useful in the future for movie theatres to understand towards which segment decide to focus while trying to appeal to the experiential side of the movie consuming. The segments analyzed are the demographic categories of age, gender and job, while the behavioral categories refer to the frequency of attendance and with whom they have the movie experience in the movie theatre. For each category it is defined the amount of level 3 and 4 values in each factor, in order to find the number of cases that gave importance a specific factor related to the number of respondents of that category, showed in brackets. In this way, the main factors will be highlighted by the highest columns of each histogram and if the number of cases reach and exceed the 50% mark, the factor is considered important by the majority of the segment.

Age

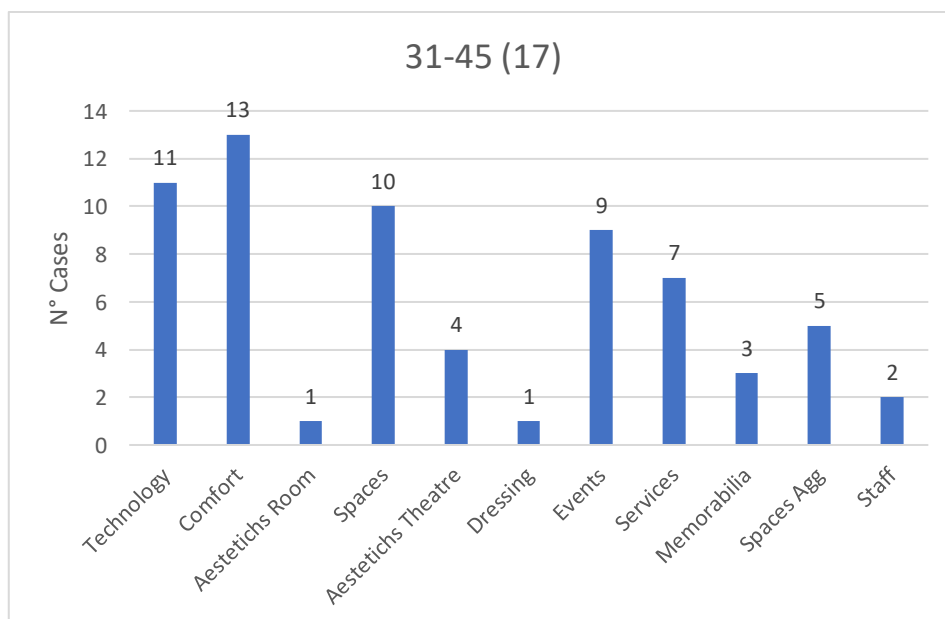
The main segmentation referred to the age of the respondents, with a distinction between young population (18-30 years old), adulthood with the distinction of the two segments 31-45 and 46-60, and the older population of the sample (over 60). The age segmentation is justified by the fact that people with different age tends to have different attitudes shaped by time, objectives and taste, that gradually change over time and aging, bringing different perception of movie-going experience and different importance to the same factors. Many respondents confirmed a change in their attitudes with their maturity, remembering their younger self giving more importance to experiential factors that now they do not need in their movie experience.

Intuitively, younger people should prefer the novelty and treating the movie going more as a social entertainment event, going with the peers to see the latest movie and remain inside the buzz, while older people see the experience as a more individual cultural growth, disliking the American way of movie-consuming. Adults should be a compromise between these two extremes, with other demographic factors intervening when defining their movie-going experience.



Graph 12: Young segment results

The young segment seems to be keener to find important the experiential factors, with technology and services leading the results. Intuitively, the younger generations are more prone to the liking of technological advancements (16) in movie theatres and the derived immersion, seeing it as one of the main reasons they visit movie theatres together with the comfort factor (13). All the thematic factors, such as services (15), events (11) and memorabilia (11) are over or equal the 50% mark of the 22 respondents of the segment, seeing it as a novelty for the movie theatre and a support in the immersion of the consumer, becoming motivations to visit the movie theatres.

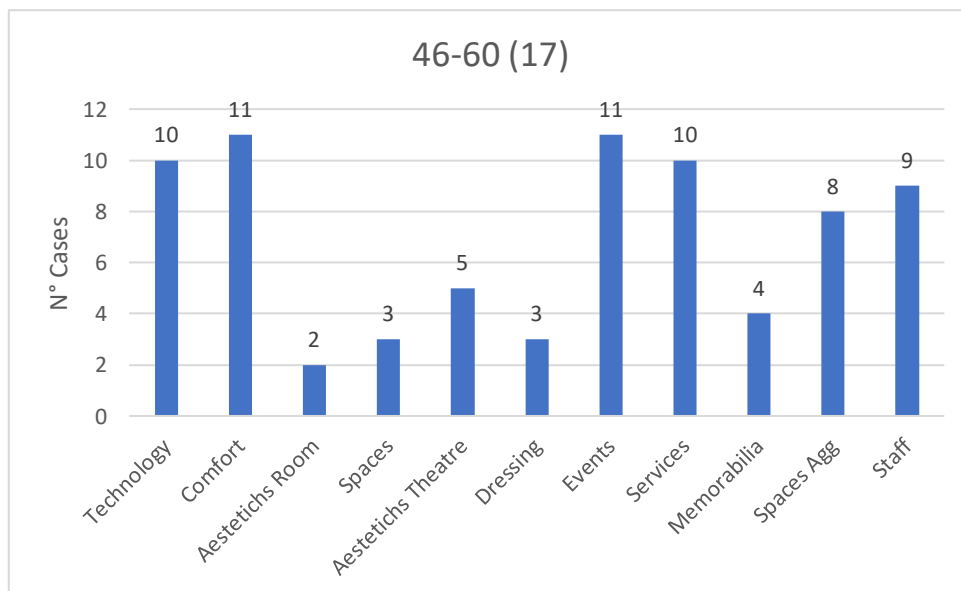


Graph 13: First adult segment results

The first adult segment, made by 17 cases, starts to show a decrease in interest in the memorabilia, dropping to 3 cases, and an increase in the space factors (10 cases). This could be due to the fact that the majority of respondents tends to go not very often to movie theatre, so spaces with other functions provide ulterior motivation to have a complete evening at the movies, an event that they do not attend so often.

“Having more spaces give me something to do at least, since coming with my family make me choose all the time animation movies that I do not particularly like. At least the presence of them helps me to find the experience less boring” (Monica, 42)

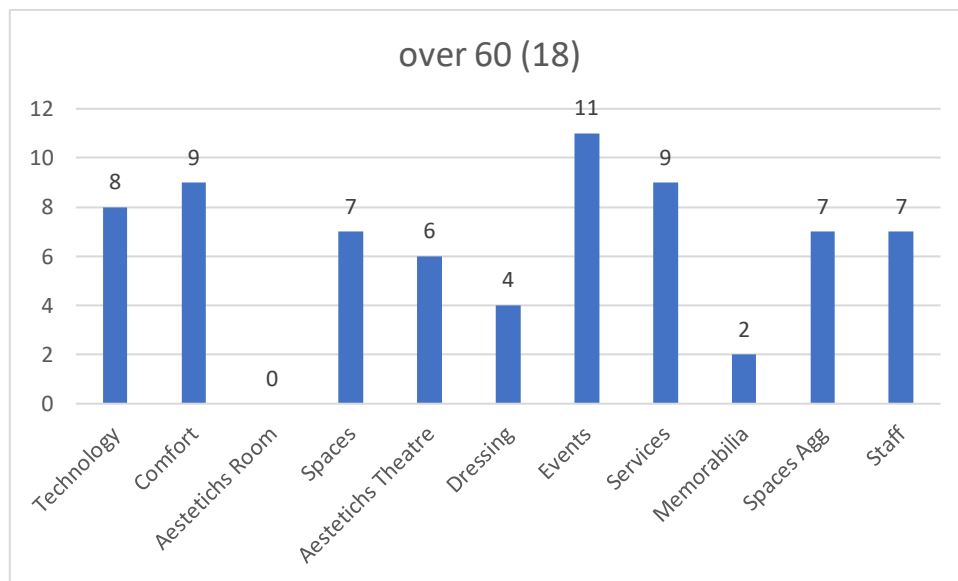
From the results there is a more interest towards factors that help the immersion and evasion from the daily routine, being thematic factors or supports from the movie watching such as technology or comfort.



Graph 14: Second adult segment results

The second adult segment made by 17 cases shows two main differences respect to the first adult one. The first difference is the decrease of importance for their experience of spaces (dropped to 3) with other functionalities but keeping still up the need for aggregation spaces (8) inside the movie theatre. This is motivated with an increase in interest towards the treating of the movie-going experience as a social event in which the cultural growth and the fun of the evening goes through the discussion and the interaction with their peers. The other difference refers to the importance given to the staff factor (9 cases), by which it is possible to see an increase in interest towards who works in the cinema and how he interacts with the consumer.

This can be motivated by the interest towards treating the movie experience as social event by which interactions happens also with members of the staff.



Graph 15: Old segment results

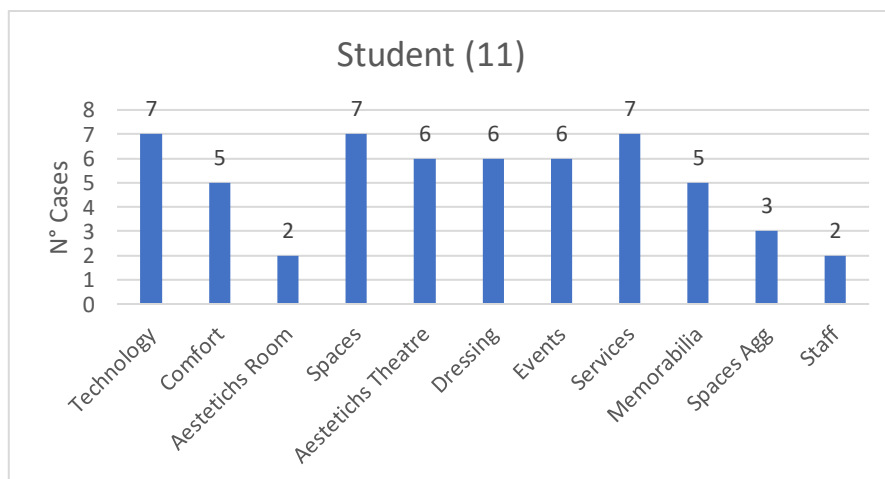
The over 60 segment, made by 18 cases, do not seem to have experiential factors that are considered important by a great amount of the respondents, with only the factors of comfort (9), thematic events (11) and services (9) that goes barely over or equal the 50% mark. From the interview, it seems that their movie-going experience put at the center the movie product so experiential factors not related to that are not taken in consideration when deciding in which cinema to go. This could be due to the fact that in the movie-going experience of the past cinemas did not offer all the functions they are offering now, and then in the mind of this segment the movie theatre is more connected to the sole function of screening the movie. The thematic events and the services that add value to the vision of a particular movie are deemed important just when the movie theatre propose a theme that is of their taste, with the majority of the respondents tending to like more when the theme refers to a cultural growth and not a pure entertainment. So, events related to festivals, retrospectives and deepening into some authors are welcomed, as so services such as exhibitions, lessons and more.

Generally, it is possible to see a decrease in importance of the experiential factors defined with the aging of the consumer, with a more importance given just to the movie product as the consumer mature. It is not to exclude that this is motivated by the fact that in the past the movie-going experience was very different from what it is proposed now, making the older generation more attached to a different kind of experiential movie-going. Even though that there are some factors that remains constantly important for the segments such as the comfort, technology, the

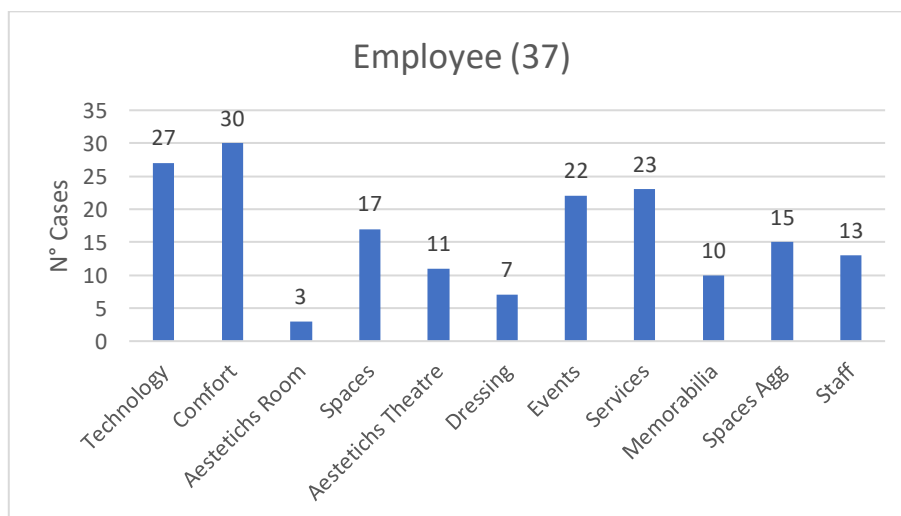
thematic events and the services offered, the same factors deemed important by the totality of the sample, while aesthetics, memorabilia, dressing and staff factors are not considered important by the sample of any age.

Job

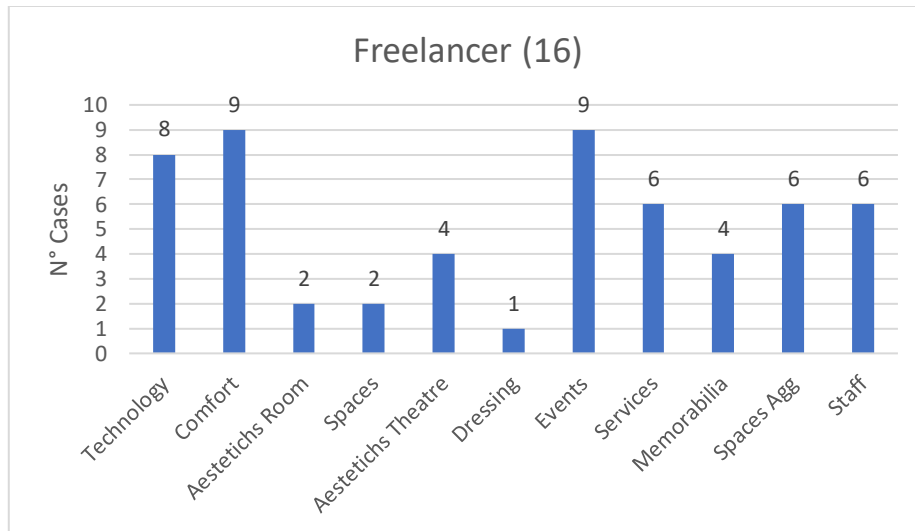
Four different answers define the job category: Student, Employee, Freelance and Retiree. This segmentation is made taking in consideration the leisure time availability of the consumer given by their job status, in order to understand if visitors of movie theatres with different job positions value differently the same set of experiential factors. Intuitively Students and Retirees should have more time available than adults who are in the working class, and the Freelances should have more flexibility than employees regarding times of attendance for movies and events, since they have more decisional power of their working times.



Graph 16: Student segment results



Graph 17: Employee segment results



Graph 18: Freelancer segment results



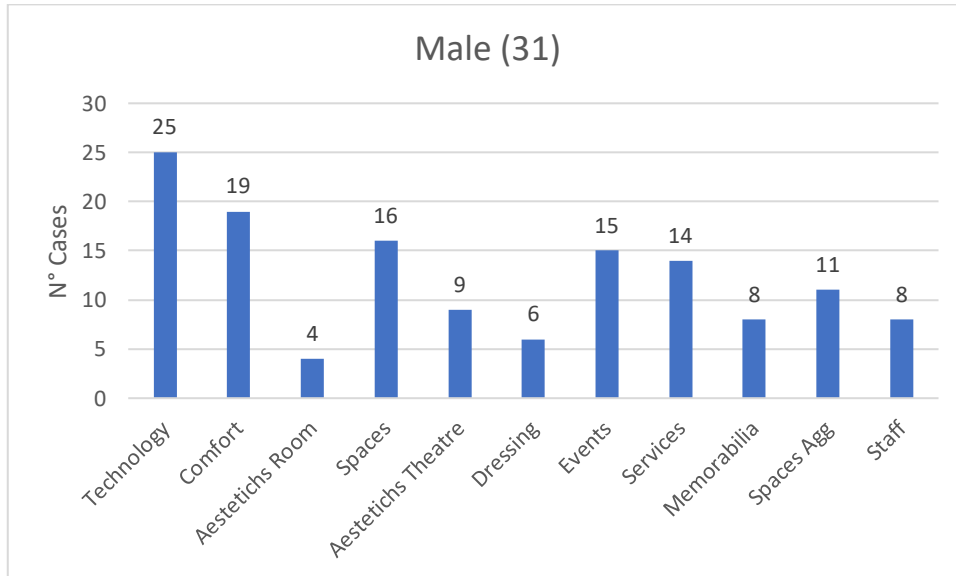
Graph 19: Retiree segment results

The results give an overview on the importance of factors given by the job segments, and it follows the general overview made by the age segments already explained in the previous paragraph. This is motivated by the fact that the job segmentation matches the age one, with students representing the young generations, retirees the older one, and workers the two adult segments. Students have many interests in experiential factors, while retirees are generally uninterested, not supporting the correlation between leisure time availability and appreciation of experiential factors.

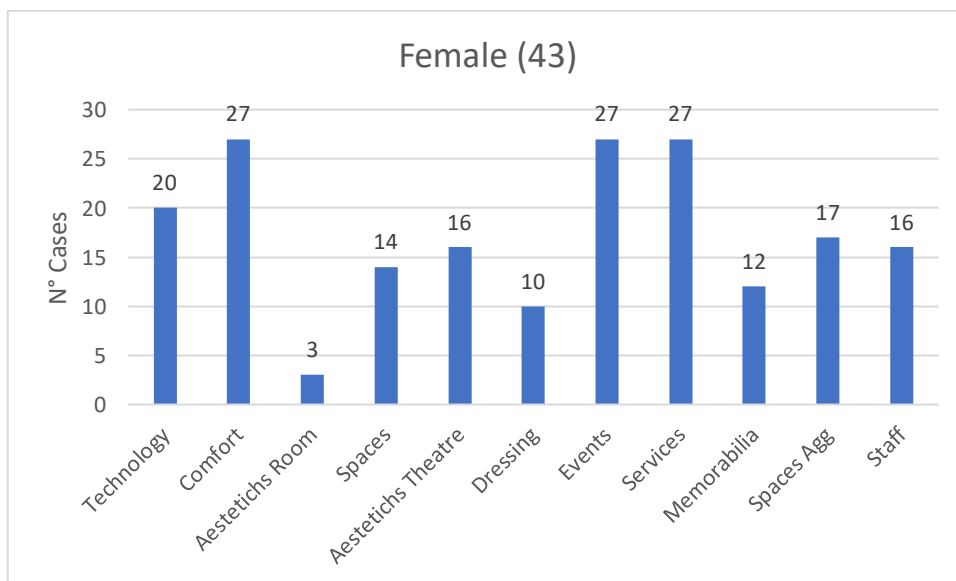
The results although shows a counterintuitive result referring to the distinction between Freelances and Employees: even though the majority of factors have similar importance comparing the two categories, services are deemed more important for employees (23 cases

out of 37) than for freelancers (6 cases out of 16), which should have more flexibility and time to use thematic services respect to employees.

Gender



Graph 20: Male segment results



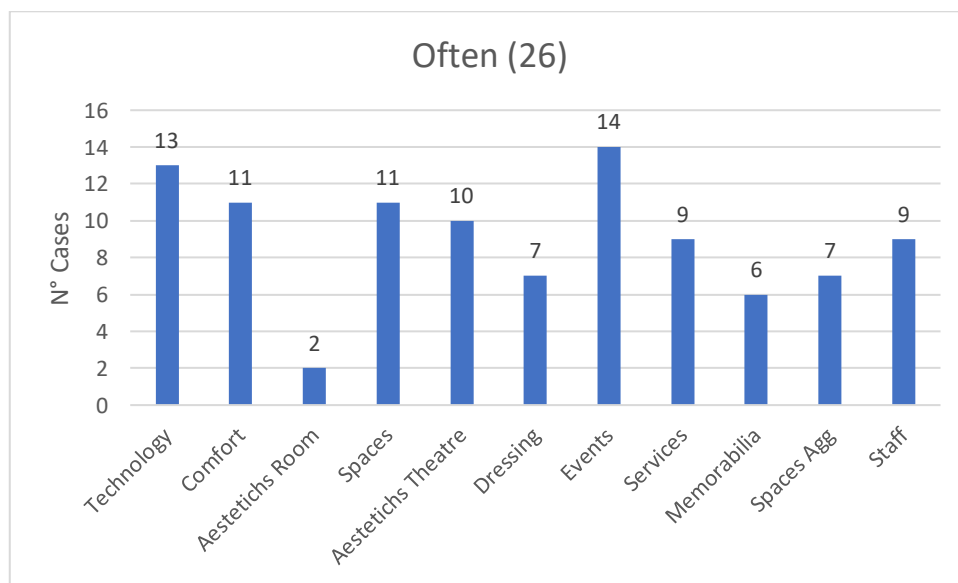
Graph 21: Female segment results

From the results there are clear distinctions between male and female respondents regarding their importance given to experiential factors. The male population of the sample has more interest in factors such as technology (25 cases) and comfort (19 cases), with a predisposition for the movie-going experience related to experiential enhancement of the screening room. Female respondents instead find importance in factors related more to thematic immersion

such as events (27 cases) and services (27 cases), together with the comfort factor that seems important for both the gender segments.

Attendance

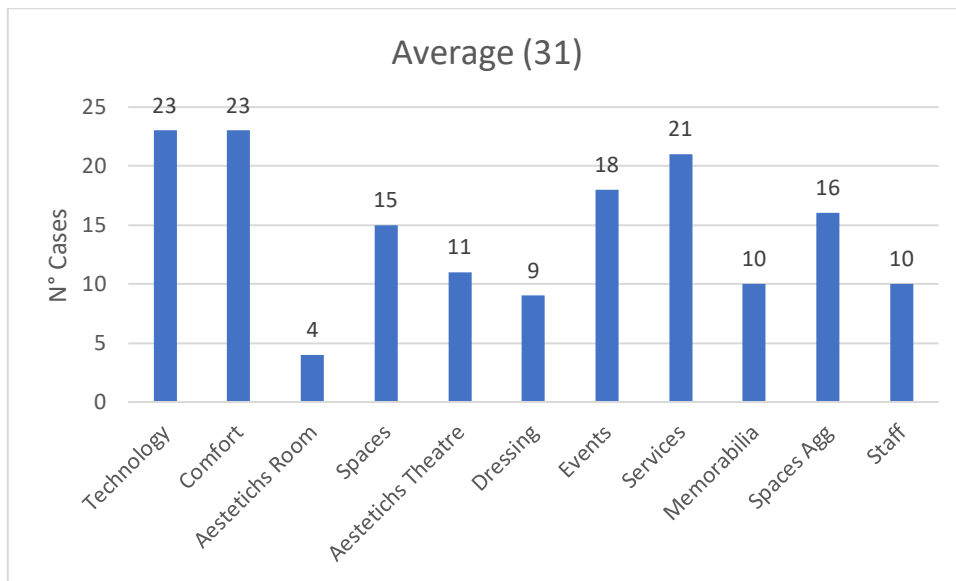
The frequency of attendance segments is divided in Rarely, Average and Often. Rarely refers to people that defines their attendance to movie theatre with less than ten times per year, showing an occasional interest in the movie going, generally for seeing particular movies and with tendencies of going with other people being friends or family. Average refers to the segment that attend movie theatre around 1 or 2 times per month. This consumer has the movie-going experience more than the occasional customer but still threat the movie going as something more connected to the event idea. Often instead refers to the segment that goes to the movie theatre 3 or more time per month, seeing the movie-going as a constant in their life and a normality in their routine.



Graph 22: Often segment results

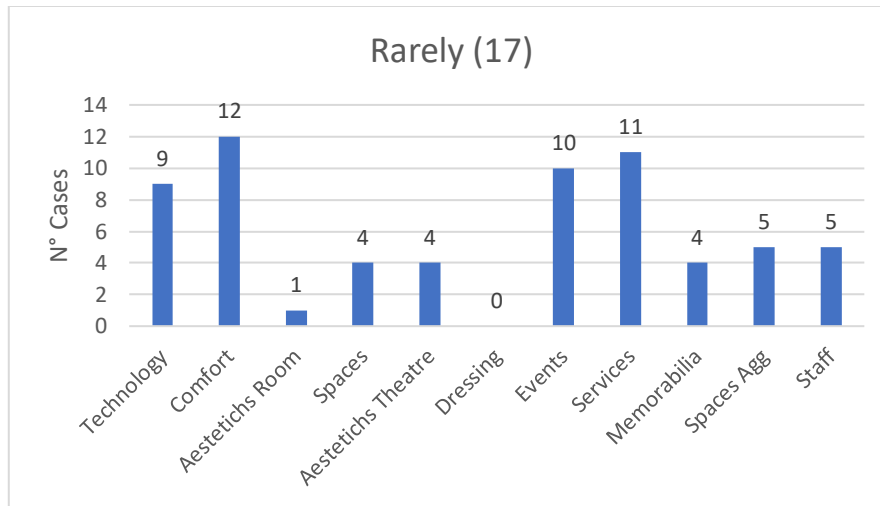
The results are showing some patterns regarding the attendance of the consumers and their attribution of importance to experiential factors. Who attends often shows a general disinterest toward the factors defined, barely reaching the 50% mark of 13 out of 26 cases with just the thematic events (14 cases) and the technology factors (13 cases). The reason behind this pattern resides probably in the treating the movie going experience as a normality with the movie product at the center: when visiting often the movie theatre, the experiential factors seem to have minor importance respect to other functional factors less attached to the eventful experience, such as location, price and other functional variables. This is supported by the age

composition of this segment with the majority of it being made by people over 60+ of age (15 people out of 26), a segment that does not seem to have a particular interest in many of the experiential factors defined by the analysis.



Graph 23: Average segment results

The respondents that show an average attendance seems to be the most influenced by the experiential factors, with many features deemed important by this segment, from the technological advancements (23 cases) and comfort (23 cases) of the screening room to the thematic events (18 cases) and services (21). The explanation comes from the idea of movie-experience as an event that generally drives people that goes not very often to the movie theatre: supports and factors that help the immersion of the consumer in the experience are defined as important for making the event something memorable, adding value to the consumer experience and giving more motivations to decide to visit a movie theatre instead of staying at home.



Graph 24: Rarely segment results

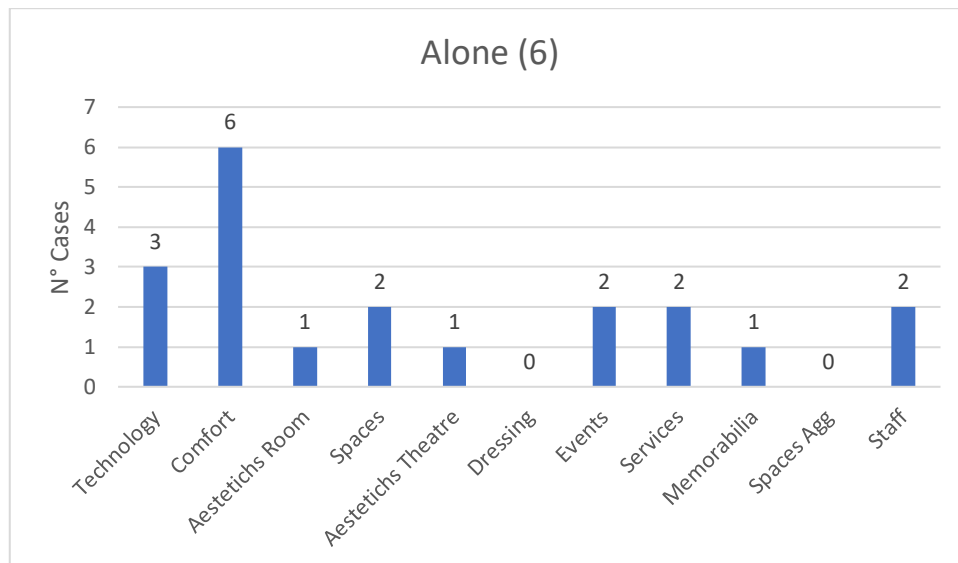
Occasional customers that visit rarely the movie theatres instead give importance to the thematic events (10 cases) and the services (11 cases), supporting the idea that going to the movies for them is considered an event in which they want the full package and searching for value additions over the movie itself. The other factors are not deemed important and it could be motivated by the fact that going to the theatre so rarely does not make important experiential factors not related to the movie watching, being the movie product the main driver for this type of consumer. The comfort is also the other real important factor for them (12 cases), with the majority interested in a comfortable place first of all, the main difference between their homes and the movie theatre that drives them to the movies together. Other motivations could be found into the research of relax for people that goes to the movie rarely because they are constrained by friends and family.

“I am being constrained to go the theatre, so at least I get out of it some nice relax time with good comfort while watching the animation movie with my kids” (Monica)

With Whom

The segments defined for this categorization are Alone, with Family, with Friends and with Partner. These segments refer to the group with which the sample goes the most to the movie theatre, trying to understand if this variable influence the level of importance given to the experiential factor shaping the consumer experience. Who goes alone has its own desire to satisfy, while going with a group of people most of the time there is the need for a compromise in the decision making process. A family with kids has more limitations in the choice of themes and experiences than couples and group of friends, with the latter having more people

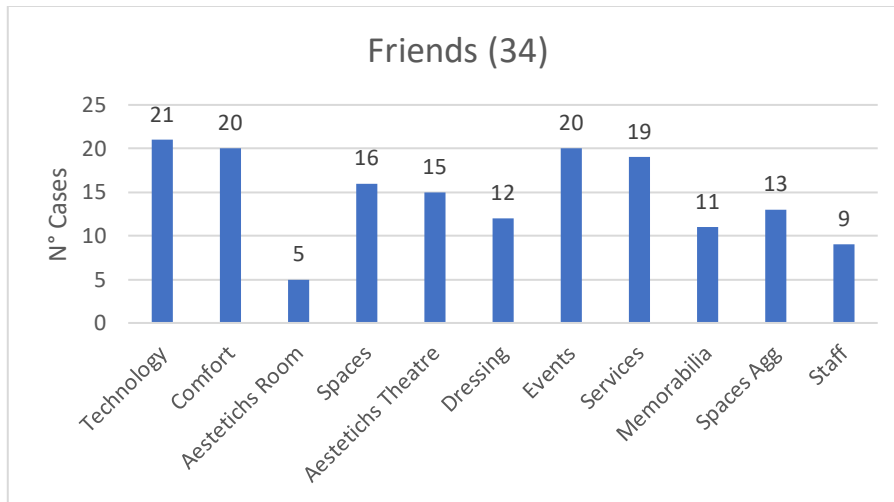
intervening in the decision process for the experience than the consumer that goes more often with the partner, which ideally have the same idea in what kind of experience they want from the movie theatre.



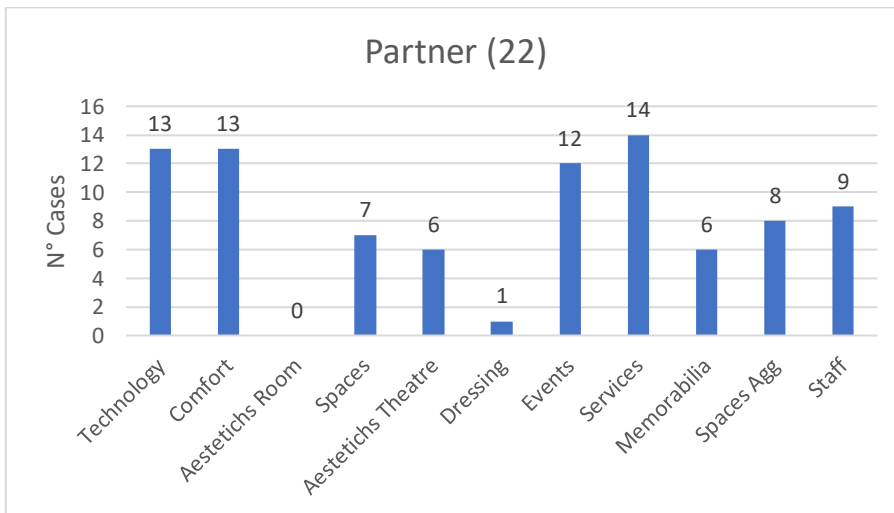
Graph 25: Alone segment results

The main finding shows that the few people that go alone does not care much about the experiential factors, a part from the comfort feature (6 cases out of 6 cases), a result understandable when thinking that the main driver for this part of the sample is defined by the movie itself. Going alone means that the interest for the movie goes over the necessity of having an experience with others declaring that enjoying a movie is first of all an individual experience. This high level of importance to the movie product tends to overshadow the experiential factors defined and supports the idea that these factors have more value towards a more collective experience of movie-going.

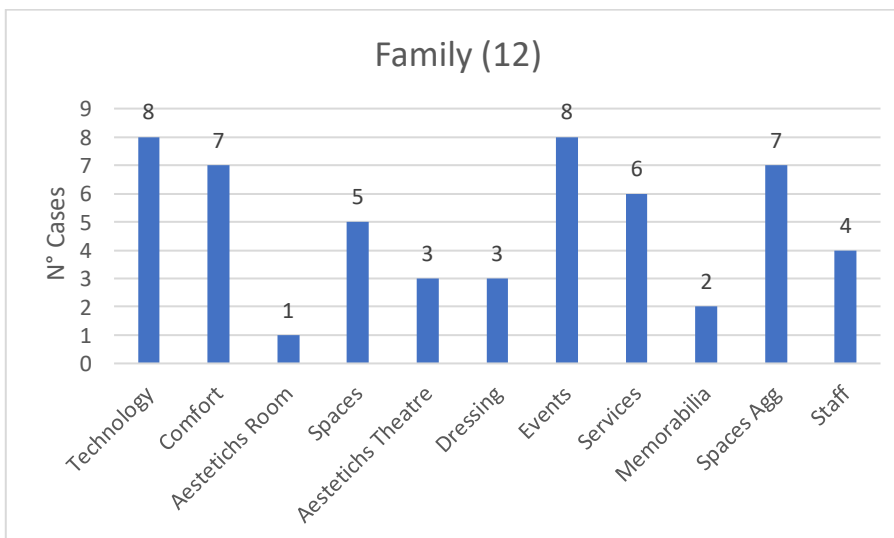
“I do not like screening rooms full of people, they tend to be noisy while I am trying to enjoy my movie in peace. After all, once the movie starts everyone should be silent, there should not be impolite people that talks, so it is an individual experience.” (Mariano)



Graph 26: Friends segment results



Graph 27: Partner segment results

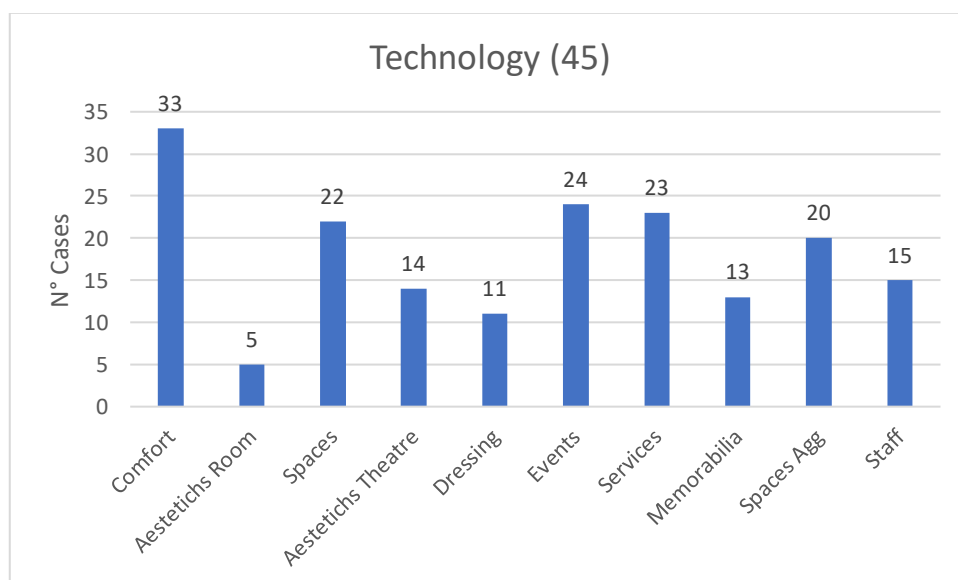


Graph 28: Family segment results

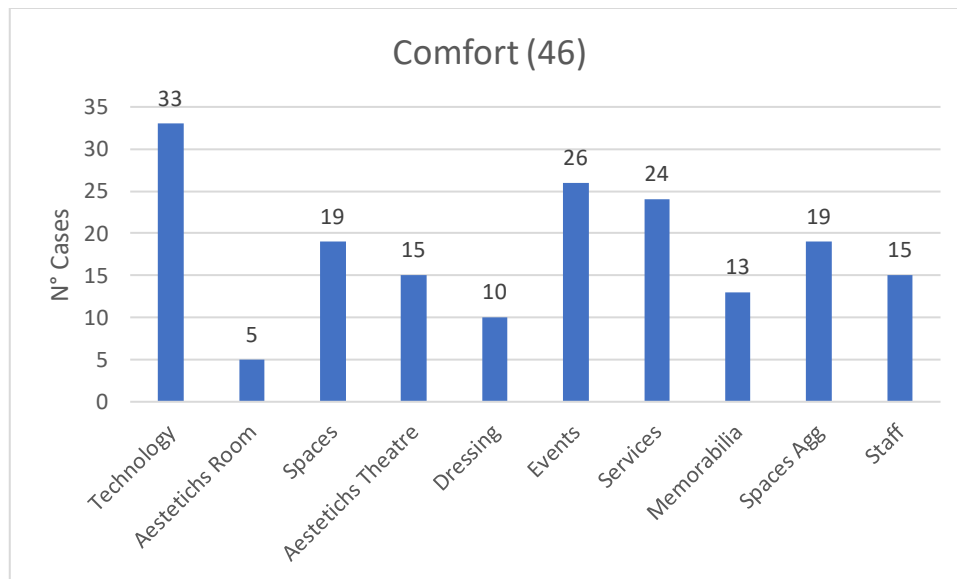
The other results tend to show bigger importance towards the factors of technology and comfort and to the thematic factors of events and services offered, by both the “with friends” segment and the “with partner” segment, showing similarities of importance between the 2 segments. The family segments instead give also importance to the aggregation places factor, and this is motivated by the composition of the family segment: the respondents that gave importance to the aggregation places factors are more than 18 years old and go to the movies with their parents valuing the experience as a social event where you can discuss with your family as they are considered their peers. Respondents that go to the theatre with their kids instead gave little importance to this factor.

Cross-data Factor Analysis

This paragraph of the chapter has the objective to see if from the data is possible to deduct some correlations between experiential factors, noticing if there are patterns that can define better type of consumers base on their movie-going experience. Doing a cross-data analysis, it will be taken in consideration only the respondents that gave importance to the factor chosen, showing which factors are held more important by this group of respondents. If the factors is deemed important by more than 50% of the respondents, it is considered important.



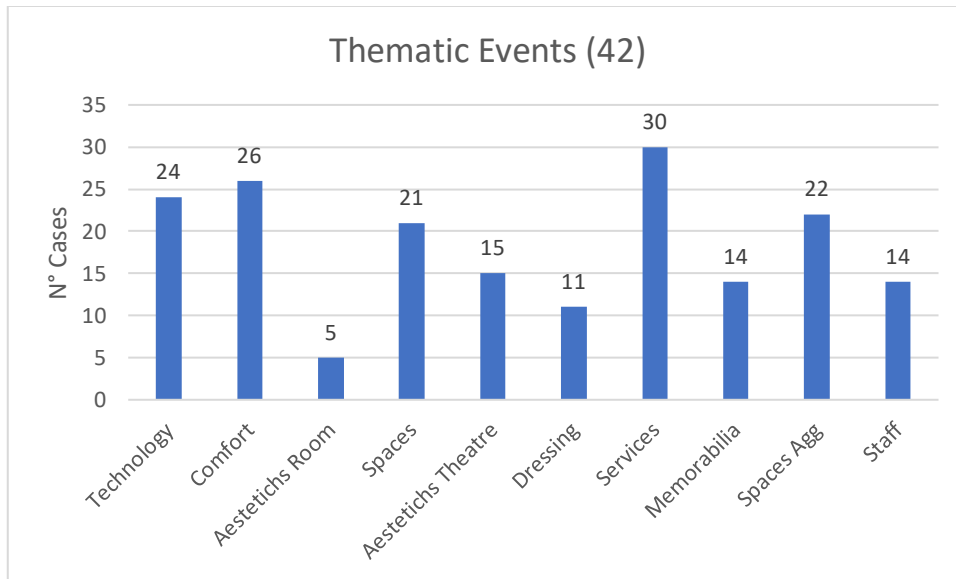
Graph 29: Cross-data Technology factor results



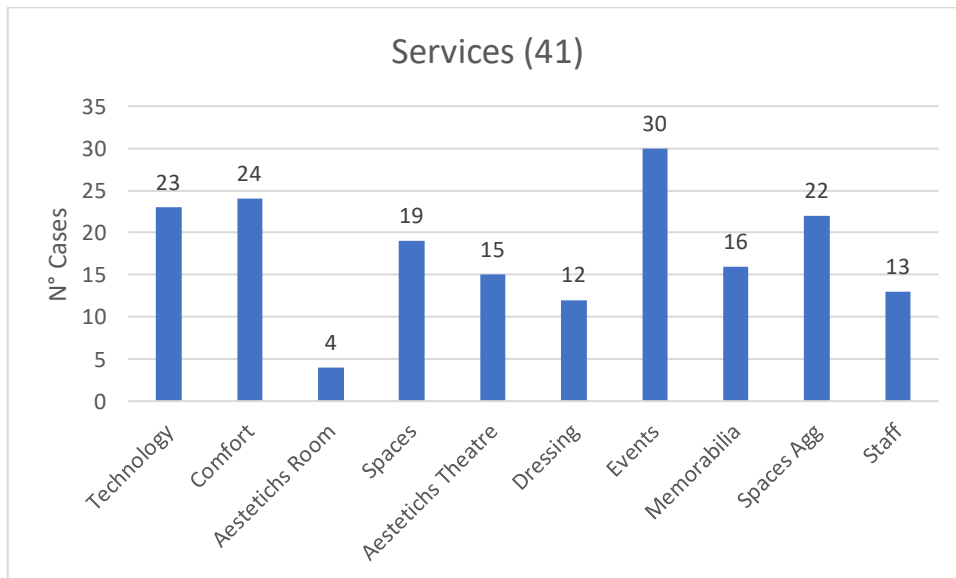
Graph 30: Cross-data Comfort factor results

The results shows that the sample who give importance to technology gives also importance to the comfort factor (33 cases) and vice versa, with 33 cases of the respondents who gave importance to the comfort factors giving high importance also to technology. The motivation resides on the fact that both of the factors are supporting the consumer in the immersion during the screening, and they are deemed most of the time as the two main reason together for the improvement of the consumer experience by the respondents. This is supported by the findings on the comfort factor, that see the technological factor as one of the most important experiential components for the respondent’s movie experience. The other factors that go over the 50% mark of importance for both the comfort and the technology result to be the thematic events (24 and 26 cases) and services (23 and 24 cases), factors that help the consumer to immerse himself more into the movie experience using the themes proposed by the movie theatre.

“I definitely prefer to watch movies at the movie theatre, because it is THE place dedicated for the movies, where I can feel immerse while watching it and experience it like I am in the movie myself in the screening room” (Mara)

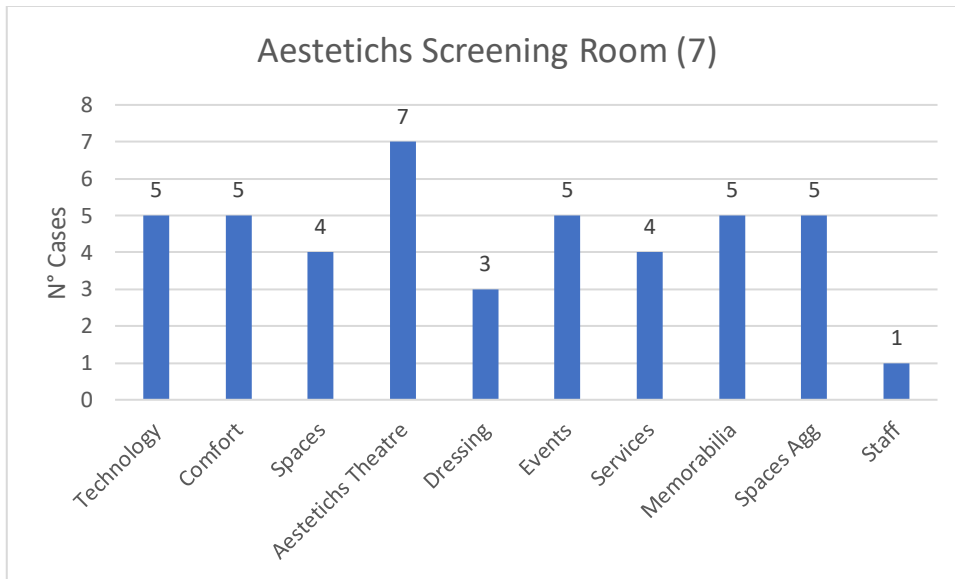


Graph 31: Cross-data Thematic events factor results

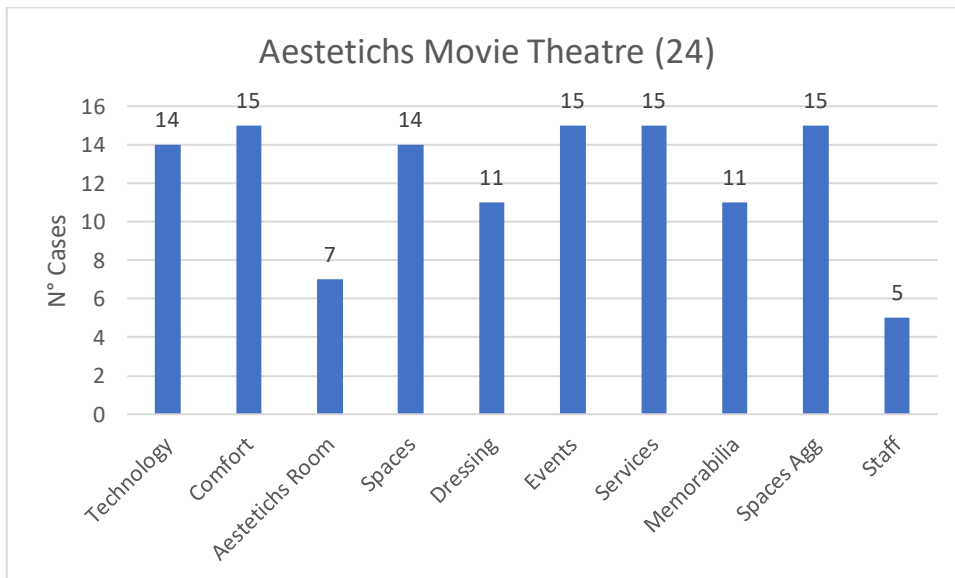


Graph 32: Cross-data Services factor results

The thematic events and the service factor results show that these 2 factors seem to have a correlation between them, with people that gave importance to one of them to give importance also to the other. This is motivated by the factors being under the same idea of improving the experience of the consumer through the use of themes, with people who gave importance to one of them tending to be interested in the thematic immersion offered also by the other factor. The other factors that seem to prevail are the comfort and technology factor that has previously stated helps the consumer in his immersion in the movie experience, so it is intuitive to see them counted as important of them in the majority for both the thematic factors.



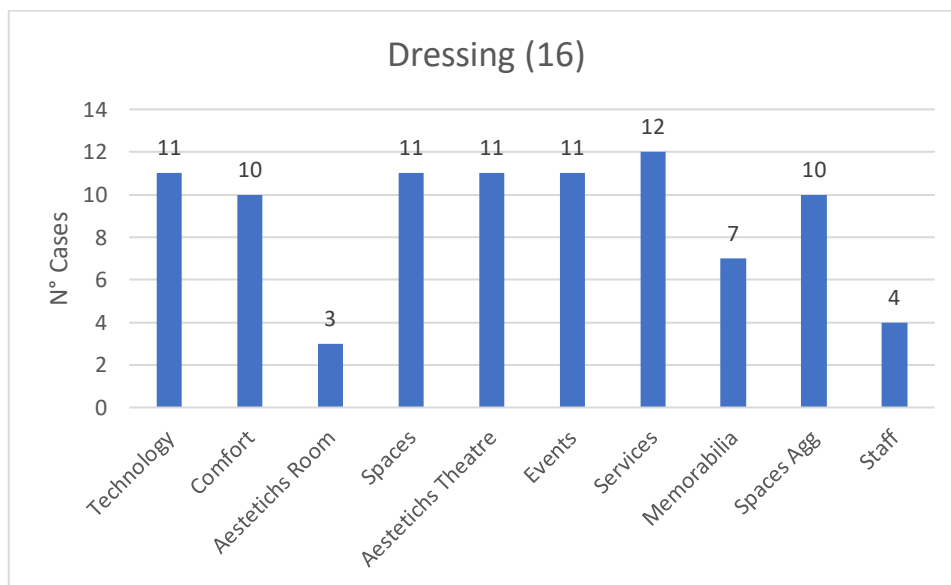
Graph 33: Cross-data Aestetichs Screening room factor results



Graph 34: Cross-data Aestetichs Movie theatre factor results

Another intuitive result may be found in the factors referring the design and aesthetics of the screening room and the movie theatre. It is possible to notice that the totality of who give importance to the aesthetics of the screening room give importance also to the aesthetics of the movie theatre itself, but it is not true the opposite, with just few respondents giving both of the factors the same importance (just 7 cases out of 24). This is explained by the fact that inside the screening room is less noticeable the aesthetic factor respect to the whole theatre, and if a consumer notice how the screening room looks like it is sure that will notice the movie theatre appearance too.

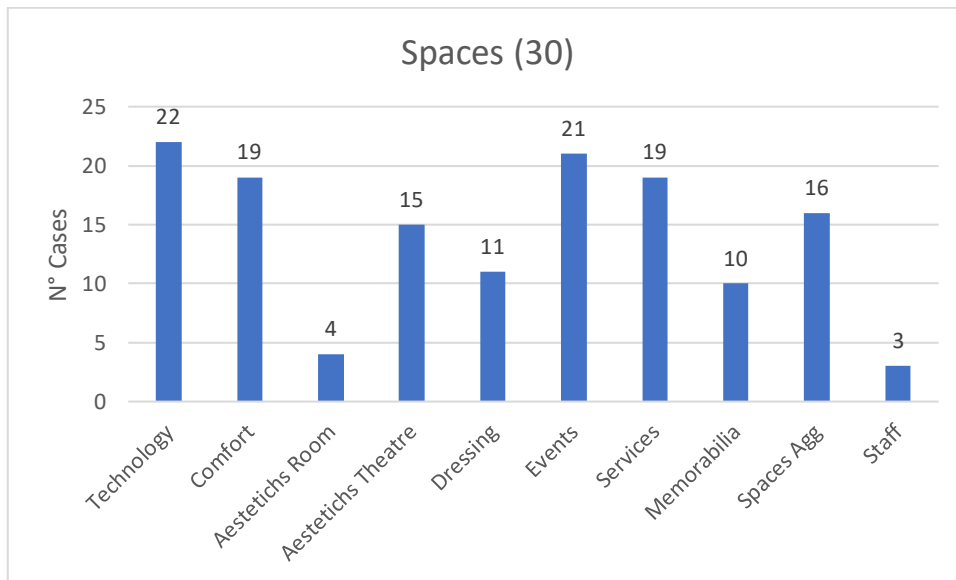
The results shows that who notice the aesthetics of the screening room and/or of the theatre tends to give importance also to many experiential factors defined by the research, supporting the idea that consumers interested in the appearance of a movie theatre, a factor that modify marginally the experience, are more sensible to changes of the experience with other more experience-involving features, with the exception of the staff and dressing factors. It is possible then to see the same pattern between dressing factor and the aesthetics of the movie theatre, with the majority of the consumer interested in the dressing giving importance to the design and aesthetics of the theatre, but not the other way around. This can be motivated by the fact that the dressing is a help toward the immersion of the consumer, but it is considered lighter respect to other factors proposed, so it is easier to find consumers that are touched more by changes in other more substantial factors than the dressing of the movie theatre spaces.



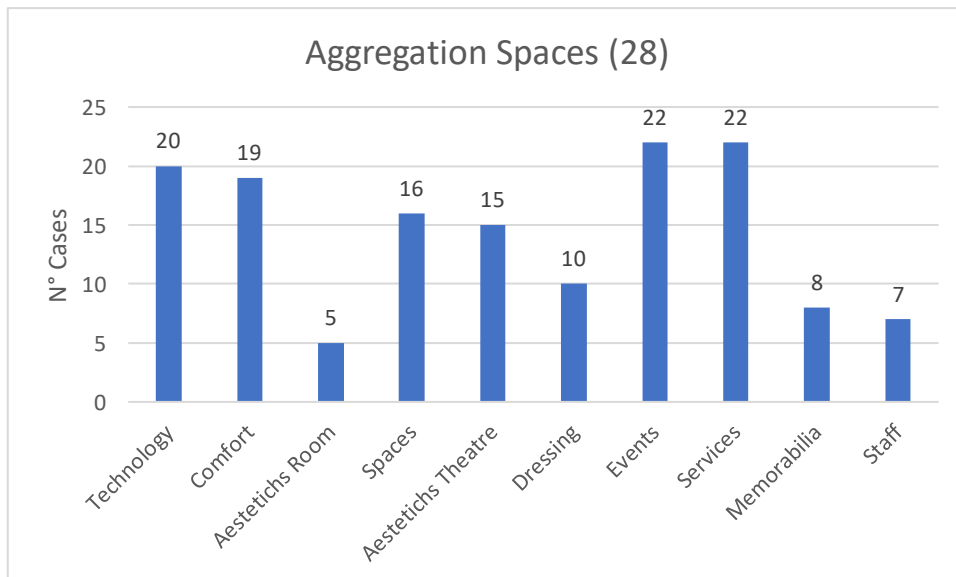
Graph 35: Cross-data Dressing factor results

Consumers who deem the spaces factor seem to find important also the factors of technology, services and thematic events, a result supporting the motivations that define the importance of the space factor by the consumer as part of a full package experience made not only by the movie product but also by other activities. The majority of the respondents for this factor seems to give importance also to the design and aesthetics of the movie theatre (15 cases out of 30), a result that can be considered understandable since spaces available define also the overall appearance of the building, while the importance given to aggregation spaces (16 cases out of 30) can be motivated by the same reasons of the previous factors, with these particular spaces adding the social activity to the experiential package of the movie-going experience. This is supported by the similarities between this graph with the graph defining the main factors

important for customers interested in the aggregation spaces factor. These similarities are another proof that the spaces factor, being it for social functions or other functions, when considered important there is the tendency to find important the factors more related to the definition of the movie-going as a full event experience, with the technology and the comfort remaining important as primary factors in the movie going experience.



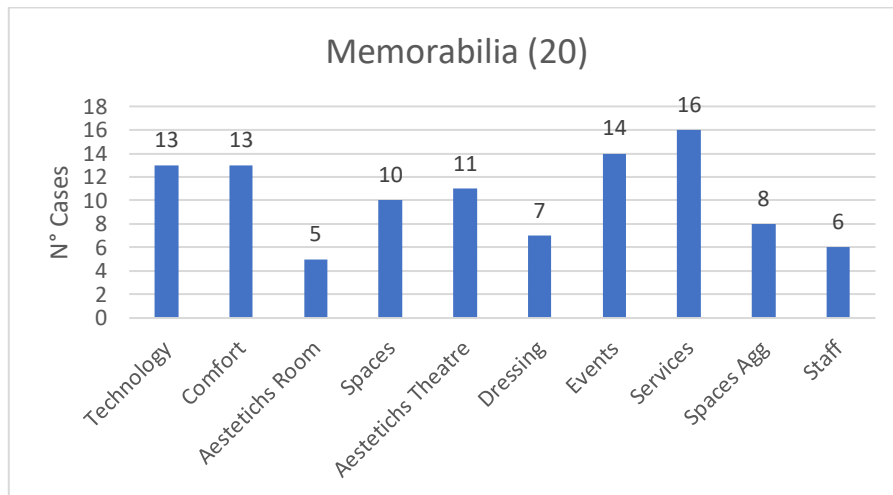
Graph 36: Cross-data Spaces factor results



Graph 37: Cross-data Aggregation spaces factor results

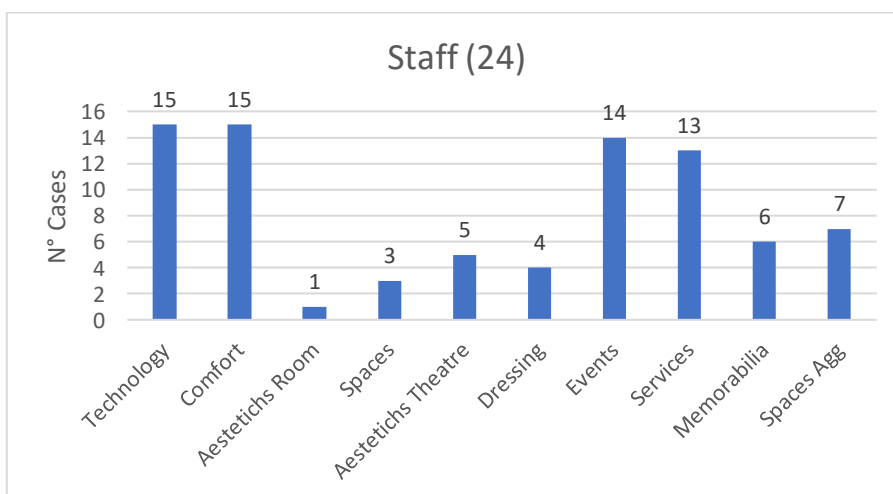
Who deems important the memorabilia factor seems in general to find important many factors defined, with a spike in the thematic services feature (16 cases out of 20). This result can be explained by imagining the memorabilia as a conclusion of the consumer path of a memorable experience, where the spectator wants to remember the experience because it was something

out of the ordinary. What makes the movie-going experience extraordinary are the factors with the most involvement level for the consumer such as the thematic services or activities done during an event. When the sample give importance to the memorabilia factor, there is tendency on giving importance also to this high involvement factor defined.



Graph 38: Cross-data Memorabilia factor results

At last, respondents that gave importance to the staff factor gave importance more to the factors related to technology (15 cases), comfort (15 cases), thematic events (14 cases) and services (13 cases), factors that help the consumer immerse more into the movie environment. This is explained by the motivations given by the consumer who gave importance to the staff factor by focusing on the “magic of the cinema” and the desire to “not be disturbed while being immersed in it”. This perspective gives an explanation on why the highly immersive factors are considered more important by this kind of consumer than factors related to socialization or aesthetics of the movie theatre.



Graph 39: Cross-data Staff factor results

Types of consumers: a hypothetical model

The results and the insights taken during the interviews shows the importance given by the sample to experiential factors defined at the beginning of the research, accompanied by motivations and explanation of answers that shed a light towards the results during the analysis. It is possible to notice some patterns and define some categories of consumers based on their preferred movie-going experience in the sample, giving a support on the understanding of the phenomenon and a base of targeting for movie theatres regarding the movie-going experience. From the interviews the researcher found out that respondents can be grouped by the perception of what are the main components and what is the main focus of their movie-going experience. In this way, four different groups are defined: Individual cultural consumer; Social edutainment consumer; Evasion consumer; Entertainment consumer.

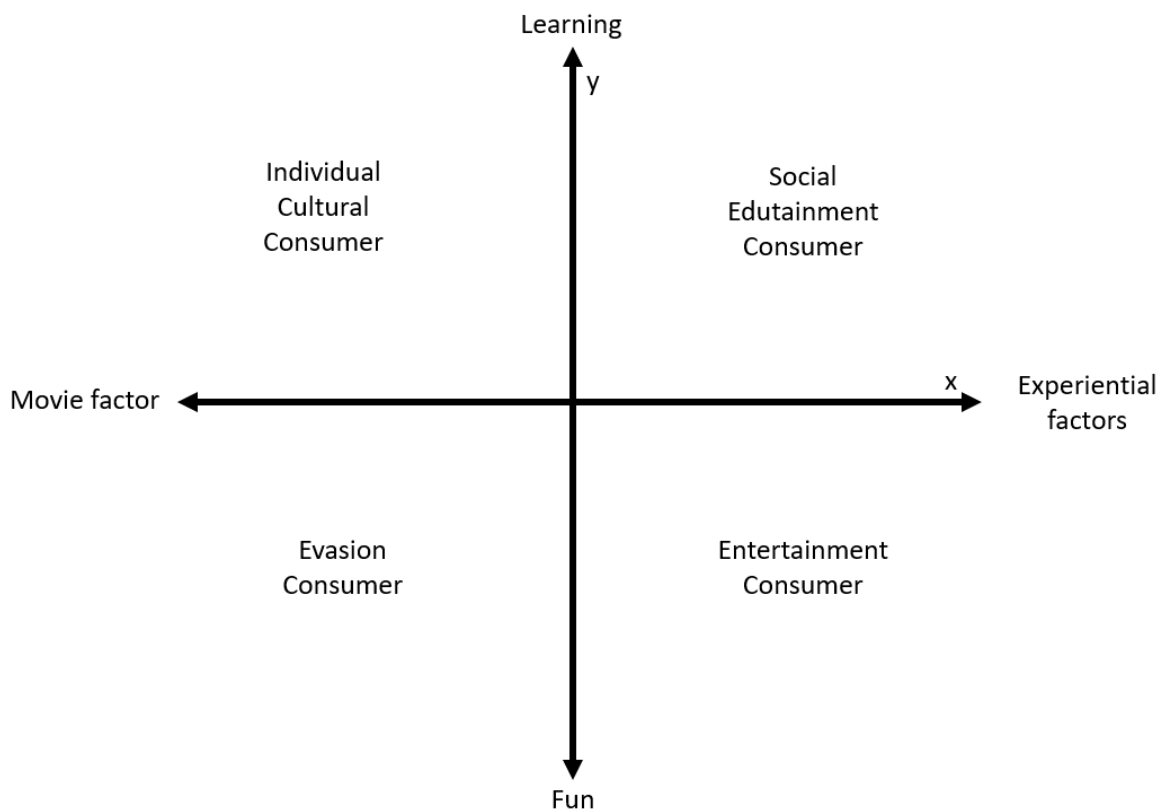


Figure 19: Hypothetical model of movie experience consumer types

In the model, the X axe reflects the importance given to the movie product by the consumer respect the experiential factors defined in their movie-going experience, with the two extremes representing the opposite levels of importance found during the research. The more the movie

component overshadow the other experiential factors, the more the consumer is defined as functional towards his experience at the movie theatre, with the main interest on watching a movie. On the opposite side of the spectrum the consumer considers the movie as a part of the experience at the same level of other experiential factors, seeing the experience as a full package made by many different components. On the Y axis instead is defined the main objective that the consumer wants to reach in his movie-going experience, spanning from the two extremes of a learning experience to a pure and simple fun experience. The consumers can fall in different points regarding these two spectrums, and it will position them in one of the four types of consumers defined by the researcher.

The Individual cultural consumer is the respondent that defined its own movie experience as a normality in their routine, going often to the movie theatre and consuming a great quantity of movie products, with the main objective of watching a movie for a personal cultural growth. The movie product become their main source of factor for their movie-experience, overshadowing most of the other factors defined by the researcher. The movie then becomes the sole source of education for the costumer, selected before going to the movie theatre and considering the experience more individually than a social event. It gives more importance to factors dedicated to the enhancement of the movie-watching experience such as comfort and technology, seen as the main motivation for him to prefer the screening room to his own living room for movie consumption.

"I like to watch movies and once I am inside the screening room, it is me and the movie, a movie that leaves me something to reflect, not the commercial marketing things that America is proposing sometimes. That I leave it to others please." (Mariano)

The Social edutainment consumer has similar characteristics to the previously mentioned type but has a higher interest towards the thematic factors and services, seeing them as part of his cultural movie experience. This consumer incorporates in its movie going other elements that permit him to be educated in some way regarding the theme and the movie itself, such as cineforums, festivals, and other details that give him an educational value in his movie-going experience. This consumer values the learning power of the social events in which he can share his opinion and growth culturally by the discussion with his peers. Differently from the individual cultural consumer, this respondent gives importance also to the thematic events, services and aggregation spaces where the social needs can be satisfied.

“I found personally that a movie leaves you something and talking about it helps you growth and reflect. When talking about movies, sharing the opinion is also part of the process of learning from it, talking about the themes and see if it made us think in different ways.” (Luisa)

“Moviemaking is an art, and like when you are going into a museum, it is nice if there an expert of someone that gives an explanation of what it is and why it is like that. It enriches your vision with more information and let you create your own idea knowing the ideas behind it” (Antonio)

The evasion consumer is defined by a high interest for his movie experience as a moment for relaxing and evade from the every-day life, but he considers this function done well enough just by the movie product. He likes movies for their level of immersion, mainly if their theme refers to extraordinary worlds, and give high consideration to factors that help the immersion in the screening room during the movie watching, such as technology and comfort, with the thematic factors being a support but not defined as important for his immersion.

“I love to go to watch fantastic movies, Sci-fi, and all other genres that let me navigate in parallel universes. This happens when I watch them on the big screen, I just need exactly that for feeling immerse, I do not care about the rest.” (Mara)

The entertainment consumer instead deems important many other experiential factors for his immersion in the movie experience, considering his own experience as full package event with many different features for his enjoyment and entertainment. The movie product becomes one of the components of their event, giving importance also to thematic events, services, spaces, staff and memorabilia factors, helping them in the immersion in the movie environment during the day they dedicate to the movies. Not going often to the movie theatre, they appreciate everything that increase the value of their experience and make it memorable, going with his friends or family to make it also socially relevant.

“I go rarely to the movie theatre, but when I go, I know I am going to have fun. It is an event in which I like to experience something new, out of the ordinary. I know I will dedicate that day to the movies, I will talk with my friends, I will buy popcorns and maybe at the end we will be going to talk in a pub about it” (Davide)

This model of four types of consumers, based on their movie-going experiences, is just a proposition and needs to be tested further to prove its existence, but can be considered a starting point for further academic and managerial research related to segmentation and targeting of movie consumption.

The analysis answered the main research question related to which experiential factors are taken the most in consideration by the movie consumers and showed also some patterns and motivations from the sample for more exploratory purposes regarding the nature of the movie-going experience. The interviews revealed information of qualitative nature for understanding better the experiential drivers of movie theatre consumers, giving another tool to movie theatres that wants to attract new consumers or regain the ones lost to streaming services focusing on the experiential side of the movie-going as a competitive advantage. The next chapter will draw the conclusion of the research, answering the main question of the thesis and summarizing the results found by the researcher. The conclusions will be followed by the managerial implications related to the results of this research, the limitations of the study and possible directions of research stemming from this work.

Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The following chapter is dedicated to the conclusion of the study, in which the results and analysis done in the previous chapter will be summarized and an answer to the main research question will be provided. After a brief recap of the research objective and the steps undertaken in order to reach it, the main interesting results from the analysis will be presented and discussed, with the aim of answering the main question and provide useful insights for managerial decisions regarding the movie-going experience. Following this paragraph, useful managerial implications will be explained, giving some advises and directions stemmed from the qualitative interviews results. The chapter will conclude with a paragraph regarding the limitation of the study and the opportunities for further research regarding the movie-going experience deducted from the thesis.

Discussion and conclusion

The main research questions were dedicated to the understanding if the Italian market was interested in a fruition of the movie theatre more focused towards the experiential side of the movie-going experience, and which factors of experience are deemed important by them when going to see a movie. These questions arose from the necessity for the movie theatre to evolve and adapt in a constant changing environment that was starting to erode one of their main point of existence: the exclusivity on the new movies screening. The changing process already started to act way before the beginning of the pandemic, with the streaming services as new players proposing new movie products bypassing the theatrical release. With the recent developments regarding the shortening of the theatrical window, there is the need for the movie theatres to find a new competitive advantage that permits their survival detaching from the novelty of the movie product. This research proposed the focusing on the movie-going experience as a real competitive advantage, and the study explored the phenomenon of the movie experience in the Italian market to understand if the Italian movie consumer was interested in movie theatres with such competitive advantage, more focused on the experiential satisfaction than the functional screening of new movies. In order to do that, experiential features were defined by the analysis of three movie theatres of Milan that have as main competitive advantage the offering of an experience. The features were then grouped in eleven different experiential

factors, each one touching a different part of the movie-going experience: Technology, Comfort, Screening room aesthetics and design, Movie theatre aesthetics and design, Availability of spaces, Availability of aggregation spaces, Dressing of the spaces, Thematic events, Thematic services, Memorabilia, Staff. These experiential factors were proposed through qualitative interviews to a sample of the Italian population, selected in the Venetian area for practical purposes. The sample has described its own movie-going experience and defined which experiential factors are modifying it in an important way. The experiential factors that effectively enters in the decision-making process of the consumer when opting to watch a movie are to be considered as much important as to justify a competitive advantage based on them.

The results obtained show the majority of the sample giving importance to four different experiential factors: Technology, Comfort, Thematic Events and Services. The other factors are not deemed enough important to influence the choice of movie theatre and considering them as candidates for become competitive advantages. From these results it is possible to notice that the factors deemed important are the ones connected to highest point of experiential movie-going, with technology and comfort helping the immersion of the consumer during the movie watching, and thematic events and services driving him towards his immersive experience. The other factors, although they still offer help to the consumer in his immersion in the movie environment, have a shallow impact in the consumer experience, seen more as a background that can be nice to have but not deemed important as the other four factors. This shows that there is desire from the sample to feel immerse, but it must be something that involve him in more substantial way, making his own movie-going experience more valuable. However it is important to notice the high number of answers related to the second level of importance for all the factors proposed, showing that exists a modification, even if slight, of the customer movie-going experience and opening up to the idea that “the whole is greater by the sum of its parts”: during the research the factors were presented as individual factors, considered detached by one another during the interview for practical purposes, but when devising a consumer experience it must be taken in account the power of synergies between these experiential factors, which they will increase the overall importance also of the features deemed of little interest. Supporting this idea there are the insights gathered by the interviews on the dressing factor, which reward with a higher level of importance if there is effort and logic behind its organization, synergizing with other elements of the theatre such as events, aesthetics, services and more.

The results of the qualitative interviews revealed attitudes and the motivations of the sample towards the individual factors. The technological factor and the comfort factor are both seen as the main feature that a movie theatre should have, with them being the main discriminant between movie consumption at home or in a dedicated space such as the screening room, where they can relax and enjoy a movie without being disturbed and being snapped out of the experience they are living. The other factor regarding the screening room, the aesthetics, goes mostly unnoticed, with a major explanation given by the limited amount of time the consumer pass inside the room before the start of the screening. The aesthetics and design factor starts to become more important when applied to the whole building, being more difficult to not notice but still depending on how much time the customer spend inside, not reaching the levels of importance required to be important by the consumers for their experience. The dressing of the movie theatre follows the same results of the aesthetics of the building, giving that it does not produce much immersion for the consumer if done with superficiality as many movie theatres tend to do, relegating it to the role of a forgettable background for the movie-going experience.

The availability of spaces with other functions is not considered important by the majority of the sample, with many respondents not caring about their presence since they are not part of their movie-going experience. The spaces factor suffers from the limitation of being considered a feature not really connected to the primary function of a movie theatre, the movie screening, so even if they are used, they are mainly exploited outside the movie-going experience. The same it is possible to say for the presence of aggregation spaces, considered most of the time not particularly important for the satisfaction of the social needs. Consumer that values the movie-going event as a social opportunity for sharing opinions and grow culturally do not need specific places inside the theatre to satisfy this need of socialization. Nonetheless both the factors receive important considerations from people valuing the movie theatre experience as full package event and when visiting movie theatres in the outskirts where options lacks.

The thematic events and services are deemed important by the majority of the sample, considering these factors as a support to their immersion and an element of novelty for their experience. One important but intuitive result came from the deep connection between the movie product and the thematic events and services factors, defining its importance mainly as a valuable spin-off of the product the customer wants to see. Immersing themselves into a movie environment requires energy, time and other resources from the consumer, being more willing to spend them when the theme is connected to their taste. The importance of the movie

product in the consumers mind is also shown by the answer given by the almost totality of the respondents, defining only few factors more important than the value given by the movie screened, with the sample, when choosing in which movie theater to go, already knowing what they are going to watch and treating the movie as the primary factor of choice. It is not surprising then to see that the factors deemed important by the consumer are mainly ones that are connected with the movie chosen by them, such as technology that enhance his vision, thematic events and services.

The staff factor is not considered important by the majority of the sample, which gave it a role not dedicated to the enhancing of the experience but one of preserving the immersion of the consumer. The staff then is seen more an element of the disturb of the flow of the experience and making it an important element when it does not show the level of professionalism expected, with limited number of respondents praising the improving of the experience because of the connections they made with the polite staff.

The memorabilia factor, differently than other factors connected to the movie product such as the thematic events, is not held important by the sample, with many respondent's movie experiences being not touched by this feature that the theatre can offer. Memorabilia obtain importance when the experience reflects the idea of movie-going as a full package event where the obtaining of a memory is considered the icing on the cake of the whole memorable experience.

	Indifferent - 1	Little important - 2	Important- 3	Very important - 4	Total 1+2	Total 3+4
Technology	7	22	32	13	29	45
Comfort	5	23	42	4	28	46
Aestetichs Room	36	31	7	0	67	7
Aestetichs Theatre	22	27	23	2	49	25
Spaces	22	22	24	6	44	30
Dressing	25	33	13	3	58	16
Events	9	23	35	7	32	42
Services	16	17	33	8	33	41
Memorabilia	29	25	19	1	54	20
Agg Spaces	17	29	21	7	46	28
Staff	19	31	19	5	50	24

Table 2: Summary of individual factor results

The category analysis revealed some important remarks referring the different groups of consumers. The first important result shows a decrease in interest towards the experiential factors defined by the research the older the customer is. This is motivated by an increase in importance of the movie product in the movie experience, overshadowing other elements of

experience given by the experiential factors defined, and it seems connected to the level of attendance of the segments, with the older segment going more often respect to the other segments that have lower attendance. This result reinforces the idea that the experiential factors defined tends to make memorable the movie-going experience, but they consume resources of the consumer in the process of immersion making it more valuable for people that does not go often to the movie theatre. Who has higher attendance levels tends to not have the energy to experience fully the movie-going experience every time he goes to the movie theatre, as some respondents declared:

"I like to be immersed, but not fully immersed, I do not need that every time I go to the theatre"
(Leonardo, goes often)

"It's interesting and I would go to full movie experience, but not every time, maybe once per month. Lots of the times I just simply want to see a movie" (Beatrice, goes often)

This is supported by the findings in the categories related to attendance, with the average and rarely groups having strong levels of importance for the four most popular experiential factors. This show that treating the movie-going as something extra-ordinary, out of the normal routine, make the consumer value more the experiential factors defined by the research.

The other results show a predisposition for the female consumer to enjoy the thematic factors more than the male, which on the contrary gave more importance on the technological factor, while the job categories reflect the age segments results since the type of job is matching the age of the consumer, with students related to the young segment, retiree with the older and the employee and freelancer with the adult ones. The segmentation referring to with whom the sample is going to have its movie experience did not produce important results if not a confirmation of the valuing of the experiential factors by people that do not go alone to the cinema, with the exception of the comfort factor, declared important by every segment.

	Age				Job				Gender	
	18-30 (22)	31-45 (17)	46-60 (17)	60+(18)	Student (11)	Employee (37)	Freelancer (16)	Retiree (10)	Male (31)	Female (43)
Technology	16	11	10	8	7	27	8	3	25	20
Comfort	13	13	11	9	5	30	9	2	19	27
Aestetichs Room	4	1	2	0	2	3	2	0	4	3
Aestetichs Theatre	10	4	5	6	6	11	4	4	9	16
Spaces	10	10	3	7	7	17	2	4	16	14
Dressing	8	1	3	4	6	7	1	2	6	10
Events	11	9	11	11	6	22	9	5	15	27
Services	15	7	10	9	7	23	6	5	14	27
Memorabilia	11	3	4	2	5	10	4	1	8	12
Agg Spaces	8	5	8	7	3	15	6	4	11	17
Staff	6	2	9	7	2	13	6	3	8	16

Table 3: Summary demographic categories results (in brackets total important cases for each factor)

	Attendance			With Whom			
	Rarely (17)	Average (31)	Often (26)	Alone (6)	Friends (34)	Partner (22)	Family (12)
Technology	9	23	13	3	21	13	8
Comfort	12	23	11	6	20	13	7
Aestetichs Room	1	4	2	1	5	0	1
Aestetichs Theatre	4	11	10	1	15	6	3
Spaces	4	15	11	2	16	7	5
Dressing	0	9	7	0	12	1	3
Events	10	18	14	2	20	12	8
Services	11	21	9	2	19	14	6
Memorabilia	4	10	6	1	11	6	2
Agg Spaces	5	16	7	0	13	8	7
Staff	5	10	9	2	9	9	4

Table 4: Summary behavioral categories results (in brackets total important cases for each factor)

The cross-data factor analysis grouped together some factors and revealed some patterns in the results, such as the tendency by the respondent to give importance together to comfort and technology, thematic events and services, spaces and aggregation spaces. An interesting result shows that who gave importance to experiential factors not commonly considered important by the sample, such as dressing, aesthetics and memorabilia, tends to be more sensible to changes in its movie going experience brought by the other factors defined, giving importance also to them.

The patterns revealed can be grouped into different type of movie going experiences, and this can lead to a definition of groups of consumers that differs for the level of importance given to the various factors proposed, based on their definition of movie-going experience. There were proposed four different group of consumers: the Individual cultural consumer define is experience as a personal individual growth given by mainly the movie product; the Social edutainment consumer looks at his movie-going experience as an eventful moment in which he can learn something thanks to the social aspect of movie going and the organization of thematic

events and services; the Entertainment consumer enjoy the most the experiential factors offered by the theatre, describing his experience as a full package event that they do not attend often and from which they mainly desire to have fun; the Evasion consumer highlights the immersion and escapism of the movie-going experience, but considering the movie product the main component of their immersion, not deeming important the other experiential factors defined by the researcher.

	Technology (45)	Comfort (46)	Aestetichs Room (7)	Aestetichs Theatre (24)	Spaces (30)	Dressing (16)	Events (42)	Services (41)	Memorabilia (20)	Agg Spaces (28)	Staff (24)
Technology	/	33	5	14	22	11	24	23	13	20	15
Comfort	33	/	5	15	19	10	26	24	13	19	15
Aestetichs Room	5	5	/	7	4	3	5	4	5	5	1
Aestetichs Theatre	14	15	7	/	14	11	15	15	11	15	5
Spaces	22	19	4	15	/	11	21	19	10	16	3
Dressing	11	10	3	11	11	/	11	12	7	10	4
Events	24	26	5	15	21	11	/	30	14	22	14
Services	23	24	4	15	19	12	30	/	16	22	13
Memorabilia	13	13	5	11	10	7	14	16	/	8	6
Agg Spaces	20	19	5	15	16	10	22	22	8	/	7
Staff	15	15	1	5	3	4	14	13	6	7	/

Table 5: Summary cross-data results (in brackets total important cases for each factor)

In conclusion the sample showed importance to the aspects of technology, comfort, thematic events and services as individual experiential factors, but leaving open the possibility of synergies between all of the factors defined for the improvement of their experience. It is possible to see from the results of this thesis that focusing on the movie consumer experience as a competitive advantage is possible in the Italian market, but synergies and insights for each factor must be taken in consideration by the movie theatres in order to create a solid loyalty link between them and their customers. The results showed also important information regarding the costumer targeting based on their movie-going experience, seeing that the most affected by the experiential factors are young consumers treating the movie going as an event out of the routine, while old consumers going often to the theatres and treating this event as a normality in their life are the least affected by the experiential factors. This exploratory study gave us the opportunity to shed another light over the phenomenon of the movie-going experience, making understand motivations and reasons behind the consumer behavior regarding their “night at the movies”.

Managerial Implications

The scope of this research was to understand if there was interest from the Italian movie consumer for an approach of the movie distribution focused on the experiential factors of the movie going. The results produced by the analysis found out that there is an interest towards this way of movie consumption and some experiential factors are considered more important than others by the consumer, giving already a direction to movie theatres on what are the main

features to develop. Being up to date with the technological advancement to offer the best possible immersion becomes a way to attract the majority of the sample defined, followed by an improved comfort experience for helping the consumer immersion during the movie screening. Following the results, the movie theatre should also provide some elements of thematization and, with the help of special events and new thematic and cultural services, offer new motivations for the customers to visit the movie theatre, beating the competition of the home video experience.

One of the main results of the qualitative interviews showed many different perspectives on movie-going experience given by the different motivations and subjective feelings towards the movie products and its experience. This is translated in a condition in which it becomes nearly impossible to satisfy every consumer regarding its own preferable experience, so that movie theatres have to decide which type of consumer they want to attract and make them loyal to their experiential offer. The movie theatre analyzed already showed a focus towards a niche of consumers based on the idea of movie-going experience they want to satisfy: Palazzo del Cinema Anteo focus on the individual cultural consumers and the social edutainment consumers, the Cinema Arcadia prefer to attract the evasion and entertainment consumers, the Cinema Bianchini is more focused on the social edutainment and entertainment consumers. These three realities are having successful experiences focusing only on some particular groups of consumers, making them loyal customers even during the advent of new competitors and the shrink of the theatrical window. Movie theatres that want to use experience as a competitive advantage then should try to appeal to specific groups of consumers, with the results of this exploratory study providing the first tools for understanding the best way to use the experience features available to movie theatre. All the insights gathered by this research permits to understand which features are important for which type of consumer and why it is considered important, expanding the possibilities for theatres in targeting matters.

Limitations and further research opportunities

Although interesting results were found by the research, there were some limitations regarding the execution of the study that could have hindered the results. The main limitation refers to the pandemic situation in which the researcher had to work in, making more difficult to find respondents and organize interviews for the purpose of the thesis. This led to a definition of the sample geographically located in the area of the researcher and easily reachable thanks to the practice of network sampling, which increased the level of difficulty in finding the right sample

composition for the purpose of this research. A limitation came from also the lack of examples that the sample could know about experiential movie-going, being the interviews geographically limited in the venetian area where cases for some experiential factors were not common. This made harder the work of the researcher in making the interviewee understand what each factor was referring to. These limitations though open up to different ways to deepen the just completed research, such as changing the geographic location of the sample or using a different data collection method. A study with deep qualitative interviews instead of semi structured ones could expand the horizons of variables that affect experiential movie going determining new factors available for movie theatre to improve their customer experience. A possible work stemming from this study could analyze more deeply the factors defined, focusing more on the determinants of importance for specific movie theatre features. For example, the thematic factors require more understanding regarding their components and the synergies between them, with movie theatres gaining important understanding on how to deliver the right experience to their customer. Further research is also required to prove the existence of the consumer types that this research proposed at the end of the analysis, understanding if the model can be found in different samples or even in international markets. Another research could instead focus on specific categories of consumers, adding knowledge regarding motivations and explanation of the movie experience of consumer groups belonging to a particular segment. This could give another tool to movie theatres that wants to target the movie-going experience of a consumer niche.

This study delved into the phenomenon of the movie-going experience, a side of the movie consumption that leaves open the possibility of becoming a competitive advantage for the movie theatres, called to a new step towards an evolution of their offer to survive against the new competition arose during the last decade. The research showed interest from the Italian consumers towards the movie-going experience and the value of their immersion into the movies, in the form of technology, comfort, thematic events and services factors, and offered guidance in the application of these feature to the movie theatres that wants to use them as competitive advantage thanks to the qualitative interview's revelations on the consumer behavior. The results of this study may be used by movie theatres that wants to focus on movie-going experience as main competitive advantage and need a first understanding of what the consumers find important in the experiential features offered to them, in order to satisfy and build a loyal customer base that will make them competitive against the new competitors in the market.

Graphs, Figures and Tables

Graphs

Graph 1: Technology factor results	49
Graph 2: Comfort factor results.....	51
Graph 3: Aestetichs Screening Room factor results.....	53
Graph 4: Aestetichs movie theatre factor results.....	53
Graph 5: Spaces factor results.....	55
Graph 6: Dressing factor results.....	58
Graph 7: Aggregation Spaces factor results	59
Graph 8: Staff factor results.....	60
Graph 9: Events factor results.....	62
Graph 10: Services factor results.....	65
Graph 11: Memorabilia factor results.....	66
Graph 12: Young segment results	69
Graph 13: First adult segment results.....	69
Graph 14: Second adult segment results	70
Graph 15: Old segment results.....	71
Graph 16: Student segment results	72
Graph 17: Employee segment results.....	72
Graph 18: Freelancer segment results.....	73
Graph 19: Retiree segment results	73
Graph 20: Male segment results.....	74
Graph 21: Female segment results	74
Graph 22: Often segment results	75
Graph 23: Average segment results	76
Graph 24: Rarely segment results.....	77
Graph 25: Alone segment results.....	78
Graph 26: Friends segment results.....	79
Graph 27: Partner segment results.....	79
Graph 28: Family segment results	79
Graph 29: Cross-data Technology factor results	80
Graph 30: Cross-data Comfort factor results.....	81
Graph 31: Cross-data Thematic events factor results.....	82
Graph 32: Cross-data Services factor results.....	82
Graph 33: Cross-data Aestetichs Screening room factor results.....	83
Graph 34: Cross-data Aestetichs Movie theatre factor results.....	83
Graph 35: Cross-data Dressing factor results	84
Graph 36: Cross-data Spaces factor results.....	85
Graph 37: Cross-data Aggregation spaces factor results.....	85
Graph 38: Cross-data Memorabilia factor results.....	86
Graph 39: Cross-data Staff factor results.....	86

Figures

Figure 1: Holbrook and Hirschman model (1982)	8
Figure 2: The 4 Es model by Pine and Gilmore (1998)	9
Figure 3: Carù and Cova model of consumer immersion (2007).....	15
Figure 4: Fornerino immersion-satisfaction model (2008).....	17
Figure 5: Palazzo del cinema Anteo.....	22

Figure 6: Sala Nobel	23
Figure 7: Osteria del cinema.....	24
Figure 8: Cinema Arcadia, main hall	25
Figure 9: Logan thematic event, Cinema Arcadia.....	26
Figure 10: Cinema sui tetti, Cinema Bianchini event.....	27
Figure 11: Drive-in Milan Idroscalo	28
Figure 12: Cinema Arcadia, Sala Energia.....	32
Figure 13: Cinema Arcadia, prop in the hall.....	33
Figure 14: Archivio di Ca' Granda, Cinema Bianchini location event.....	35
Figure 15: Cinema Arcadia, Logan photography event.....	35
Figure 16: Cinema Arcadia, Film memorabilia Dunkirk event.....	36
Figure 17: Cinema Anteo, library.....	37
Figure 18: Example of the table used for the data gathering (the columns related to demographic and behavioral classes are hidden)	45
Figure 19: Hypothetical model of movie experience consumer types.....	87

Tables

Table 1: Different day and time attendance of different consumers (Fasolo, 2017)	41
Table 2: Summary of individual factor results	94
Table 3: Summary demographic categories results.....	96
Table 4: Summary behavioral categories results.....	96
Table 5: Summary cross-data results.....	97

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