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**An Experimental Investigation of the Effects of Perceived  
Co-Consumer Age on Younger Consumers' Expectations of Service Quality**

Katayoun Saleh

A Thesis

in

The Faculty

of

Commerce and Administration

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **An Experimental Investigation of the Effects of Perceived Co-Consumer Age on Younger Consumers' Expectations of Service Quality**

Katayoun Saleh

Many services offer their services in the presence of multiple consumers who share the servicescape with each other (i.e., co-consumers). This study examines how co-consumer age, as an element of the servicescape, affects younger consumers' service experience. An experiment was conducted where three service settings (rafting trips, restaurants, classrooms) and three categories of co-consumer age (young, middle-aged, old) were manipulated using a student sample of two hundred and forty three.

Across the three services studied, younger consumers' expectations of service quality did not vary depending on whether co-consumers were young, middle-aged, or older adults. However, for both the rafting and restaurant settings, younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers were more favorable when co-consumers were younger than older adults. In addition, for the classroom setting, younger consumers' patronage intentions were higher when co-consumers were young adults than when they were middle-aged adults. Limitations of the study as well as directions for future research are discussed.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The inherent characteristics of services make them more difficult to evaluate in comparison with manufactured goods. Services are intangible, non-standardized, and are produced and consumed simultaneously (Zeithaml, 1981). These characteristics force consumers to rely on extrinsic cues when evaluating service quality (Zeithaml, 1988). Given the importance of extrinsic cues, therefore, it is not surprising that numerous researchers have studied the effects of these cues on consumers' evaluations of service quality. Much of this research deals with the extrinsic cues that are accessible to consumers during a *service encounter* defined as "a period of time during which a consumer directly interacts with a service" (Shostack, 1985, p. 243). This definition of service encounter encompasses all aspects of a service firm with which the consumer may interact such as its personnel, its physical facilities, and other tangible elements. However, one important extrinsic cue that has been neglected in these studies is the presence of other consumers/customers sharing the servicescape, designated as "co-consumers" by Solomon (1996), and their effects on one's evaluation of service quality.

In several frameworks developed for conceptualizing the service encounter, the presence of co-consumers as an element of service encounter has been acknowledged. For example,

Booms and Bitner (1981), in their *Seven P's Model* of marketing mix label other customers as *Participants*. In their *Servuction Model* of service encounter, Langeard, Bateson, Lovelock, and Eiglier (1981) call other customers collectively as *Customer B*. The Grove and Fisk (1983), *Dramaturgical Framework* for services identifies customers as members of the service's *Audience*. Co-consumers are characterized as an element of *Social Factor* in Baker's (1987) definition of service encounter. Nevertheless, with exception of a few studies, research on consumer-to-consumer relationships and their effects on one's evaluation of service and service firm have been limited in services marketing.

The few studies that have investigated the consumer-to-consumer relationships found that co-consumers' behavior affects the evaluation of service and service firm. For instance, in an exploratory study, Martin (1996) showed that other customers' behavior in two different service settings, namely restaurants and bowling centers, influenced customers' satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the service and the service firm. Grove and Fisk (1997), using Critical Incident Technique (CIT), examined the effects of other customers on one's service experience and satisfaction/dissatisfaction with a tourist attraction theme park. Their findings also indicated that other customers' behavior positively/negatively affected one's service experience. Furthermore, by examining the critical incidents, they identified two broad categories of protocol and sociability incidents that captured how the presence of others affected the service experience. The authors of these studies, however, do not offer any theoretical explanations as to how or why customers' behavior affects service experience of others sharing servicescape. Moreover, no formal hypotheses have been formulated and

empirically tested in these studies. A common finding from both studies indicates that not only behavior but also visible characteristics of co-consumers affect others' service experience and satisfaction/dissatisfaction with service firms. Therefore, given the lack of research and theory development, the primary objective of the present study is to better understand consumer-to-consumer relationships and examine the effects of co-consumers' characteristics, as extrinsic cues, on other consumers' evaluations of service quality. In this study, we focus on one of co-consumers' characteristics, age. Since both Martin, and Grove and Fisk found that many dissatisfying incidents were linked to co-consumers of different age categories.

Age presents an interesting variable to study. Marketers have long used age as a classification variable for market segmentation for manufactured goods. Considering that many services such as restaurants, hotels, airlines, amusement parks, etc. offer their services in the presence of multiple consumers/customers of different age groups, managing consumers/customers of different ages is considered important. Martin and Pratner (1989) suggest that service firms should be involved in "compatibility-management" to increase the likelihood of the appropriate customer mix and customer-to-customer relationship for a specific service firm. Likewise, Lovelock (1996) argues that "managing the customer's portfolio" based on customers' appearance, age, etc. is necessary in order to enhance customers' service experience. Gummesson (1993) believes that "recruiting the right customers is as important as recruiting the right personnel" to alleviate or reduce conflicts that may arise among customers (p. 99). Silpakit and Fisk (1985) suggest that recruiting the

right customers can enhance the “comfort of being among other people” and may affect customers’ willingness to participate in the service production (p. 119).

One anticipated benefit of this study, therefore, is that a better understanding of age-related cues in the context of customer-to-customer relationships will provide service firms with valuable insights on how to better manage their businesses and improve on their services. Considering that it costs five times more to obtain new customers than to keep existing ones, service firms should be involved in continuous quality improvement in order to keep their existing customers rather than to acquire the new ones (Desatnick, 1988).

Another important issue with respect to consumer age has to do with catering to the “mature” or “baby boomers” market. In 1993, the number of baby boomers has estimated to be around 78 million (American Demographics, 1992). Their total income was about \$985 billion and for the next ten years this is projected to double, while income of the rest of the population of the United States will increase by only 50 percent (Berkman, Lindquist, and Sirgy, 1997, p. 469). Therefore, it is not surprising to see why marketers increasingly target this segment of population. In targeting this segment, however, marketers need to address one question: Would catering to the “baby boomers” market be at the expense of alienating the “younger consumers” market? In a study of the effects of age-related cues in retail services advertising, Day and Stafford (1997) offer some evidence that this may be the case. They examined the effects of older models and senior discounts on the patronage intentions of younger consumers for two service settings, restaurants and photo processing shops. Their

findings revealed that patronage intentions of younger consumers for more conspicuous services, such as restaurants, were negatively influenced by ads showing older models.

The present study builds on Martin (1996), Grove and Fisk (1997), and Day and Stafford (1997) studies. It investigates consumer-to-consumer relationships in the context of co-consumer age and its effects on younger consumers' expectations of service quality. Grove and Fisk concluded their study by calling for further research in managing customer compatibility and suggested that research is needed in examining the mix of customers of different age categories. This study responds to calls for further research in this area and should contribute to knowledge in several ways.

First, to our knowledge, this is the only study to assess the effects of co-consumer age on younger consumers' expectations of service quality using an experimental design. It is the only study that attempts to do this in multiple service settings, with the selection of settings theoretically grounded and based on findings in the literature (see below).

Second, the current study draws on literature from social psychology relating to the attitudes of younger adults toward older adults (Slotterback and Saarnio, 1996). It is guided by findings in the literature in the selection of appropriate stimuli for a context factor (i.e., service settings), one of the two factors manipulated. Moreover, since the attitudes of younger adults seem to differ with respect to three age groups of young, middle-aged, and older adults, the study focuses on these three age groups (i.e., other factor manipulated)

rather than just young and older adults.

Third, this study attempts to assess the role of a variable omitted in Day and Stafford's (1997) study. They suggest that patronage intentions of younger consumers for restaurant settings might have been influenced by price perceptions rather than the age cue manipulated. That is, the subjects might have interpreted the restaurant ads containing older models to be more expensive, and therefore reported lower patronage intentions for these ads. Price perception, however, was not measured in their study. Our study will examine this matter further by measuring subjects' perceptions of price of a meal in different restaurant settings depicting young, middle-aged, and older adults.

A further contribution is an attempt to assess empirically in an experimental context whether the protocol and sociability factors, found to be significant by Grove and Fisk (1997) in their qualitative CIT-based study, can contribute to explaining responses to older co-consumers. To this end, we operationalize these constructs and develop items based on Grove and Fisk's findings.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. In the chapters that follow, the relevant literature will be reviewed. We then present the research hypotheses and the appropriate methodology for the study. The results and discussion as well as limitations of the study and directions for future research will be presented in the last two chapters.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW: SERVICES MARKETING

**Chapter 2 reviews literature from services marketing. The importance of service quality and characteristics which distinguish services from goods are described in detail. Service quality evaluation and the presence of the co-consumer as an element of service encounter are discussed. The chapter is concluded with a discussion on previous research on consumer-to-consumer relationships.**

#### **2.1. Characteristics of Services**

The manner in which services differ from goods can be best explained by Gronroos's (1990)

definition of services:

A service is an activity or series of activities of more or less intangible nature that normally, but not necessary, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems (p. 27).

As the above definition implies, services are very different from manufactured goods. The most distinguishing characteristics of services are (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, 1985):

1. The critical distinction between goods and services is the intangibility of services.

Since services are performances rather than objects, they cannot be seen, felt, tasted

or touched in the same manner as tangible goods. This implies that precise manufacturing specifications concerning uniform quality cannot be set for services. Most services cannot be counted, measured, inventoried, tested, and verified in advance of sale to assure quality. Due to intangibility, the service firm may find it difficult to understand how consumers perceive their services and for the service firms to evaluate service quality (Zeithaml, 1981).

2. Production and consumption of many services are inseparable. That is, unlike goods that are first produced, then sold, and then consumed, services are first sold, and then produced and consumed simultaneously (Regan, 1963). In the labor intensive services, the inseparability also implies that there is an intimate interaction between customers and the production process. This interaction between a customer and the firm's contact person means that quality occurs during service delivery.
3. Heterogeneity is another characteristic of services particularly for those services with a high labor content. The heterogeneity or non-standardization of services implies that their performance often varies from producer to producer, from customer to customer, and from day to day. Standardized or uniform quality (i.e., consistency of behavior from service personnel) is difficult to assure because what the service firm intends to deliver may be entirely different from what the customer receives (Booms and Bitner, 1981).

4. Most services are perishable. Services cannot be saved, stored, or inventoried. If a service is not bought when offered, it is lost forever. The perishability of services sometimes makes it difficult for a service firm to synchronize supply and demand. Service firms need to adopt strategies to constantly cope with fluctuating demand.

## **2.2. Service Quality Evaluation**

The inherent characteristics of services - intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability - make them more difficult to evaluate in comparison with most manufactured goods for both consumers and service firms delivering them (Zeithaml, 1981; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, 1985). In evaluating quality of goods, consumers can rely on tangible cues such as style, color, package, etc. In evaluating quality of services, however, fewer tangible cues are present. In most cases, tangible cues are limited to the service provider's personnel, physical facilities, and equipment.

The difference in a manner consumers evaluate the quality of goods and services can be best explained by classification offered by Nelson (1970), and Darby and Karni (1973). Nelson identified two categories of properties of manufactured goods: (1) *search properties* or attributes than can be determined prior to purchasing a product (e.g., color, style, price, etc.), and (2) *experience properties* or attributes than can only be discerned after purchase or during consumption (e.g., taste, durability, purchase satisfaction, etc.). Darby and Karni

added a third category of properties of goods: (3) *credence properties*. The credence properties are those attributes that are impossible to evaluate even after purchase and consumption (e.g., surgical operations). Consumers rely on both search and experience properties when evaluating quality of goods, whereas they usually rely on the experience and credence properties when evaluating service quality.

In addition, customers seem to evaluate the quality of service on two dimensions (Gronroos, 1984; Gronroos, 1990). In a model of service quality, Gronroos suggested that apart from what the customers were actually receiving from the service, the customers also judge how (the manner) in which the service was delivered. He termed the former as *technical quality* or *outcome dimension* and the latter as *technical quality* or *process-related dimension*.

Considering the importance of service quality, numerous researchers have studied the effects of tangible extrinsic cues on consumers' evaluations of service quality. Much of this research deals with the extrinsic cues that are accessible to consumers during a *service encounter*, defined as "a period of time during which a consumer directly interacts with a service" (Shostack, 1985, p. 243). Shostack's definition of service encounter is a comprehensive one as it encompasses all aspects of a service firm with which the consumer may interact such as its personnel, its physical facilities, and other tangible elements. However, one important intangible cue that has been neglected in these studies is the presence of other consumers/customers sharing the service encounter and their effects on one's evaluation of service quality. Solomon (1996) designated the other consumers as "co-

consumers”, a term that will be used throughout this study as well.

### **2.3. Presence of Co-Consumers in Service Encounter Frameworks**

The presence of co-consumers as an element of the service encounter has been acknowledged in several frameworks developed for conceptualizing the service encounter. These frameworks are explained below.

Because of the inherent characteristics of services, it has been suggested that service firms should have additional variables, beyond the traditional *Four P's*, in their *services marketing mix*. The marketing mix is defined as the controllable variables that an organization puts together to satisfy its target market (McCarthy, Shapiro, and Perreault, 1994, p. 48). In their *Seven P's Model*, Booms and Bitner (1981) proposed an expanded services marketing mix consisting of the four traditional variables of product, price, place, promotion, and three new variables: *physical evidence*, *participants*, and *process*. The physical evidence refers to the physical surroundings and all tangible cues such as noise level, odors, temperature, colors, design, decor, signage, and business cards. The participants refer to all human factors in the service encounter including firm personnel and other customers. The process variable refers to procedures, mechanisms, and flow of activities. These additional variables are important as they can provide customers with other extrinsic cues for evaluation of service encounter and service firm.

In another framework developed for conceptualizing the service encounter, Langeard, Bateson, Lovelock, and Eiglier (1981), in their *Servuction Model* call other customers collectively as *Customer B*. The term servuction refers to simultaneity of customer's participation and role in both service production and delivery processes. The components of the model are: (1) *the part of the service organization that is visible to the customer*, which include the physical environment and contact personnel, (2) *other customers*, and (3) *the customer in person*. Langeard et al. contend that the final service product involves the interaction between a customer, service facilities, service personnel, and even other customers.

Grove and Fisk (1983) used the term *audience* to describe a number of people being served simultaneously by the service provider. In their *Dramaturgical Framework*, Grove and Fisk proposed that the performance of service providers depends on three components: (1) *personal front*, (2) *physical setting*, and (3) *impression management*. The personal front refers to the service provider's personal appearance and manner such as his/her dress, facial expressions, demographic profile, and personality. The physical setting is the decor, furnishing, and physical layout. Grove and Fisk argue that the physical setting has greater impact on the evaluation of services than that of goods due to intangibility of services. The last component of the model, the impression management, refers to service provider's creating a believable performance. Each of the three dramaturgical components of service provider's performance occurs before a particular set of observers or *audience*, and which has some impact on their satisfaction with the service and service firm.

Baker (1987) identified three basic components in her *Physical Environment Framework* that are considered to be important to how consumers evaluate service firms and service quality. The three factors are: (1) *ambient factors*, (2) *design factors*, and (3) *social factors*. The ambient factors refer to background conditions that exist below the level of our immediate awareness such as air quality, noise level, scent, and cleanness. The design factors represent stimuli that exist at the forefront of our awareness. This factor has two dimensions: (1) *functional dimension* that includes layout (space arrangement) and comfort, (2) *aesthetic dimension* that includes architecture, color, shape, style, etc. Baker identified the social factors as the people component of the environment. This factor also has two dimensions: (1) *audience* refers to the other customers in the service environment, and (2) *service personnel*. According to Baker, appearance, behavior, and number of other customers and service personnel affect the way consumers perceive service firm.

Although the presence of co-consumers as an important factor in service encounter has been acknowledged in several frameworks, there are only a few studies that have examined the effects of co-consumers on evaluation of service firms and service quality. The next section discusses previous research on consumer-to-consumer relationships.

## **2.4. Previous Research on Consumer-to-Consumer Relationships**

To our knowledge, there are only two studies that have investigated consumer-to-consumer relationships and its effects on one's evaluation of service quality. Neither of these studies, however, formulated and empirically tested formal hypotheses based on a theoretical background.

For example, Martin (1996) surveyed 554 consumers/customers on their level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction on 32 specific consumer behaviors in two service settings, restaurants and bowling centers. Martin concluded that consumers' public behaviors affected the service experience of others who share the same environment. Principal components analysis of consumers' satisfaction ratings identified seven categories of behaviors: (1) *gregarious*, (2) *grungy*, (3) *inconsiderate*, (4) *crude*, (5) *violent*, (6) *malcontent*, and (7) *leisurely*. The results revealed that respondents were most pleased when other consumers demonstrated gregarious behaviors and least pleased with violent or grungy behaviors. The satisfaction ratings were also found to vary somewhat by situational context (i.e., restaurants versus bowling centers). Respondents rated ten behaviors to be more satisfying in bowling centers than restaurants, while the reverse was found for nine behaviors. Furthermore, the satisfaction ratings were found to vary across respondents' demographics as well. The most significant differences were reported between younger and older consumers, and between males and females.



In another study, using Critical Incident Technique (CIT), Grove and Fisk (1997) gathered data from 486 customers visiting a tourist attraction about their satisfying/dissatisfying experiences with the service provider as the result of other customers' presence. The classification of the critical incidents resulted in two broad categories capturing how the presence of other customers positively/negatively affected the service experience. The two categories are: (1) *protocol incidents*, (2) *sociability incidents*. Protocol incidents are compromised of co-consumers' behaviors that violate expectations of protocol either positively/negatively. Sociability incidents represent those incidents that relate to other customers' sociability. The authors concluded that the presence of other customers affected one's satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the tourist attraction theme park. Moreover, among the respondents' characteristics, marital status and age (i.e., the presence of children) were linked to many dissatisfactory critical incidents.

Given the lack of research and theory development, therefore, the primary objective of the present study is to better understand consumer-to-consumer relationships and examine its effects on one's evaluation of service quality. The study builds on Martin (1996), and Grove and Fisk (1997) studies by empirically proposing and testing research hypotheses. Furthermore, since as reported in both studies, many dissatisfying experiences were linked to the mix of customers of different ages, the study focuses on mix of co-consumers of different age categories or more precisely on age of co-consumers.

Since the study focuses on co-consumer age, it also draws on Day and Stafford's (1997)

study on the effects of age-related cues in retail services advertising. In their exploratory study, Day and Stafford investigated potential problems retail service firms face in using older-aged cues in their advertising. They examined the effects of models' age and mention of a senior citizen discount on younger consumers' attitudes toward ad, attitudes toward service, and patronage intentions in two service settings, restaurants and photo processing shops. Their findings indicated that younger consumers' attitudes toward ad and toward service do not vary whether the models in the ads were young or older adults. Similarly, patronage intentions of younger consumers for less conspicuous service settings (i.e., photo processing shops) were not affected by either the use of older models or mention of a discount. However, younger consumers' patronage intentions for more conspicuous service settings (i.e., restaurants) when accompanied by same-age friends were negatively influenced by ads containing older models.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

**This chapter explores the literature from social psychology. Social identity theory followed by homophily-heterophily principle is explained in detail. In addition, literature relating to attitudes of younger adults toward older adults will be discussed and used to construct a framework for the study.**

#### 3.1. Social Identity Theory

One of the pertinent theories in social psychology in explaining group identification and intergroup relations is *social identity theory*. It states that individuals derive the social part of their identity or self-concept from their knowledge of their membership in a social group or groups along with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). By favorably comparing the attributes of their social group (ingroup) with those of other groups (outgroups), they build their own self-esteem, and acquire a positive sense about their ingroup and an understanding of how to behave toward ingroup and outgroup members. The theory is based on several assumptions (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1981):

1. Individuals try to maintain or enhance their positive self-concept and as a result they try to achieve or maintain positive social identity.

2. Membership in a social group is associated with positive or negative value connotations. This implies that social identity may be positive or negative based on positive or negative connotations that are associated with an individual's social group (ingroup).
3. The evaluation of an individual's own group is based on social comparisons in terms of value-laden attributes and characteristics that are made between one's ingroup and some other relevant outgroups. Positively discrepant comparisons between ingroup and outgroups produce high prestige; whereas, negatively discrepant comparisons between ingroup and outgroup result in low prestige. When social identity is negative, individuals will try to leave their ingroup and join a more positively perceived group.
4. No group exists alone. All groups in society are interconnected. This implies that positive aspects of social identity and the reinterpretation of attributes and engagement in social action only acquire meaning in relation to other groups.

Some of the earliest support for social identity theory came from an experimental procedure known as the *minimal group paradigm*, which tested the effects of belonging to a group on subjects' behavior (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Flament, 1971). Tajfel et al. were interested in examining whether the mere act of social categorization can lead to ingroup behavior and discrimination against the outgroup in favor of the ingroup. It was shown that random

assignment of subjects (i.e., school boys) to one of two arbitrary groups would compel them to discriminate in favor of their own group by trying to maximize their ingroup rewards relative to those of an outgroup. The basic finding of the study is that the trivial and ad hoc intergroup categorization leads to ingroup favoritism and discrimination against the outgroup. In fact, in a similar study, Billig and Tajfel (1973) ruled out the possibility that social categorization and discrimination against the outgroup in favor of ingroup are based on some perceived interpersonal similarities and/or dissimilarities (i.e., some perceived a priori criteria) among the subjects. The perception that an individual is a part of a social group and others are not is enough to cause an automatic evaluative reactions toward ingroup and outgroup members (Lau, 1989; Dovidio and Gaerther, 1993).

Although it is well-established that individuals tend to favor members of ingroup and to discriminate against outgroup's, it is not known how individuals identify with a group. Group identification can be defined as the *collective awareness* of a group as a distinct social entity (Turner, 1987). This definition of group is very broad and is basically that of a *category* in which there is no need for face-to-face interaction of its members. Turner (1982) defined this as the *social group* in which "two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves or perceive themselves to be members of the same social category" (p. 15). This implies that a social group can influence its member even though the members may never interact with each other. Lau (1989) offers a similar definition of group identification. According to Lau, group identification refers to psychological attachment to a group. There is no need for objective membership in a group. That is, one does not have

to be a member of a group to identify with it and not all objective members of a group identify with it.

According to Turner's (1987) definition of group identification, an ingroup then can be defined simply as a group or category to which an individual belongs such as one's family, country, age category, gender, or race. On the other hand, an outgroup is a group or category to which an individual does not belong. For instance, at the family level, one's own family would be considered as an ingroup but the neighbor's family would be considered as an outgroup. At the country level, one's country would be considered as an ingroup but other countries would be considered as outgroups. Similarly, one assumes that an individual of a certain age category would consider people of that age as an ingroup but those of different ages as outgroups. If the gender is the category or group level, then one should assume that women (men) would consider other women (men) as an ingroup and men (women) as an outgroup. Triandis, Bontempo, and Villareal's (1988) definition of ingroup mirrors Turner's definition. They defined an ingroup as "a set of people with whom one shares some attribute that contributes to one's positive social identity" (p. 324). An outgroup then consists of all those not belonging to the ingroup.

In an empirical study, Lau (1989) proposed three hypotheses relating to why individuals identify with a specific social group. The first hypothesis, the *similarity hypothesis*, states that people tend to identify with social groups whose members match or are similar on certain easily identifiable characteristics. The primary factor in identification with a group

is affect for that group. That is, individuals like the group they identify with. Moreover, individuals like others who are similar to themselves as they can provide a more accurate appraisal of one's abilities. Status and length of membership within the group are two factors that are associated with affect for a group.

The second explanation for identifying and feeling close to a group is the general salience of a group in society, the *salience hypothesis*. According to this hypothesis, the more salient a group is, the more likely identification with the group would be. Lau (1989) identified two kinds of factors affecting group salience: (1) *chronic factors*, and (2) *acute factors*. The chronic factors are those factors that are always present for certain groups such as one's minority status or one's race. The acute factors represent those factors that are present temporarily such as a group member who is running for an important political office. These factors contribute to the salience of a group in the society and therefore increase the probability of identifying with that social group.

The third hypothesis is the *social density hypothesis*. The hypothesis states that the higher the proportion of group members in an individual's immediate environment (i.e., social density), the more likely that group is to be chosen as a social or a reference group. Nearness or closeness of a group can lead to the choice of that group as the social group because closeness leads not only to liking but also to easily available means of comparison. Low levels of social density lead to a higher probability of identifying with a group, whereas high levels of social density are associated with a lower probability. Lau (1989) attributes this to

the fact that at relatively high levels of social density, there are enough group members already present to provide the social interdependence functions that groups serve; however, at these levels also more and more group members make the group cognitively less salient. The less salient a group is, the less likely identification with the group would be according to the salience hypothesis discussed above.

### **3.2. Homophily-Heterophily Principle**

A distinct but related concept useful in explaining group identification and intergroup relations is *homophily-heterophily principle*. The principle is mainly used in communication literature in explaining the relationship between source and receiver. Homophily refers to “the degree to which pairs of individuals who interact are similar with respect to certain attributes such as beliefs, values, education, social status, etc.” (Rogers and Bhowmik, 1971, p. 526). Rogers and Bhowmik define heterophily as “the degree to which pairs of individuals who interact are different with respect to certain attributes” (p. 526). The authors suggest that a homophilous source-receiver pair not only interact more but also interact more effectively since they may share common meanings, attitudes, or beliefs. More effective interaction would in turn create greater consensus and similarity between the source and the receiver and result in an even higher rate of interaction.

The homophily principle is consistent with the similarity hypothesis discussed earlier in



explaining why individuals identify with a specific social group. It implies that when given a choice, individuals tend to prefer to interact with others who are similar to themselves (Brown and Reingen, 1987). Laumann (1966) calls this “affinity” or “like-me” principle. This is attributed to the fact that people who share some common characteristics, attributes, or values can relate and interact more easily with each other.

### **3.3. Younger Adults’ Attitudes Toward Older Adults**

The literature on attitudes of younger adults toward older adults suggests that in general young adults hold negative attitudes toward older adults. Older adults are stereotyped as having a marked deterioration of intellectual abilities (Cornelius and Caspi, 1986; Ryan, 1992), being unattractive (Janelli, 1986), being unhappy (Tuckman and Lorge, 1953), and being physically inactive (Ostraw, Keener, and Perry, 1987). Other reviews of literature, however, indicate that younger adults’ attitudes toward older adults to be more positive. Kite and Johnson (1988) contribute discrepancies in results across studies to differences in methodology used.

In an empirical study, Slotterback and Saarnio (1996) argue that a better understanding of the old-age stereotyping and negative attitudes toward older adults will be achieved by categorizing person attributes. They suggest that attitudes of younger adults toward older adults should be assessed based on categories of person attributes and different attitudinal

tasks. They identified three attribute categories: (1) *physical*, (2) *personal-expressive*, and (3) *cognitive*. The physical attributes define those characteristics that are related to physical appearance, physical states, or physical movement. The personal-expressive attributes are those attributes related to states of mind, attitudes, or social relations. The cognitive attributes are attributes related to intellectual abilities or information processing.

Slotterback and Saarnio (1996) then assessed younger adults' attitudes toward three target age groups of young, middle-aged, and older adults on two attitudinal tasks; that is, an open-ended and a rating tasks. In the open-ended task, the subjects were given a sentence stem and were asked to provide descriptors of young adults, middle-aged adults, and older adults. In the rating task, subjects read the same sentence stem as in the open-ended task followed by 42 adjectives that completed the stem. They were asked to rate each adjective on a 5-point scale based on the appropriateness of that adjective for the target group. The selected adjectives reflected three attributes of physical, personal-expressive, and cognitive. Half of the adjectives were positive, and half were negative.

The results of Slotterback and Saarnio's (1996) study offer some explanations for the discrepancies in results obtained in previous studies. It was found that young adults' attitudes toward older adults were a function of category of attribute and type of attitudinal task employed. The results also revealed that younger adults had the most negative attitudes toward other individuals' physical attribute. In this category, young adults viewed other young adults less negatively than middle-aged adults who are viewed less negatively than

older adults. The results were similar for both the open-ended and rating tasks; however, negativity was strongest in the open-ended task.

In personal-expressive category, young adults viewed older adults more negatively than other young or middle-aged adults, about whom attitudes did not differ significantly in the open-ended task. In the rating task, however, young adults viewed other young adults more negatively than middle-aged or older adults, about whom attitudes did not differ significantly.

In cognitive category, young adults viewed middle-aged adults less negatively than other young or older adults, about whom attitudes did not differ in both tasks. However, the negativity was strongest in the rating task.

Luszcz (1986), using a different nomenclature, identified four dimensions/categories of person attributes on which young adults' attitude toward older adults differed. In an experimental procedure, adolescents, middle-aged adults, and older adults rated a typical person of either their own age group or one of the other two on 28 pairs of adjectives along a 7-point Likert scale. The adjectives represented four dimensions: (1) *instrumentality*, (2) *acceptability*, (3) *autonomy*, and (4) *integrity*. The instrumentality dimension reflects one's adaptability and vitality or activity level. The acceptability dimension suggests the extent to which one is considered to be socially pleasing to others. The autonomy dimension relates to the extent to which one is self-sufficient and more a contributor to than a recipient of some

social system benefits. The integrity dimension implies a sense of personal satisfaction or being at peace with oneself.

Consistent with the Slotterback and Saarnio's (1996) findings, the results of Luszcz's (1986) study also revealed that the negative attitudes toward older adults were a function of dimension or category of person attributes evaluated. For example, in the instrumentality dimension, adolescents perceived a steady decline in the level of instrumentality from adolescents, to middle-aged adults, to older adults. Luszcz's instrumentality dimension is similar to the physical attribute of Slotterback and Saarnio, and her findings are also consistent with their findings.

In the acceptability dimension, adolescents perceived other adolescents less positively than middle-aged or older adults, about whom attitudes did not differ from each other. The acceptability dimension is similar to the personal-expressive attribute of Slotterback and Saarnio (1996). Also, the findings are consistent with the results obtained for the personal-expressive attribute in the rating task.

The results for the other two dimensions of autonomy and integrity were similar to the acceptability dimension. That is, adolescents perceived other adolescents less positively than middle-aged or older adults, about whom attitudes did not differ from each other.

Table 3.1 lists the Slotterback and Saarnio (1996), and Luszcz (1986) frameworks and links

the similar attributes of the former to the dimensions of the latter. In this study, we use the three attributes/dimensions of physical/instrumentality, personal-expressive/ acceptability, and cognitive upon which the research hypotheses are built and empirical data were assessed.

**Table 3.1. Conceptual Categorization of Younger Adults' Attitudes Toward Older Adults**

<b>Slotterback &amp; Saarnio (1996)</b>	<b>Luszcz (1986)</b>	<b>Findings</b>
<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	
1) Physical	1) Instrumentality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger adults are viewed less negatively than middle-aged adults who are viewed less negatively than older adults (for both open-ended and rating tasks) (Slotterback &amp; Saarnio, 1996)</li> <li>• Adolescents are perceived more positively than middle-aged adults who are perceived more positively than older adults (Luszcz, 1986)</li> </ul>
2) Personal-Expressive	2) Acceptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger and middle-aged adults are viewed to be the same but less negatively than older adults (for open-ended task) / Middle-aged and older adults are viewed to be the same but less negatively than younger adults (for rating task) (Slotterback &amp; Saarnio, 1996)</li> <li>• Adolescents are perceived less positively than middle-aged and older adults about whom attitudes do not differ from each other (Luszcz, 1986)</li> </ul>
3) Cognitive	3) Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle-aged adults are viewed less negatively than younger and older adults who are viewed to be the same (for both open-ended and rating tasks)</li> <li>• Adolescents are perceived less positively than middle-aged and older adults about whom attitudes do not differ from each other</li> </ul>
	4) Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adolescents are perceived less positively than middle-aged and older adults about whom attitudes do not differ from each other</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

**The research hypotheses for the proposed study are outlined here in detail. The hypotheses are operationalized by looking at three service settings where satisfaction with the service depends in part on physical, personal-expressive, or cognitive attributes of co-consumers respectively.**

#### 4.1. Conceptual Framework

From the literature on attitudes of younger adults toward older adults, it is evident that younger adults' negative attitudes toward older adults are attribute-specific. That is, the negative attitudes of younger adults seem to vary with respect to physical, personal-expressive, or cognitive attribute of older adults. Applying these findings to services, one expects that in some service settings where satisfaction with the service depends in part on physical, personal-expressive, or cognitive attributes of co-consumers, younger consumers' attitudes toward older consumers to be also attribute-specific and vary from one service setting to other. It is proposed here that younger consumers' attitudes toward older consumers affect their evaluations of service quality in service settings where satisfaction with the service involves co-consumers' attributes. Moreover, it is expected that ingroup bias and/or homophily to further heighten the younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of different age categories.

Below we operationalize the research hypotheses by looking at three service settings where satisfaction with the service involves physical, personal-expressive, or cognitive attributes of co-consumers. The selected service settings are: rafting trips, restaurants, and classrooms.

#### **4.2. Services Involving Physical Attributes of Co-Consumers**

With respect to physical attributes, young adults perceive a steady decline in the level of physical abilities from young adults, to middle-aged adults, to older adults. With this in mind, it is expected that in some service settings, such as rafting trips, where satisfaction with the service depends in part on the physical abilities of co-consumers, younger consumers' attitudes to be more positive when co-consumers are young adults than when they are middle-aged or older adults.

It is further expected that younger consumers' attitudes toward older adults will be heightened by ingroup bias and/or homophily. According to social identity theory, age category can be used as a criterion for intergroup categorization leading to ingroup favoritism and discrimination against the outgroup. That is, it is more likely that young consumers consider other young consumers (rather than middle-aged or older co-consumers) as ingroup members particularly if no other information about co-consumers is available to them. In addition, young adults are expected to have more in common with others in their age group than they have with others in different age categories. Based on homophily principle, the



more two individuals have in common, the more likely and effectively they interact with each other. This implies that young consumers should prefer the presence of other young consumers simply because they can more easily relate to and interact with them.

We propose here that young consumers expect to have a more satisfactory service experience and higher evaluations of service quality when co-consumers are young adults rather than middle-aged or older adults. Furthermore, satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the service affects consumers' behavioral intentions positively/negatively (Woodside, Frey, and Daly, 1989; Taylor and Baker, 1994). Some consequences of customers' favorable behavioral intentions for service firms are retention, positive word-of-mouth communication, ongoing revenue, price premium, and referred customers (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996). Based on this discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1a: Younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are middle-aged adults
- H1b: Younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H2a: Younger consumers' attitudes toward service of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are middle-aged adults
- H2b: Younger consumers' attitudes toward service of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults

- H3a: Younger consumers' expectations of service quality of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are middle-aged adults
- H3b: Younger consumers' expectations of service quality of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H4a: Younger consumers' patronage intentions of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are middle-aged adults
- H4b: Younger consumers' patronage intentions of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults

Grove and Fisk (1997), in their qualitative CIT (Critical Incident Technique) based study, found protocol and sociability incidents to be significant factors in explaining how the presence of other consumers/customers positively/negatively affected the service experience. Moreover, they found that many dissatisfying incidents reported were linked to presence of co-consumers of different ages, a finding which is consistent with Martin's (1996) study. Therefore, it would be interesting to see if the protocol and sociability factors also differentiate among co-consumers of different age categories. That is, if these factors can contribute in explaining further young consumers responses to older co-consumers within the framework explained above.

It is predicted that younger consumers expect more sociability when co-consumers are young adults rather than middle-aged or older adults. Consequently, the following hypotheses are

formulated:

- H5a: Younger consumers will expect more sociability of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are middle-aged adults
- H5b: Younger consumers will expect more sociability of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults

#### **4.3. Services Involving Personal-Expressive Attributes of Co-Consumers**

For personal-expressive attributes, young adults view older adults more negatively than other young or middle-aged adults, with attitudes not differing between the latter two age groups. Considering this fact, it is expected that in some service settings, such as restaurants, where satisfaction with the service depends on the ambiance created in part by co-consumers (i.e., personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers), younger consumers' attitudes to be more negative when co-consumers are older than when they are young or middle-aged adults. It is further expected that ingroup bias and/or homophily to strengthen younger consumers' negative attitudes toward older adults. That is, when given a choice, young consumers prefer the presence of other young or middle-aged co-consumers to older co-consumers.

It is proposed that younger consumers have a more satisfactory service experience and higher evaluations of service quality when co-consumers are young or middle-aged adults rather

than older adults. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H6a: Younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H6b: Younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H7a: Younger consumers' attitudes toward service of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H7b: Younger consumers' attitudes toward service of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H8a: Younger consumers' expectations of service quality of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H8b: Younger consumers' expectations of service quality of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H9a: Younger consumers' patronage intentions of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H9b: Younger consumers' patronage intentions of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults

Similarly, with respect to protocol and sociability factors, it is predicted that younger consumers will expect more sociability when co-consumers are young or middle-aged adults rather than older adults. Consequently, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H10a: Younger consumers will expect more sociability of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults

H10b: Younger consumers will expect more sociability of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults

In their empirical study, Day and Stafford (1997) suggested that younger consumers' patronage intentions for restaurant settings might have been influenced by price perception rather than the age cue manipulated. That is, the subjects might have interpreted the restaurant ads showing older adults to be more expensive. This was evident by the comments made about the restaurant's ads as being "expensive", "elegant", and "classy." Price perception, however, was not measured in their study. In this study, we examine this matter further by measuring the subjects' perceptions of price of a meal in different restaurant settings depicting young, middle-aged, and older adults.

It is expected that younger consumers' perceptions of price (i.e., price of a meal) to be lower in restaurant settings depicting young or middle-aged adults rather than older adults. Since we expect that older consumers to be associated with more expensive and classy restaurants.

Therefore, the following hypotheses are posited:

H11a: Younger consumers' perceptions of price of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be lower when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are older adults

H11b: Younger consumers' perceptions of price of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be lower when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults

#### **4.4. Services Involving the Cognitive Attributes of Co-Consumers**

With respect to cognitive attributes, younger adults' attitudes toward older adults are slightly different from their views on physical or personal-expressive attributes of older adults. Younger adults perceive middle-aged adults more positively than other young or older adults, about whom attitudes do not differ. Therefore, it is expected that in some service settings, such as classrooms, where service satisfaction depends in part on the cognitive abilities of co-consumers, younger consumers' attitudes to be more favorable when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when they are young or older adults. However, unlike services involving physical or personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers, we expect that younger consumers' positive attitudes toward middle-aged adults will override any ingroup bias and/or homophily. We predict that even though ingroup bias and/or homophily might be present, its effects to be minimal. That is, we expect younger adults' attitudes to have more influence on evaluations of service quality than ingroup bias and/or homophily.

It is proposed that younger consumers expect to have a more satisfactory service experience

and higher evaluations of service quality when co-consumers are middle-aged adults rather than young or older adults. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H12a: Younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are young adults
- H12b: Younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H13a: Younger consumers' attitudes toward service of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are young adults
- H13b: Younger consumers' attitudes toward service of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H14a: Younger consumers' expectations of service quality of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are young adults
- H14b: Younger consumers' expectations of service quality of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults
- H15a: Younger consumers' patronage intentions of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are young adults
- H15b: Younger consumers' patronage intentions of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults

With respect to protocol and sociability factors, it is predicted that younger consumers will expect more protocol when co-consumers are middle-aged adults rather than young or older adults. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H16a: Younger consumers will expect more protocol of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are young adults

H16b: Younger consumers will expect more protocol of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are older adults



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **METHODOLOGY**

**In this chapter, experimental design, selection of services, as well as the development of sketches used in the study are described. Sample, procedure, and measures employed to collect data are also explained in detail.**

#### **5.1. Experimental Design**

A 3 (service setting) x 3 (age category) between-subjects factorial design was employed to test the research hypotheses in this study. This resulted in nine conditions. The selected service settings were rafting trips, restaurants, and classrooms corresponding to three person attributes of physical, personal-expressive, and cognitive respectively. The age categories were young, middle-aged, and old respectively. Dependent variables, covariates, and manipulation checks were then assessed using a questionnaire.

#### **5.2. Selection of Services**

Three services, namely rafting trips, restaurants, classrooms, were pretested. A sample of 90 undergraduate students, similar to the ones in the main study, from Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Concordia University were recruited to participate voluntarily in the

study. After examining the 1999 summer undergraduate class schedule, some classes were randomly selected for experimental testing. Professors were then contacted in-person or via telephone and asked for their cooperation in the experiment. If permission was granted, a date and time were set to visit the classroom.

Upon arrival at the classroom, the researcher briefly introduced herself and then told students that she was conducting a study to understand people's perceptions of different activities in order to design relevant promotional materials as a part of her master's thesis research. Students were asked for their voluntary assistance in this research, and it was specifically emphasized that no obligation was placed upon them to participate. Students who volunteered were then presented with a questionnaire to fill out, which took approximately five minutes. Each participant rated 42 adjectives using one of the three activities (i.e., a between-subjects design) on a 7-point scale with endpoints "not at all/definitely." The descriptions were:

**Rafting:**

"The following adjectives deal with a white water rafting trip where you would be part of a team on the raft; in your opinion, the characteristics that would be desirable in team members would be:'

**Restaurant:**

"The following adjectives deal with a restaurant where you might dine with friends or family; in your opinion, the characteristics that would be desirable in diners in this restaurant would be:"

Classroom:

“The following adjectives deal with a computer class where students are assigned to work in groups; in your opinion, the characteristics that would be desirable in students in this class would be:”

The 42 adjectives were adapted from Slotterback and Saarnio’s (1996) study. The adjectives represent both positive and negative attributes associated with physical, personal-expressive, and cognitive characteristics. Fourteen adjectives represented physical attribute: sick, energetic, tired, active, wrinkled, athletic, weak, strong, blind, well groomed, deaf, healthy, crippled, and pretty. Sixteen adjectives were employed to describe personal-expressive attribute: mean, kind, bored, quiet, foolish, responsible, moody, caring, destructive, happy, self-centered, friendly, unwanted, generous, intolerant, and lonely. The remaining 13 adjectives assessed cognitive attribute: senile, wise, uneducated, bright, ignorant, knowledgeable, forgetful, mentally alert, confused, well read, philosophical, and intelligent. The adjectives were mixed in order to avoid any possibility of order bias.

The purpose of the pretest was to assess if the three services chosen would differ with respect to these adjectives considering that each chosen service setting was supposed to represent one of the three attributes. It was predicted that subjects would rate the services involving more physical activities such as rafting trips higher than the other two services, namely restaurants and classrooms, on the adjectives representing physical attribute. Similarly, it was predicted that subjects would rate restaurant and classroom settings higher on the adjectives representing personal-expressive and cognitive attributes respectively.

Each set of adjectives was first subjected to factor analysis to see how many factors are obtained and if the positive and negative adjectives are extracted on different factors. The extraction method used was principal component (PC) with orthogonal (VARIMAX) rotation with each factor expected to be independent of, or orthogonal from, all other factors (i.e., the correlation between factors is assumed to be zero). Moreover, this method was the only method of extraction that produced relatively clear patterns of factor loadings, even though several extraction procedures were also run. Four factors, with eigenvalues larger than one and accounting for 65.5 percent of the total variance, emerged for adjectives describing physical attribute. An examination of the factor loadings indicates that factor 1 captures the respondents' perceptions of positive adjectives (See Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1. Factor Loadings for Adjectives Describing Physical Attribute**

<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>	<b>Factor 4</b>
Energetic	<b>.76</b>	.14	-.21	-.19
Active	<b>.72</b>	-.05	-.03	-.24
Athletic	<b>.77</b>	.14	.14	.08
Strong	<b>.77</b>	-.01	.00	.18
Healthy	<b>.65</b>	-.06	-.28	.30
Weak	-.03	<b>.55</b>	<b>.49</b>	-.13
Blind	-.10	<b>.80</b>	.30	-.00
Deaf	.03	<b>.89</b>	.11	.00
Crippled	.19	<b>.79</b>	.07	.19
Sick	-.07	.18	<b>.72</b>	.05
Tired	-.18	.07	<b>.83</b>	-.05
Wrinkled	.13	<b>.41</b>	<b>.55</b>	-.02
Groomed	-.08	-.08	.07	<b>.88</b>
Pretty	.11	.18	.04	<b>.81</b>

Five factors obtained for adjectives describing personal-expressive attribute, which accounted for 65.8 percent of the total variance. An analysis of the factor loadings showed that factor 1 best captured subjects' perceptions of positive adjectives (See Table 5.2).

**Table 5.2. Factor Loadings for Adjectives Describing Personal-Expressive Attribute**

<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>	<b>Factor 4</b>	<b>Factor 5</b>
Responsible	<b>.55</b>	-.07	-.17	.08	-.16
Caring	<b>.81</b>	.13	-.04	-.11	-.04
Happy	<b>.73</b>	-.33	-.12	.10	.04
Friendly	<b>.74</b>	-.16	-.07	-.12	.04
Generous	<b>.69</b>	-.04	.12	-.02	-.18
Bored	-.07	<b>.87</b>	.11	.15	-.08
Foolish	-.08	<b>.57</b>	<b>.57</b>	-.12	.15
Moody	-.11	<b>.63</b>	<b>.42</b>	.36	.25
Destructive	-.20	<b>.78</b>	.12	.26	.08
Unwanted	-.17	.12	<b>.81</b>	.20	.08
Lonely	.03	.19	<b>.82</b>	.19	-.08
Quiet	.01	.00	.21	<b>.53</b>	-.36
Self-centered	-.03	.28	.04	<b>.70</b>	-.04
Intolerant	.02	.16	.19	<b>.79</b>	.32
Mean	-.02	.08	.12	.14	<b>.83</b>
Kind	<b>.43</b>	-.00	.06	.16	<b>-.66</b>

For adjectives representing cognitive attribute, the factor analysis resulted in three factors accounting for 62.2 percent of the total variance. Again, factor 1 appears to represent respondents' perceptions of positive adjectives for cognitive attribute (See Table 5.3).

**Table 5.3. Factor Loadings for Adjectives Describing Cognitive Attribute**

<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>
Wise	<b>.78</b>	-.06	-.05
Bright	<b>.77</b>	-.00	-.12
Knowledgeable	<b>.69</b>	<b>-.45</b>	.11
Mentally Alert	<b>.69</b>	-.20	-.18
Intelligent	<b>.77</b>	-.32	.05
Well-read	<b>.50</b>	<b>-.45</b>	<b>.42</b>
Uneducated	-.36	<b>.57</b>	.15
Ignorant	-.13	<b>.81</b>	.10
Forgetful	-.07	<b>.60</b>	<b>.58</b>
Confused	-.18	<b>.79</b>	.18
Philosophical	<b>.45</b>	<b>.50</b>	.07
Senile	-.12	.12	<b>.82</b>

First factor from each factor analysis was then used for further analysis. For cognitive attribute, however, factor loadings indicate that two adjectives of knowledgeable and well-read are loaded highly on both factor 1 and 2. Therefore, these two adjectives were not used in further analysis. The Cronbach's alpha for each attribute is shown in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4. Cronbach's Alpha for Each Attribute**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math>-value</b>
Physical	5	0.79
Personal-Expressive	5	0.77
Cognitive	4	0.81

In order to test any group differences with respect to each attribute among three service settings, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with a priori multiple comparisons was conducted. First, a mean was obtained for each subject on each of the three factors. The ANOVA was then run on the calculated means. For physical attribute, the ANOVA yielded an  $F = 22.50$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , supporting the significance of the test. The results of the multiple comparisons indicated that the mean ratings of rafting (5.91) was significantly higher than both the restaurant (4.55) and classroom (4.19) respectively ( $p < 0.001$ ). For personal-expressive attribute, the ANOVA resulted in  $F = 2.53$ ,  $p < 0.10$ , indicating the significance of the test. The results of the multiple comparisons were also significant indicating that the mean ratings of the restaurant (5.63) was higher than both the rafting (5.08) and classroom (5.00) ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results for cognitive attribute were slightly different from what was predicted. The ANOVA yielded an  $F = 2.31$ ,  $p > 0.10$ , indicating that the test was not significant. However, the mean ratings for the classroom (5.64) was higher than the ones for the restaurant (4.96) and rafting (5.51) as intended. The ANOVA results are presented in Table 5.5.

### **5.3. Development of Sketches**

The sketches were developed by a sketch artist/graphic artist, who was paid for his services. In order to achieve consistency and comparability of different versions of sketches, namely young, middle-aged, and older versions, a young version of each service setting was first

sketched. This version was then scanned and digitally manipulated by computer to portray middle-aged and older versions respectively. In addition, to avoid any confounding effects, the cover story accompanied each sketch was kept as similar as possible.

In order to ensure that subjects perceived age differences among sketches portraying young, middle-aged, and older adults as intended, a second pretest along the same lines as in Day and Stafford (1997) was conducted. A sample of 253 undergraduate students, similar to the ones in the main study, from Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Concordia University were recruited to participate voluntarily in the study. After examining the 1999 summer undergraduate class schedule, some classes were randomly selected for experimental testing. Professors were then contacted in-person or via telephone and asked for their cooperation in the experiment. If permission was granted, a date and time were set to visit the classroom.

Upon arrival at the classroom, the researcher briefly introduced herself and then told students that she was conducting a study to understand people's perceptions of different visual stimuli such as sketches, photographs, etc. depicting some service settings as a part of her master's thesis research. Students were asked for their voluntary assistance in this research, and it was specifically emphasized that no obligation was placed upon them to participate. Students who volunteered were then presented with a questionnaire containing one of the nine sketches (i.e., a between-subjects design). Participants were asked to estimate the average age of people in each sketch in response to:



**Table 5.5. ANOVA Results for Each Attribute by Service Settings**

Attribute	Service Setting			ANOVA F
	Rafting/Restaurant (mean)	Restaurant/Classroom (mean)	Classroom/Rafting (mean)	
<b>Physical</b>	5.91/4.55***		4.19/5.91***	22.50*** (0.000) <sup>a</sup>
<b>Personal-Expressive</b>	5.08/5.63**	5.63/5.00**		2.53* (0.086)
<b>Cognitive</b>		4.96/5.64	5.64/5.51	2.31 (0.105)

<sup>a</sup> Significance level

\*\*\* p < 0.001

\*\* p < 0.05

\* p < 0.10

**Table 5.6. ANOVA Results for Each Service Setting by Age Categories**

Service Setting	Age Category			ANOVA F
	Young/Middle-aged	Middle-aged/Old	Old/Young	
<b>Rafting</b>	23.11/34.25***	34.25/62.30***	62.30/23.11***	191.41*** (0.000) <sup>a</sup>
<b>Restaurant</b>	27.43/34.10***	34.10/51.11***	51.11/27.43***	92.12*** (0.000)
<b>Classroom</b>	23.10/34.89***	34.89/55.62***	55.62/23.10***	147.02*** (0.000)

<sup>a</sup> Significance level

\*\*\* p < 0.001

Rafting Sketch:

“In your opinion, what is the age of the people in the sketch?”

Restaurant Sketch:

“In your opinion, what is the age of the customers in the sketch?”

Classroom Sketch:

“In your opinion, what is the age of the students in the sketch?”

In order to assess the perceived age differences among the three age categories for each service setting, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with a priori multiple comparisons was conducted. The results indicated that ANOVA F-statistic to be significant for the three service settings: rafting ( $F = 191.41, p < 0.001$ ), restaurant ( $F = 92.12, p < 0.001$ ), and classroom ( $F = 147.02, p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, it was found that the group means to be significantly different among the three age categories of young, middle-aged, and old for the three services, supporting the perceived age differences among the three age categories. The ANOVA results for each service setting are shown in Table 5.6.

In general, subjects perceived the average age of people in each sketch to be between 23-27 years old for the young version, between 34-35 years old for the middle-aged version, and between 51-62 for the older version. Although the results were in the desirable range, the researcher decided that three sketches portraying people either too old or too young and hence needed to be modified for the main study. These were: young version of restaurant

sketch (27 years old), older version of restaurant sketch (51 years old), and older version of classroom sketch (56 years old).

#### **5.4. Sample**

Two hundred and sixty four undergraduate students from Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Concordia University participated voluntarily in the study. The use of student sample is justifiable due to the exploratory nature of the study. Of the responses, 21 were incomplete and discarded. This resulted in a final sample of 243. The sample consisted of 109 (44.9%) males and 134 (55.1%) females, with ages ranging from 18 to 55 years old and an average age of 24 years old. Table 5.7 shows subjects' distribution per cell.

**Table 5.7. Distribution of Subjects per Cell**

<b>Service Setting</b>	<b>Age Category</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>Young</b>	<b>Middle-aged</b>	<b>Old</b>	
<b>Rafting</b>	29	30	23	82
<b>Restaurant</b>	28	28	26	82
<b>Classroom</b>	27	26	26	79
<b>Total</b>	84	84	75	243

## 5.5. Procedure

After examining the 1999 summer undergraduate class schedule, some classes from Faculty of Commerce and Administration were randomly selected for experimental testing. Professors were then contacted in-person or via telephone and asked for their cooperation in the experiment. If permission was granted, a date and time were set to visit the classroom.

Upon arrival at the classroom, the researcher briefly introduced herself and then told students that she was conducting a study on people's perceptions of different sketches to be used in promotional materials for various service settings as part of her master's thesis research. Students were asked for their voluntary assistance in this research, and it was specifically emphasized that no obligation was placed upon them to participate. They were also informed of the duration of the experiment as well as what is expected from them. In order to encourage participation, an incentive was also offered to participants<sup>1</sup> (See Appendix 1 - Verbal Instructions to Participants). Before distributing the questionnaire, students volunteering to participate were then presented with a consent form to sign. That is, they were informed of their right to withdraw from the study and their right to confidentiality (See Appendix 2 - Consent Form to Participant in Research).

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<sup>1</sup> The use of incentive is justifiable not only as a means of persuasion but also as a means of compensation for subjects' time and effort. Poor quality responses are likely to be obtained if no compensation is offered. Subjects might feel exploited and as a result engage in response biases such as *extremity response bias*. The extremity response bias is a tendency to give extreme responses by using only the end points of a scale (Whitley, 1996, p. 144).

Questionnaires were then distributed so that students were randomly assigned to one of the nine conditions (i.e., a between-subject design). After collection of all the questionnaires, subjects were debriefed on the true nature of the study<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, they were asked not to reveal the purpose of the study to anybody else.

## 5.6. Measures

Each questionnaire consisted of a cover page and three sections. The cover page contained one of the nine sketches along with a cover story and instructions for completing the questionnaire (See Appendix 3 - Questionnaires). The first section included items relating to the cover story (questions 1-4), as well as items for measuring dependent variables (questions 5-13). It was necessary to include items relating to the cover story in order to make the deception more believable. The dependent variables measured in this study were: attitude toward sketch, attitude toward service, patronage intention, intention to recommend, expected service quality, expected overall service experience, protocol, sociability, attitude toward co-consumers, and price perception<sup>3</sup>.

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2 It was necessary to use deception in order to prevent subjects from guessing the research hypotheses and providing *socially desirable* but untrue answers. The social desirability response bias is a tendency to respond in a way that makes the respondent look good (socially desirable) to others (Whitley, 1996, p. 143). This study deals with how co-consumer age affects younger consumers' expectations of service quality. Obviously, nobody would admit that he/she stereotypes people based on their age or any other visible characteristics.

3 It should be noted that dependent variables of attitude toward sketch, intention to recommend, and expected overall service experience were not used in the analyses.

Attitude toward sketch was measured using four 7-point bipolar items anchored by adjectives “bad/good”, “dislike/like” (Yi, 1990), “unfavorable/favorable”, and “negative/positive” (Day and Stafford, 1997). Attitude toward service measurement was based on three 7-point items anchored by adjectives “bad/good”, “unfavorable/favorable”, and “negative/positive” (Muehling, Lacznia, and Stoltman, 1991; Day and Stafford, 1997).

Patronage intention measurement, based on Yi (1991) and Day and Stafford (1997), comprised of two 7-point bipolar items anchored by adjectives “unlikely/likely”, “impossible/possible”, and on one 5-point scale anchored with “definitely would not”, “probably would not”, “may / may not”, “probably would”, and “definitely would” (Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Rentz, 1996). Intention to recommend was also measured on the same three items.

Expected service quality was measured on five items. Four items were measured on a 7-point scale anchored by adjectives “low/high”, “poor/excellent” (Dabholkar, 1996), “terrible/great”, and “below average/above average”. The fifth item, based also on Dabholkar’s study, was assessed with one 7-point bipolar scale with endpoints “strongly disagree/strongly agree”. Five items were developed to measure expected overall service experience as no existing validated scale was found to measure this construct. This was meant to capture subjects’ overall experience of consuming such a service depicted in the sketch. It was assessed on five 7-point bipolar items with endpoints “not enjoyable/enjoyable”, “not beneficial/beneficial”, “boring/stimulating”, “dull/lively”, and

“unpleasant/pleasant”.

Items to measure protocol were developed based on Grove and Fisk’s (1997) study. Four 7-point bipolar items with endpoints of “ill mannered/well mannered”, “impolite/polite”, “discourteous/courteous”, and “inconsiderate/considerate” were used to measure this variable. Items to measure sociability were also developed based on Grove and Fisk’s study. It comprised of six 7-point items anchored by “unsociable/ sociable”, “unfriendly/friendly”, “cold/warm”, “not enthusiastic/enthusiastic”, “unhelpful/helpful”, and “uncooperative/cooperative”.

Finally, attitude toward co-consumers was measured with three items on 7-point scale with endpoints “strongly disagree/strongly agree”. Additionally, one item was used to measure price perception in the questionnaire developed for the restaurant setting. It was measured on 7-point scale with endpoints “affordable/very expensive”.

The second section contained manipulation checks (questions 1-4), as well as an item (question 5) for measuring a covariate. Two items were used to measure age. One item was measured on 7-point bipolar scale anchored by endpoints “very young/very old.” The other item asked the participants to provide an average age for people depicting in each sketch. The manipulation checks were also assessed for physical, personal-expressive, and cognitive attributes to ensure that each service setting was perceived as intended (Slotterback and Saarnio, 1996). The physical attribute was measured on three items on 7-point bipolar scale

anchored by “passive/active”, “not athletic/athletic”, and “weak/strong”. Three items on 7-point bipolar scale with endpoints “sad/happy”, “unfriendly/friendly”, and “miserly/generous” were also used to assess the personal-expressive attribute. The cognitive attribute was measured using three items on 7-point bipolar scale anchored by “dumb/bright”, “slow/alert”, and “stupid/intelligent”. A covariate measuring group perception was also measured. It was assessed on 7-point scale anchored by “strongly disagree/strongly agree”. The group perception intended to measure the degree to which subjects imagine themselves as a part of the group portrayed in each sketch.

The third section of the questionnaire contained only demographic information (questions 1-6) on respondents’ sex, age, level of schooling, as well as their student status and work status.



## CHAPTER 6

### ANALYSES & RESULTS

**In this chapter, results of manipulation checks as well as results of hypotheses testing for services involving physical (rafting trip settings), personal-expressive (restaurant settings), and cognitive (classroom settings) attributes of co-consumers are discussed in detail. Inter-item reliabilities of dependent measures are also presented.**

#### 6.1. Manipulation Checks

A series of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) with a priori or planned comparisons were performed to determine whether manipulation checks were perceived as predicted. The ANOVAs for both age variables manipulated were found to be significant. For the first age variable, the ANOVA yielded an  $F = 139.32$  with  $p < 0.001$ . For the second age variable, the ANOVA resulted in an  $F = 429.71$  with  $p < 0.001$ . Moreover, the results of the a priori comparisons revealed that subjects perceived the mean ratings to differ significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) among the three age categories of young, middle-aged, and old. The mean perceived age was found to be 24 years old, 35 years old, and 57 years old for young, middle-aged, and older co-consumers respectively. The ANOVA results are shown in Table 6.1.

The manipulation checks were also assessed for physical, personal-expressive, and cognitive attributes. For the physical attribute, the ANOVA resulted in an  $F = 20.97$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,

indicating the significance of the test. The results of the a priori comparisons further indicated that the mean ratings was significantly higher for rafting (5.42) than the ones for restaurant (4.47) and classroom (4.30) settings respectively. For the personal-expressive attribute, the ANOVA F-statistic of 5.07 was also found to be significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results of a priori contrasts indicated that the mean ratings for restaurant (5.48) was significantly different from both the rafting (5.83) and classroom (5.35). The mean ratings of restaurant, however, was only found to be higher than the classroom setting as predicted. The ANOVA was not significant ( $F = 1.433, p > 0.10$ ) for the cognitive attribute; consequently, no further contrasts were examined. The means, however, were in the expected direction. That is, the mean ratings for classroom (5.06) was higher than the ones for rafting (4.79) and restaurant (5.02) settings respectively. The ANOVA results are presented in Table 6.2.

## **6.2. Analyses**

First, the mean of each dependent measure ratings under each of the three age categories was obtained for each subject. We then conducted three one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVAs) to estimate the overall effect of the age categories on all dependent measures. In order to remove the effects of covariates, three one-way multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVAs) were also conducted. The covariates included were group perception and subject's age. The group perception measured the degree to which subjects

**Table 6.1. ANOVA Results for Each Age Variable by Age Categories: Manipulation Checks**

Variable	Age Category			ANOVA F (0.000) <sup>a</sup>
	Young/Middle-aged (mean)	Middle-aged/Old (mean)	Old/Young (mean)	
Age 1	3.18/4.02***	4.02/5.60***	5.60/3.18***	139.32*** (0.000) <sup>a</sup>
Age 2	24.23/34.92***	34.92/57.43***	57.43/24.23***	429.71*** (0.000)

<sup>a</sup>Significance level

\*\*\* p < 0.001

**Table 6.2. ANOVA Results for Each Attribute by Service Settings: Manipulation Checks**

Attribute	Service Setting			ANOVA F (0.000) <sup>a</sup>
	Rafting/Restaurant (mean)	Restaurant/Classroom (mean)	Classroom/Rafting (mean)	
Physical	5.42/4.47***		4.30/5.42***	20.97*** (0.000) <sup>a</sup>
Personal-Expressive	5.83/5.48**	5.48/5.35**		5.07** (0.007)
Cognitive		5.02/5.06	5.06/4.79	1.43 (0.241)

<sup>a</sup>Significance level

\*\*\* p < .001

\*\* p < .05

imagined themselves as a part of the group portrayed in each sketch. The inclusion of the group perception as a covariate was important as it was predicted that subjects to associate themselves to various degree to the group depicted in each sketch. Due to the presence of older subjects in the sample, it was also important to control for subjects' age as a covariate.

Next, a series of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) with a priori or planned comparisons were carried out to test the research hypotheses. In instances when a large number of dependent variables are being examined, the statistical power of a series of ANOVAs exceed one that obtained with a single MANOVA (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1995, p. 266). Hair et al. suggest a sample size of 56-66 per group for achieving statistical power of 0.80, when there are between four and six dependent variables, three groups, and expected effect size is medium (p. 279).

### **6.3. Overall Effect**

Three MANOVAs, one for each service setting, were conducted to test the overall group differences among young, middle-aged, and older co-consumers with respect to all dependent measures. For the rafting and classroom settings, there were five dependent variables, for the restaurant setting, six. The results indicated an overall group differences for all three services. For the rafting, MANOVA resulted in Wilks' lambda = 0.80,  $F = 1.74$ , and  $p < 0.10$ . Similarly, the F approximation of Wilks' lambda was significant for the restaurant

setting (Wilks' lambda = 0.74, F = 2.02, p < 0.05). For the classroom setting, MANOVA resulted in Wilks' lambda = 0.80, F = 1.66, and p < 0.10, indicating the significance of the test (See Table 6.3).

**Table 6.3. MANOVA Results for Each Service Setting**

<b>Service Setting</b>	<b>Wilks' lambda</b>	<b>F-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Rafting	0.80	1.75	0.073
Restaurant	0.74	2.02	0.026
Classroom	0.80	1.66	0.096

In order to eliminate the effects of covariates on the dependent variables, three MANCOVAs were also performed. The results were consistent with the ones obtained from MANOVAs. That is, when the effects of covariates were removed, there were still significant differences among the three age categories for the three services. The inclusion of the covariates improved the F approximation of Wilks' lambda for both the rafting and classroom settings. However, since the covariates were found to be insignificant in all three service settings, they were not considered for further analyses (See Table 6.4).

**Table 6.4. MANCOVA Results for Each Service Setting**

<b>Service Setting</b>	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Wilks' lambda</b>	<b>F-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Rafting	Age Category	0.78	1.97	0.040
	Group Perception	0.93	1.10	0.368
	Subject's Age	0.94	0.98	0.435
Restaurant	Age Category	0.75	1.78	0.056
	Group Perception	0.99	0.17	0.984
	Subject's Age	0.90	1.30	0.268
Classroom	Age Category	0.76	2.04	0.034
	Group Perception	0.91	1.29	0.279
	Subject's Age	0.95	0.65	0.660

## **6.4. Hypotheses Testing**

In order to test the research hypotheses, a series of ANOVAs with a priori or planned comparisons were then performed. The results of ANOVAs for each service setting are discussed below.

### **6.4.1. Rafting Trip Settings**

A series of ANOVAs with a priori or planned comparisons were run to test hypotheses H1 to H5. The ANOVA results were found to be significant for only attitude toward co-consumers (H1) ( $F = 4.38, p < 0.05$ ) and attitude toward service (H2) ( $F = 3.92, p < 0.05$ ).

The ANOVA results are presented in Table 6.5. For the attitude toward co-consumers, the results of a priori comparisons revealed that younger consumers' attitudes were more favorable when co-consumers were young adults than when they were middle-aged adults ( $p < 0.10$ ) (H1a). Similarly, younger consumers had more favorable attitudes when co-consumers were young adults than when they were old adults (H1b). Similar results were obtained with respect to the attitude toward service. The results of a priori contrasts indicated that younger consumers' attitudes toward service showing younger co-consumers were more favorable than the one showing older co-consumers (H2b). The younger consumers' attitudes did not vary between young and middle-aged co-consumers (H2a); even though, the mean ratings for young co-consumers (5.33) was higher than the one for middle-aged co-consumers (5.27) as predicted.

The ANOVA results were not significant for expected service quality (H3) ( $F = 0.36, p > 0.10$ ), patronage intention (H4) ( $F = 0.58, p > 0.10$ ), and sociability (H5) ( $F = 0.40, p > 0.10$ ). That is, younger consumers' expectations of service quality, patronage intentions, and sociability do not differ among the three age categories of young, middle-aged, and older adults. Moreover, the mean ratings for expected service quality was found to be in the opposite direction for young and middle-aged adults. That is, the mean ratings for young adults (5.04) was lower than the mean ratings for middle-aged adults (5.26). An examination of the mean ratings for patronage intentions revealed that the mean ratings was higher for young adults (4.23) than the ones for middle-aged (4.12) and older (3.72) adults as intended. This was also the case with respect to the sociability. That is, the mean ratings for young

**Table 6.5. ANOVA Results for Each Dependent Measure by Age Categories for Rafting Trip Settings**

Dependent Measure	Hypothesis	Age Category		ANOVA F
		Young/Middle-Aged (mean)	Young/Old (mean)	
Attitude Toward Co-Consumers	1	4.62/3.96*	4.62/3.34**	4.38** (0.016) <sup>a</sup>
Attitude Toward Service	2	5.33/5.27	5.33/4.19**	3.92** (0.024)
Expected Service Quality	3	5.04/5.26	5.04/4.97	0.28 (0.759)
Patronage Intention	4	4.23/4.12	4.23/3.72	0.58 (0.561)
Sociability	5	5.93/5.87	5.93/5.69	0.40 (0.671)

<sup>a</sup> Significance level

\*\* p < 0.05

\* P < 0.10



adults (5.93) was higher than the ones for middle-aged (5.87) and older adults (5.69).

To summarize, for the rafting trip setting, younger consumers reported higher mean ratings on two out of five dependent measures. That is, the mean ratings for attitude toward co-consumers and attitude toward service were found to be significantly higher when co-consumers were young rather than older adults. A summary of research hypotheses and results is presented in Table 6.6.

#### **6.4.2. Restaurant Settings**

Hypotheses H6 through H11 examined the effect of three age categories on six dependent measures in the restaurant settings. Six ANOVAs with a priori or planned comparisons were conducted to test the hypotheses (See Table 6.7). The ANOVA F-statistic showed that only attitude toward co-consumers (H6) ( $F = 3.02, p < 0.10$ ) was significant. Furthermore, the results of the a priori contrasts revealed that only younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers was significantly higher when co-consumers were young rather than older adults (H6a). However, the mean ratings for middle-aged adults (3.74) was not found to be higher than older adults (3.56) as predicted (H6b).

**Table 6.6. Summary of Hypotheses Testing for Services Involving Physical Attributes of Co-Consumers: Rafting Trip Settings**

	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Results</b>
H1a (H1b)	Younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are middle-aged (older) adults	Supported (Supported)
H2a (H2b)	Younger consumers' attitudes toward service of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are middle-aged (older) adults	Not Supported (Supported)
H3a (H3b)	Younger consumers' expectations of service quality of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are middle-aged (older) adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)
H4a (H4b)	Younger consumers' patronage intentions of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are middle-aged (older) adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)
H5a (H5b)	Younger consumers will expect more sociability of services involving physical attributes of co-consumers when co-consumers are young adults than when co-consumers are middle-aged (older) adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)

The ANOVA did not reach significance for attitude toward service (H7), expected service quality (H8), patronage intention (H9), and sociability (H10). That is, younger consumers' attitude toward service, expectations of service quality, patronage intention, and sociability did not differ among the three age categories. Moreover, the mean ratings for attitude toward service and expected service quality were in the opposite direction. That is, the mean ratings for young adults (5.17/5.14) was slightly lower than the one for older adults (5.19/5.21) for

**Table 6.7. ANOVA Results for Each Dependent Measure by Age Categories for Restaurant Settings**

Dependent Measure	Hypothesis	Age Category		ANOVA F
		Young/Old (mean)	Middle-aged/Old (mean)	
Attitude Toward Co-Consumers	6	4.43/3.56**	3.74/3.56	3.02* (0.054) <sup>a</sup>
Attitude Toward Service	7	5.17/5.19	5.37/5.19	0.23 (0.793)
Expected Service Quality	8	5.14/5.21	5.44/5.21	0.57 (0.571)
Patronage Intention	9	4.82/4.22	4.63/4.22	1.89 (0.158)
Sociability	10	5.28/5.20	5.62/5.20	1.78 (0.175)
Price Perception	11	3.64/4.15	4.36/4.15	1.80 (0.172)

<sup>a</sup> Significance level

\*\* p < 0.05

\* p < 0.10

both the attitude toward service and expected service quality respectively. The mean ratings, however, was in the expected direction for both the patronage intention and sociability.

Finally, hypothesis 11 examined the effect of three age categories on price perception. The ANOVA yielded an  $F = 1.80$ ,  $p > 0.10$ , indicating the test was not significant. That is, younger consumers' perceptions of price of a meal did not vary significantly among the age categories. Similar to the attitude toward service and expected service quality, the mean ratings for middle-aged adults (4.36) was higher than the one for older adults (4.15).

In summary, for the restaurant setting, younger consumers reported higher mean ratings on one out of six dependent measures. That is, the mean ratings for attitude toward co-consumers was significantly higher when co-consumers were young rather than older adults. A summary of research hypotheses and results is presented in Table 6.8.

### **6.4.3. Classroom Settings**

A series of ANOVAs was conducted to test hypotheses H12 through H16 for the classroom settings (See Table 6.9). The ANOVA results indicated that attitude toward co-consumers (H12), attitude toward service (H13), and expected service quality (H14) were not significant. Moreover, in most cases, the mean ratings for middle-aged adults was in the opposite direction. That is, the means were lower for middle-aged adults than the ones for

younger and older adults.

**Table 6.8. Summary of Hypotheses Testing for Services Involving Personal-Expressive Attributes of Co-Consumers: Restaurant Settings**

	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Results</b>
H6a (H6b)	Younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are young (middle-aged) adults than when co-consumers are older adults	Supported (Not Supported)
H7a (H7b)	Younger consumers' attitudes toward service of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are young (middle-aged) adults than when co-consumers are older adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)
H8a (H8b)	Younger consumers' expectations of service quality of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are young (middle-aged) adults than when co-consumers are older adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)
H9a (H9b)	Younger consumers' patronage intentions of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are young (middle-aged) adults than when co-consumers are older adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)
H10a (H10b)	Younger consumers will expect more sociability of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers when co-consumers are young (middle-aged) adults than when co-consumers are older adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)
H11a (H11b)	Younger consumers' perceptions of price of services involving personal-expressive attributes of co-consumers will be lower when co-consumers are young (middle-aged) adults than when co-consumers are older adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)

**Table 6.9. ANOVA Results for Each Measure by Age Categories for Classroom Settings**

Dependent Measure	Hypothesis	Age Category		ANOVA F
		Middle-Aged/Young (mean)	Middle-Aged/Old (mean)	
Attitude Toward Co-Consumers	12	4.09/4.21	4.09/3.81	0.59 (0.558) <sup>a</sup>
Attitude Toward Service	13	4.83/5.30	4.83/5.17	0.88 (0.419)
Expected Service Quality	14	4.57/5.14	4.57/5.10	1.23 (0.299)
Patronage Intention	15	3.61/4.65**	3.61/3.90	3.35** (0.040)
Protocol	16	4.84/4.55	4.84/5.24	1.44 (0.244)

<sup>a</sup>Significance level

\*\* p < 0.05

Hypothesis 15, which predicts that younger consumers' patronage intentions will be higher when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when they are young (older) adults, was partially supported. The ANOVA yielded an  $F = 3.35$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , indicating the significance of the test. The results of a priori contrasts revealed that only the mean ratings for middle-aged adults (3.61) differed significantly from the one for young adults (4.56). The mean ratings, however, was in the opposite direction.

Finally, hypothesis 16, which predicts that younger consumers will expect more protocol when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when they are young (older) adults, was not significant. In this case too, the mean ratings was in the opposite direction for one of the contrasts. That is, the mean ratings for middle-aged adults (4.84) was lower than the one for older adults (5.24).

To summarize, for the classroom setting, younger consumers reported higher mean ratings on one out of five dependent measures. That is, the mean ratings for middle-aged adults was significantly different from the one for young adults with respect to the patronage intention. This difference, however, was in the opposite direction. A summary of hypotheses testing and results is shown in Table 6.10.

**Table 6.10. Summary of Hypotheses Testing for Services Involving Cognitive Attributes of Co-Consumers: Classroom Settings**

	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Results</b>
H12a (H12b)	Younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are young (older) adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)
H13a (H13b)	Younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are young (older) adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)
H14a (H14b)	Younger consumers' expectations of service quality of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be more favorable when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are young (older) adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)
H15a (H15b)	Younger consumers' patronage intentions of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers will be higher when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are young (older) adults	Partially Supported (Not Supported)
H16a (H16b)	Younger consumers will expect more protocol of services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers when co-consumers are middle-aged adults than when co-consumers are young (older) adults	Not Supported (Not Supported)

### **6.5. Reliability Analysis**

Inter-item reliabilities for each dependent measure was assessed through Cronbach's alpha. The coefficients were found to be 0.86, 0.95, 0.96, 0.92, 0.94, and 0.90 for attitude toward co-consumers, attitude toward service, expected service quality, patronage intention,



protocol, and sociability respectively. All Cronbach's alpha coefficients were above the acceptable threshold value of 0.70 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1995, p. 641). Day and Stafford (1997) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.92 to 0.95 for attitude toward ad, attitude toward service, and two patronage intention measures, which are consistent with our results.

**Table 6.11. Cronbach's Alpha for Each Dependent Measure**

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math>-value</b>
Attitude Toward Co-Consumers	3	0.86
Attitude Toward Service	3	0.95
Expected Service Quality	5	0.96
Patronage Intention	3	0.92
Protocol	4	0.94
Sociability	6	0.90

## CHAPTER 7

### DISCUSSION

**In this chapter, discussion of findings as well as limitations of the study are explained. Directions for future research in consumer-to-consumer relationships and service quality are also discussed.**

#### **7.1. Discussion of Findings**

This study set out to explore the effects of co-consumer age, as an element of the servicescape, on younger consumers' expectations of service quality and related variables. It makes a theoretical contribution toward understanding when age-related effects occur and examines the role played by old-age stereotyping and ingroup bias and/or homophily. Accordingly, an experiment was conducted on a student sample using nine sketches with three service settings (rafting trips, restaurants, classrooms) and three categories of co-consumer age (young, middle-aged, old).

Across the three services studied, the results varied and do not appear to be consistent with the theory. Co-consumer age seemed to have no effect on younger consumers' expectations of service quality. A plausible explanation may be that age alone is not as salient a cue of quality as other tangible cues in the servicescape. Perhaps, other co-consumers' characteristics such as race, gender, etc. should have been taken into account. It also

appears that younger consumers' expectations of sociability and protocol did not vary depending on whether co-consumers were young, middle-aged, or older. The findings imply that the sociability and protocol incidents, found to be significant by Grove and Fisk (1997) in their qualitative study, do not contribute to explaining responses to older co-consumers across three services. This could be due to the fact that the sociability and protocol factors may be situation-specific and were not elicited by our chosen service settings. It should be noted that most of the reported dissatisfying critical incidents in Grove and Fisk's study resulted from customers' waiting in line at an amusement theme park. A situation that is quite different from rafting trip, restaurant, and classroom settings. As noted by Grove and Fisk, "standing in line is clearly a serious challenge for many people" (p. 77).

In spite of some unexpected contrary findings, the study also produced some interesting results. For the rafting trip setting, the results revealed that younger consumers had a more favorable attitudes toward younger co-consumers than middle-aged or older co-consumers. Similarly, younger consumers' attitudes toward service were found to be more favorable for younger rather than older co-consumers. These significant effects for attitudinal measures clearly indicate that old-age stereotyping and ingroup bias and/or homophily are operationalized in this case as they did affect younger consumers' attitudes.

With respect to the restaurant setting, younger consumers' attitudes toward co-consumers were also found to be more favorable when co-consumers were young rather than older adults. Once again, this supports the fact that old-aged stereotyping and ingroup bias and/or

homophily were present. Our hypothesis on younger consumers' patronage intentions, however, failed to replicate the results obtained by Day and Stafford (1997). Day and Stafford found that younger consumers' patronage intentions were negatively affected by restaurant ads containing older models. Our findings indicated that younger consumer's patronage intentions did not differ whether co-consumers were young, middle-aged, or older adults. This may be to the fact that we considered three levels of co-consumer age, namely young, middle-aged, and old, whereas Day and Stafford examined only young and old. Moreover, the power of the statistical tests might have been compromised by adding one more level (i.e., middle-aged), as our hypotheses had directional support. Furthermore, our study attempted to address one of the limitations of Day and Stafford's study. Day and Stafford suggested that younger consumers' patronage intentions may have been influenced by price perception rather than the age cue manipulated. Our study ruled out this possibility. Younger consumers' perceptions of a price of a meal did not vary depending on whether co-consumers were young, middle-aged, or older adults.

For the classroom setting, the results were the most inconsistent. The only significant hypothesis was with respect to younger consumers' patronage intentions. That is, younger consumers' patronage intentions were found to be more favorable when co-consumers were young rather than middle-aged adults. This, however, was in the opposite direction as were results for other hypotheses in this setting. For services involving cognitive attributes of co-consumers, we predicted that younger adults' attitudes toward older adults would be a more salient contributor than ingroup bias and/or homophily in explaining younger consumers'

behavior toward older co-consumers. Our results, however, clearly indicated that this was not the case. That is, ingroup bias and/or homophily seem to have more effect on younger consumers' behavior, at least for this service setting. Another possible explanation for the inconsistent results may have to do with the use of computers in the classroom sketch. It is quite possible that subjects perceived that middle-aged or older adults not to be as good as young adults in using computers; and therefore, their presence produced lower ratings.

## **7.2. Limitations**

As with any study, there are limitations to this one. First, the student sample might not have been a good representative of younger consumers due to the presence of older students. The results might have been different if another sample containing only younger adults (i.e., 18-25 years old) had been used. Obviously, a younger sample would have been more representative of younger consumers and their views. Despite this, it should be noted that when subjects' age was introduced as a covariate in the analyses it was not significant.

Second, black and white sketches may not have been the ideal way of depicting different service settings. In this case, the use of sketches was the only possible alternative for manipulation of co-consumer age without introducing any confounding. It is possible that sketches were too unlike real people to elicit the desirable responses, although every effort was made when developing the sketches. Similarly, the use of cover stories/scenarios is also

questionable. Eroglu (1987) suggests that scenarios are particularly successful in situations where subjects are required to play themselves (as in this case) rather than acting out unfamiliar roles. However, in our study, the classroom setting that should be the most familiar setting to students produced the least consistent results. As explained above, however, this may be due to the presence of computers in the classroom sketch and not so much the sketch itself.

### **7.3. Directions for Future Research**

There are some opportunities for future research in this area. Replications of this study using different service settings and/or different methodology will extend external validity (i.e., generalizability) of the present study. Since as Leone and Schultz (1980) note that “there are no universal generalization in marketing” (p. 12) and that “replication is the key to generalization” (p. 15). Similarly, Hubbard and Armstrong (1994) state that “replication is rare in marketing” (p. 233) and that replication would enhance marketings’ scientific status.

Another direction for future research would be to consider other co-consumers’ characteristics such as gender, race, etc. alone or in conjunction with age. As already mentioned, perhaps age alone is not as salient a cue of quality and other co-consumers’ characteristics should be taken into account as well.

In this study, we only examined younger consumers' views and perceptions, a more comprehensive study could investigate not only young but also middle-aged and older adults' views and perceptions about other age categories. In the case of middle-aged/older adults, the study would have a far more reaching implications for marketers. Since "mature market" is and will continue to be economically viable market in North America (Moschis, Mathur, and Smith, 1993).

Finally, the present study focused on co-consumer age as an extrinsic element of servicescape on evaluations of service quality, future studies could investigate the effects of other human elements' characteristics such as service provider age or contact person age on evaluations of service quality.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **VERBAL INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS**

## **VERBAL INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS**

The purpose of this research is to assess people's views and perceptions of different sketches to be used in promotional materials of various service settings. The study is conducted by Katayoun Saleh (M.Sc. Student) and Dr. Mrugank V. Thakor (Thesis Supervisor) of the Marketing Department at Concordia University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Administration at Concordia University.

**PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT:**

- Your participation in this study will be limited to filling out a questionnaire which should take approximately 15 minutes
- You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time without negative consequences
- Your inputs will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes by the researchers
- You may be entitled to receive one of the three prizes of \$25, \$20, or \$15 based on a lottery draw as a token of our appreciation for your time and effort upon completion of the questionnaire

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research conducted by Katayoun Saleh (M.Sc. Student) and Dr. Mrugank V. Thakor (Thesis Supervisor) of the Marketing Department at Concordia University.

I have been informed that the purpose of this research is to assess people's views and perceptions of different sketches to be used in promotional materials of various service settings.

I UNDERSTAND THAT:

- My participation in this study will be limited to filling out a questionnaire which should take approximately 15 minutes
- I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without negative consequences
- My inputs will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes by the researchers
- The results of this study may be published
- I may be entitled to receive one of the three prizes of \$25, \$20, or \$15 on the basis of a lottery as a token of appreciation for my time and effort upon completion of the questionnaire

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH.

NAME (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_



## **APPENDIX 3**

### **QUESTIONNAIRES**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS STUDY**

The purpose of the present study is to assess people's views and perceptions of different sketches to be used in promotional materials of various service settings. The sketch below shows a rafting trip in progress with some typical participants. On such a trip, all participants have to work together to enjoy and get the best out of the experience. Please keep the scene below in mind while answering the questions.



**Instructions:** Based on the sketch, please answer the questions that follow by circling the number on the scale that best represents your opinions. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. We are only interested in your honest opinions.

PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE

**Section 1**  
**Your Views and Perceptions about the Sketch Itself**

1. How realistic is the situation shown in the sketch?  

Very unrealistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very realistic
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------
  
2. How attractive are the participants (not the guide) in the sketch?  

Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------
  
3. Do you think the activity shown in the sketch is a common one?  

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------
  
4. Could you see yourself engaging in the activity shown in the sketch?  

Very unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very likely
---------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------
  
5. Please indicate your feelings about this sketch:  

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Like
Unfavourable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favourable
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
  
6. How do you feel about this rafting trip?  

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Unfavourable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favourable
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
  
7. How likely are you to go on this trip?  

Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likely
Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely would not	Probably would not	May or may not	Probably would	Definitely would

8. Would you recommend this trip to friends?

Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likely
Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Definitely would not	2	Probably would not	3	May or may not	4	Probably would	5	Definitely would

9. What kind of service quality do you expect from this trip?

Low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High
Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Excellent
Terrible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Great
Below average	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Outstanding

10. This trip should provide a high quality service:

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

11. The experience of going on this rafting trip should be:

Not enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Enjoyable
Not beneficial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Beneficial
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Stimulating
Dull	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Lively
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pleasant

12. In your opinion, the participants (not the guide) shown in the sketch seem to be:

Ill-mannered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Well-mannered
Impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Polite
Discourteous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Courteous
Inconsiderate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Considerate
Unsociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sociable
Unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Friendly
Cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Warm
Not enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Enthusiastic
Unhelpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Helpful
Uncooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cooperative

13. I would like to interact with the participants shown in the sketch:
- |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
14. I would like to be with the participants shown in the sketch:
- |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
15. My rafting experience would be enhanced by the participants shown in the sketch:
- |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|

**Section 2**  
**Your Views and Perceptions about the Team Members in the Sketch**

1. How would you characterize the age of the participants (not the guide) in the sketch?
- |                              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                            |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| Very young<br>(15 years old) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very old<br>(75 years old) |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------------|
2. The participants shown in the sketch seem to be:
- |              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |             |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| Dumb         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Bright      |
| Slow         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Alert       |
| Stupid       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Intelligent |
| Passive      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Active      |
| Not athletic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Athletic    |
| Weak         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Strong      |
| Sad          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Happy       |
| Unfriendly   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Friendly    |
| Miserly      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Generous    |
3. In your opinion, what is the average age of the participants in the sketch? Please provide a whole number in years, not a range. \_\_\_\_\_
4. To me, it does not matter who else is in the raft:
- |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|

**Section 3**  
**Demographic Information**

1. Are you:      Male      \_\_\_\_\_  
                         Female      \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your age?      \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?
- High School      \_\_\_\_\_  
College / Cegep      \_\_\_\_\_  
University (Ugrad)      \_\_\_\_\_  
University (Grad)      \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you:      First year student      \_\_\_\_\_  
                         Second year student      \_\_\_\_\_  
                         Third year student      \_\_\_\_\_  
                         Fourth year student      \_\_\_\_\_
5. Please indicate your student status:      Full-time      \_\_\_\_\_  
   Part-time      \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you work?      No      \_\_\_\_\_  
   Yes      \_\_\_\_\_      IF YES:      Full-time      \_\_\_\_\_  
   Part-time      \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP







**QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS STUDY**

The purpose of the present study is to assess people's views and perceptions of different sketches to be used in promotional materials of various service settings. The sketch below shows a restaurant scene with some typical customers. The atmosphere in the restaurant depends very much on the people dining there. Please keep the scene below in mind while answering the questions.



**Instructions:** Based on the sketch, please answer the questions that follow by circling the number on the scale that best represents your opinions. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. We are only interested in your honest opinions.

PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE

**Section 1**  
**Your Views and Perceptions about the Sketch Itself**

1. How realistic is the situation shown in the sketch?

Very unrealistic    1    2    3    4    5    6    7                      Very realistic

2. How attractive are the customers (not the bartender) in the sketch?

Unattractive            1    2    3    4    5    6    7                      Attractive

3. Do you think the activity shown in the sketch is a common one?

Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7                      Strongly agree

4. Could you see yourself engaging in the activity shown in the sketch?

Very unlikely            1    2    3    4    5    6    7                      Very likely

5. Please indicate your feelings about this sketch:

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Like
Unfavourable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favourable
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive

6. How do you feel about this restaurant?

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Unfavourable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favourable
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive

7. How likely are you to eat at this restaurant?

Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likely
Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely would not	Probably would not	May or may not	Probably would	Definitely would

8. Would you recommend this restaurant to friends?

Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likely
Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Definitely would not		Probably would not	May or may not	Probably would				Definitely would

9. What kind of service quality do you expect from this restaurant?

Low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High
Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Excellent
Terrible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Great
Below average	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Outstanding

10. This restaurant should provide a high quality service:

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

11. The experience of eating at this restaurant should be:

Not enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Enjoyable
Not beneficial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Beneficial
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Stimulating
Dull	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Lively
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pleasant

12. In your opinion, the customers (not the bartender) shown in the sketch seem to be:

Ill-mannered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Well-mannered
Impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Polite
Discourteous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Courteous
Inconsiderate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Considerate
Unsociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sociable
Unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Friendly
Cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Warm
Not enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Enthusiastic
Unhelpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Helpful
Uncooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cooperative

13. I would like to interact with the customers shown in the sketch:

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

14. I would like to eat with the customers shown in the sketch:

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

15. My restaurant experience would be enhanced by the customers shown in the sketch:

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

16. What price would you expect to pay for a dinner at this restaurant?

Affordable (\$15.00 for two)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Expensive (\$100.00 for two)
---------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------------

**Section 2**

**Your Views and Perceptions about the Customers in the Sketch**

1. How would you characterize the age of the customers (not the bartender) in the sketch?

Very young (15 years old)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very old (75 years old)
------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------------

2. The customers shown in the sketch seem to be:

Dumb	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Bright
Slow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Alert
Stupid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Intelligent
Passive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Active
Not athletic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Athletic
Weak	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strong
Sad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Happy
Unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Friendly
Miserly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Generous

- In your opinion, what is the average age of the customers in the sketch? Please provide a whole number in years, not a range. \_\_\_\_\_
- To me, it does not matter who else is eating at this restaurant:  
  
Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Strongly agree

**Section 3**  
**Demographic Information**

- Are you:            Male    \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Female   \_\_\_\_\_
- What is your age?            \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?  
  
High School                    \_\_\_\_\_  
College / Cegep              \_\_\_\_\_  
University (Ugrad)            \_\_\_\_\_  
University (Grad)             \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you:            First year student            \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Second year student         \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Third year student            \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Fourth year student         \_\_\_\_\_
- Please indicate your student status:    Full-time    \_\_\_\_\_  
  Part-time    \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you work?    No    \_\_\_\_\_    IF YES:    Full-time    \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Yes    \_\_\_\_\_                                  Part-time    \_\_\_\_\_

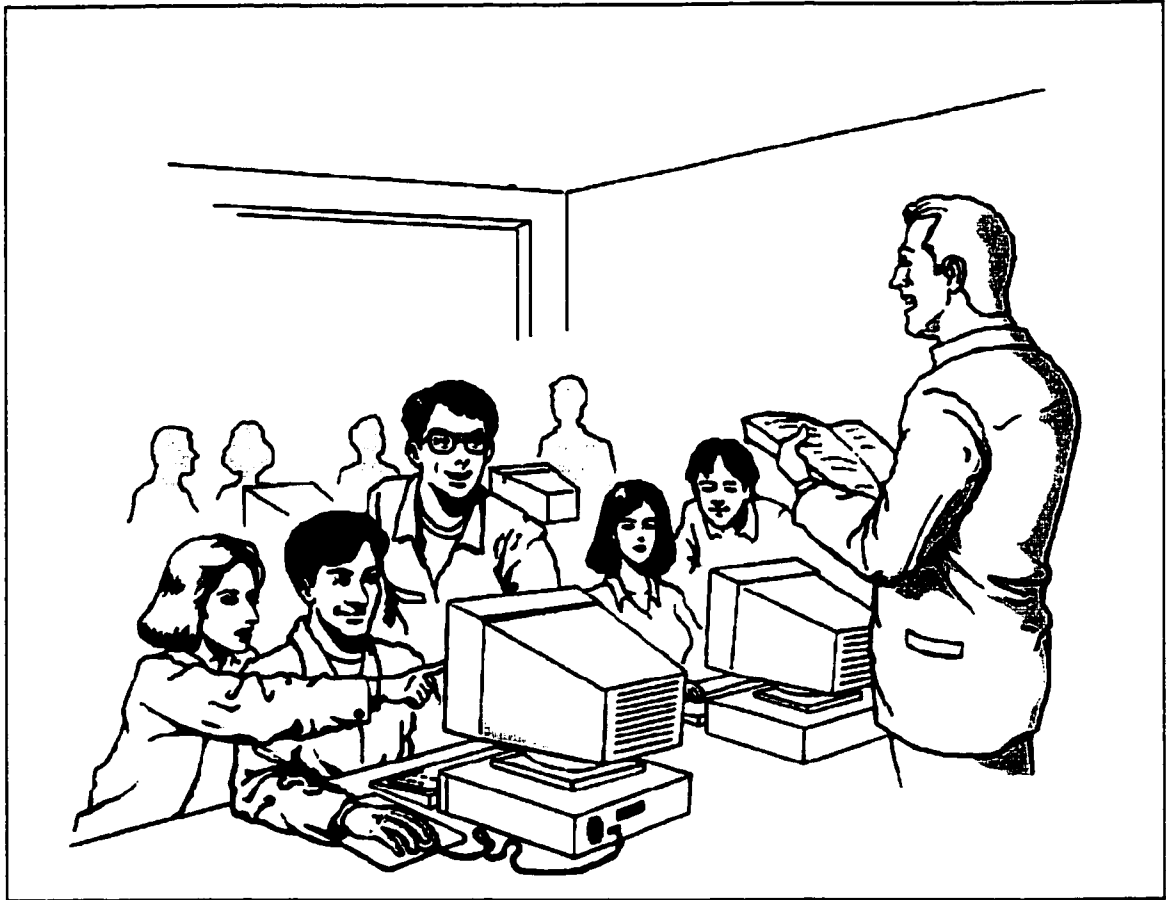
THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP





**QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS STUDY**

The purpose of the present study is to assess people's views and perceptions of different sketches to be used in promotional materials of various service settings. The sketch below shows a computer class in progress. In this class, several projects have to be completed by small groups so that those who sign up will be randomly assigned to these groups to work together.



**Instructions:** Based on the sketch, please answer the questions that follow by circling the number on the scale that best represents your opinions. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. We are only interested in your honest opinions.

PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE



**Section 1**  
**Your Views and Perceptions about the Sketch Itself**

1. How realistic is the situation shown in the sketch?  

Very unrealistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very realistic
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------
  
2. How attractive are the students (not the instructor) in the sketch?  

Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------
  
3. Do you think the activity shown in the sketch is a common one?  

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------
  
4. Could you see yourself engaging in the activity shown in the sketch?  

Very unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very likely
---------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------
  
5. Please indicate your feelings about this sketch:  

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Like
Unfavourable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favourable
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
  
6. How do you feel about this computer class?  

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Unfavourable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favourable
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
  
7. How likely are you to take this class?  

Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likely
Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely would not	Probably would not	May or may not	Probably would	Definitely would

8. Would you recommend this class to others?

Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likely
Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Definitely would not	Probably would not	May or may not	Probably would	Definitely would				

9. What kind of service quality do you expect from this class?

Low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High
Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Excellent
Terrible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Great
Below average	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Outstanding

10. This class should provide a high quality service:

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

11. The experience of taking this computer class should be:

Not enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Enjoyable
Not beneficial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Beneficial
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Stimulating
Dull	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Lively
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pleasant

12. In your opinion, the students (not the instructor) shown in the sketch seem to be:

Ill-mannered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Well-mannered
Impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Polite
Discourteous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Courteous
Inconsiderate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Considerate
Unsociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sociable
Unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Friendly
Cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Warm
Not enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Enthusiastic
Unhelpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Helpful
Uncooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cooperative

13. I would like to interact with the students shown in the sketch:  
 Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
14. I would like to be with the students shown in the sketch:  
 Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
15. My class experience would be enhanced by the students shown in the sketch:  
 Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

**Section 2**  
**Your Views and Perceptions about the Students in the Sketch**

1. How would you characterize the age of the students (not the instructor) in the sketch?  
 Very young 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very old  
 (15 years old) (75 years old)
2. The students shown in the sketch seem to be:  
 Dumb 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bright  
 Slow 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Alert  
 Stupid 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Intelligent
- Passive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Active  
 Not athletic 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Athletic  
 Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strong
- Sad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Happy  
 Unfriendly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Friendly  
 Miserly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Generous
3. In your opinion, what is the average age of the students in the sketch? Please provide a whole number in years, not a range. \_\_\_\_\_
4. To me, it does not matter who else is in the group:  
 Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

**Section 3**  
**Demographic Information**

1. Are you: Male \_\_\_\_\_  
Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?  
High School \_\_\_\_\_  
College / Cegep \_\_\_\_\_  
University (Ugrad) \_\_\_\_\_  
University (Grad) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you: First year student \_\_\_\_\_  
Second year student \_\_\_\_\_  
Third year student \_\_\_\_\_  
Fourth year student \_\_\_\_\_
5. Please indicate your student status: Full-time \_\_\_\_\_  
Part-time \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you work? No \_\_\_\_\_  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ IF YES: Full-time \_\_\_\_\_  
Part-time \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

