

## Total Experience Management – a conceptual model for transformational experiences within tourism.

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### **BACKGROUND**

How can we utilize concepts from the Experience Economy and Experience Production for product development within tourism? This is a problem that tourist enterprises face in the era of the Experience Economy. To address this issues research needs to analyse and integrate theories of the Experience Economy to develop integrated concepts that can be applied for product development.

The Experience Economy has emerged as a consequence of the contemporary cultural shift towards a conceptual age (Toffler 1970, Florida 2002, Pink 2006 and others). This cultural change will affect both the context of tourism business enterprises as well as tourist expectations, values and consumption behaviours. This shift beyond the industrial society has been predicted and described in detail by many authors. Among the early was Alvin Toffler in his book *“Future Shock”* (Toffler 1970) where he in a socio-economic analysis of the future predicted the *“psychologization”* (ibid, p. 229) of the economy and the emerging of *“experience engineers”* (Ibid, p. 229) and *“experience-designers”* (Ibid, p. 229) who through an *“experiential production”* (Ibid, p. 234) will create new economical offerings in the coming *“experience industries”* (ibid, p. 221). Toffler concludes that *“For the satisfaction of man’s elemental material needs opens the way for new, more sophisticated gratifications. We are moving from a “gut” economy to a “psyche” economy...”* (Ibid, p. 236). This prediction of an emerging experience society was further analysed by Toffler (1980) and in detail

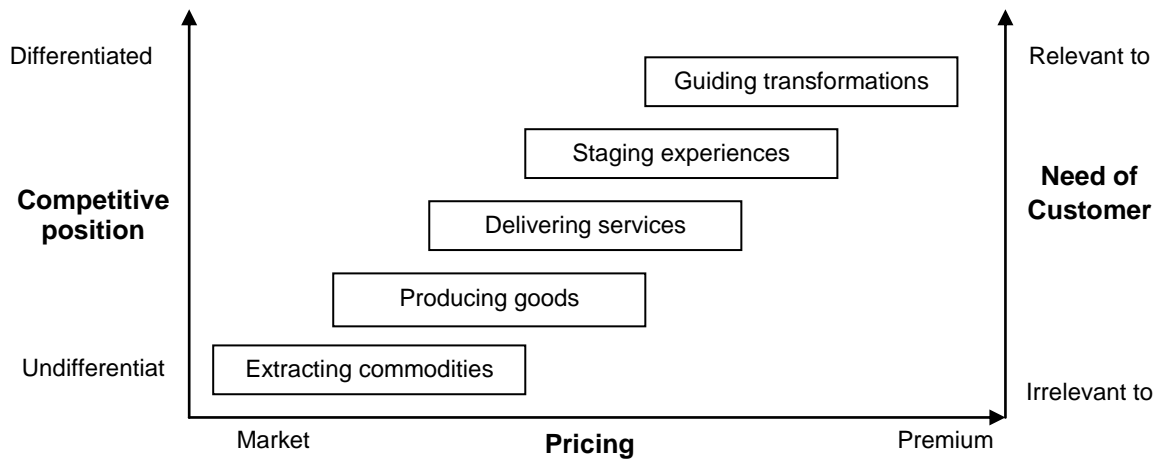
analysed in a cultural sociological context by Schulze (1992). It has also been described in a socio-political context (Bell 1973, Drucker 1993), in a marketing and commercial management perspective (O'Sullivan & Spanger 1998, Pine & Gilmore 1999, Jensen 1999, Davenport & Beck 2002, Schmitt 2003, Schmitt et al. 2004, Shaw 2005, Lenderman 2006), in a cultural entertainment context (Postman 1985, Caves 2000, Howkins 2001, Wolf 2003) and in a sociological context (Ray & Anderson 2000, Florida 2002, 2005, Kumar 2004) among many other perspectives and analyses.

Easy available knowledge and the growth of global interconnectedness by easy travel and ICT has widened the mind and holistic view of people's experience of the world, pushing business activities into new creative areas to meet the demands of the modern post-industrial society (Tinagli et al. 2007). Based on a study of 100 000 Americans, Ray and Anderson (2000) found a transformation of life values among 25% of the U.S. adults which they call "*Cultural Creatives*". Similar value shift towards creativity, authenticity, globalism, self-actualization and culture has also been confirmed by others (Inglehart 1990, 1997, Abramson & Inglehart 1995, Hall 1995, Beck & Cowan 1996, Castells 1997, Kempton et al. 1997, Jensen 1999, Florida 2002, 2005, Pink 2006, Pine & Gilmore 2007). These and others show that in the post-industrial society personal experiences and transformations are growing in importance as consumption motivation and economic offerings.

These contemporary value shifts have also been described as the emergence of Transmodernity, a concept introduced by Rodriguez Magda (2001, 2004, 2007) and Luyckx Ghisi (1999, 2006, 2008). Transmodernity is conceptualised as a synthesis of the best of modern and post-modern thinking, and arising from the critics of the prevailing modernity of the contemporary western society (see also Dussel 1993, Cole 2004, 2005). The essence of Transmodernity is

being for something, *i.e.* taking active action towards ethnic, racial and sexual equality, sustainability and interconnectedness. Transmodernity has interesting bearings on sustainable tourism (Gelter 2008). The extensive discourse of sustainability in tourism will, however, not be addressed here. The prevailing sustainability framework as the EES triangle of Environmental, Economic and Socio-cultural sustainability issues has by Gelter (2008) been extended to Personal sustainability dimension. This extended EESP-sustainability model introduces educational, pedagogic and personal value issues into the sustainability discourse, thus the Transmodern and Agenda21 context of personal responsibility of a sustainable living and lifestyle.

This cultural change in values and consumption behaviour is also manifested in the development of the new economical offerings of the Experience Economy as suggested by the model of progression of economic value by Pine and Gilmore (1999), figure 1. These new economical offerings are the staging of experiences and the guided transformations of individuals. Stepping up this “economical ladder”, according to the model, increases the pricing as new values are added into the offerings. Experiences thus add not only new economical values to services and goods, but as an economic offering *per se* also offer new consumption motivations. These new offerings need new production methods – the staging and designing, e.i. Experience Production of the experience offering – the Experience Product (Toffler 1970, Gelter 2006). Experiences differ from services as being personal while services are customized and goods standardized (Pine & Gilmore 1999, p. 6). In the same manner goods are characterised by tangible features, services intangible benefits and experiences memorable sensations. According to Pine and Gilmore consumers are labelled as *user* for goods, *clients* for services and *guests* for experiences.



**Figure 1. Progression of Economical Value (modified after Pine & Gilmore 1999, p. 22 and 166)**

The fifth economic value of transformations is rarely discussed in the Experience Economy and has not yet obtained a conceptual meaning within the tourism context. Pine and Gilmore (1999 p. 170) propose this to be the business of active and explicit changing customer's through a defined transformation toward some specific aim or purpose where the transformation elicits that intended effect. Transformation is not staging personal experience but to guide a personal change, a transformation offered individually. Pine and Gilmore (Ibid, p.170) call the transformation seller an *elictor* to distinguish them from an experience *stager* and service *provider*. The consumer they call an *aspirant* to distinguish them from an experience *guest*. Finally the outcome from a transformation offering is a *trait*, rather than a *sensation* from an experiences and *benefits* from services. In the transformational process the “*aspirant*” aspires to become someone or something different by the offered transformation.

Such transformations require a change in attitude, performance, characteristics, or some other fundamental personal dimension according to Pine and Gilmore. All such transformations are individual and thus cannot be commoditized or standardised – each transformation is unique. In addition such transformation must be sustainable through time. Finally in the transformation economy the customer is the product. This means that the exact form and

content of the transformational offering has to be analysed (*diagnosed*) carefully and be based on a close understanding of the aspirations of individual customers. In the transformation process the transformation *elictor* guide the *aspirant* through a series of experiences which are designed with certain purpose and goals. This personalisation of experiences and transformations lead to the higher pricing compared to standardized and customized services.

Applied in the tourism context such transformational offering with the explicit goals off sustainability would be what Luyckx Ghisi called “*Transmodern tourism*” (Gelter 2008) where the transformation goal is to change a person into a specific direction, in this context a sustainable lifestyle and ambassador for a Transmodernity. This implies a new concept of sustainable tourism in the sense of addressing sustainability not only to the environmental management, the society or to the business enterprise but also to the personal level according to the EESP sustainability model. It is not a coincidence that Luyckx Ghisi’s *transmodernity* and Pine and Gilmore’s *transformation* offering have the same foundation in the word *trans* – moving through or across something. Transmodernity takes (transcends) us beyond modernity; it takes us and society into another state of being. Transformations changes or moves a person from one stage to another. Thus transformational offerings can be a method for facilitating cultural change into Transmodernity (Gelter 2008). Thus Transmodern tourism with transformational offerings could offer new business opportunities within tourism.

## METHODS

### **Aim of the paper**

Since the days of Toffler (1970), several theories of Experience Production have been proposed for the Experience Economy. The aim of this paper is to integrate some concepts of the Experience Economy and transformational offerings into a conceptual framework of

Transmodern Experience Production within tourism. The research question is: *can we deductively integrate Experience Production conceptualisations into a useful theoretical framework of Transmodern Tourism with implications for tourism enterprises?*

## **Methodology**

The research question in this paper is approached by a deductive reasoning and conceptually integrating different theories within the Experience Economy into a theoretical framework of transformational tourism offerings that can be applied within small scale nature-based tourism. The research design is therefore based on the conceptual development process (Ulrich and Eppinger 2000) using established theories to develop a new concept with implications that latter can be tested and developed into testable products.

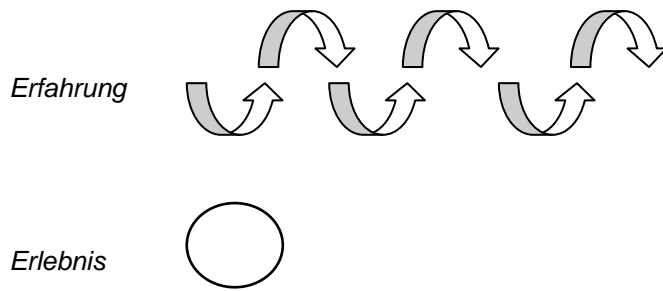
## **THEORETICAL ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### **The Experience offering and Experiential learning**

In the Experience Economy it is important to understand the central economical offering in the form of experiences and transformations. Although the concept of “experiences” is as old as our understanding of human “being” and “learning” (Kolb 1984) the concept of experiences is still unclear and vaguely defined within the Experience Economy (Gelter 2006). The word experience has its origin from the Latin word *experientia* meaning “*knowledge gained by repeated trials*” and is also related to *experiri* “*to try, test*” (Gelter 2006). In the English language the word experiences has a dual conceptualisation while many languages such as German, Swedish and Finish uses two separate words for this dual meaning. The German word *Erfahrung* correspond to the English noun “experience” meaning the skills, practices, understandings, familiarity, know-how and accumulated life knowledge and wisdom that make up a human being and that can be communicated (Kolb 1984, Gelter 2006). The German word *Erlebnis* correspond to the English noun “experience” as an

incident, encounter, event, happening etc. as well as the English verb “experience” as a feeling, emotions, what we come in contact with, what we face, live through, suffer, undergo, be subject to or come across (Gelter 2006). These two ways of interacting with the world creating our “Life World” and “Lived Experiences” (Gadamer 1976, van Manen 1990), was in a philosophical and pedagogic analysis by Lash (2006) systematised into the concepts of Ontological Experiences for the *Erlebnis* and Epistemological Experiences for the *Erfahrung*. According to Lash the Ontological Experience is a cognitive happening restricted in space and time resulting in a physical or physiological stimulation of the brain – our phenomenological interaction with the world, while the Epistemological Experience constitutes our accumulated skills, familiarity to places, artefacts and methods and constitutes our entire empirical knowledge.

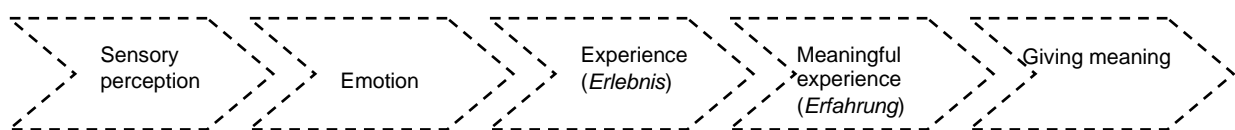
Snel (2005) in a similar analysing of the concepts of *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* defined *Erlebnis* as an isolated and immediate event while *Erfahrung* is a “... *continuous process of doing and undergoing, giving and taking, causes and consequences, action and reflection etc.*” (Ibid, p. 4), see figure 2. This differences according to Snel, is based on the meaning of the experience. An *Erlebnis* has only meaning within the context it occurs while an *Erfahrung* has meaning beyond the boundaries of its original context. The former has meaning only when the experience occurs while the later can have meaning for the life. This makes the *Erlebnis* easier to analyse, stage and design but also easier to copy compared to the more complex *Erfahrung* which is personal and therefore difficult to multiply.



**Figure 2. The difference between the isolated event of *Erlebnis* and the continuous process of *Erfahrung* (Modified after Snel 2005, p. 4)**

Snel in her analysis sees *Erfahrung* as much more difficult to analyse as it is a much stronger experience that may cause the individual to change perspective in regard to both external world as well as the internal world. In her analysis Snel argues that “While the value and meaning of *Erfahrung*-types of experiences are potentially much greater than the *Erlebnis*-types, in theory as well as in practice, more attention is still given to the latter.” (Ibid, p. 4). She concludes that both the Experience Economy as the society in general focuses on the “superficial” *Erlebnis* and mostly ignoring the *Erfahrung* (Ibid, p. 5), and recommend that “Instead of focusing on the *Erlebnis*, companies should pay more attention to meaningful experiences, *Erfahrungen*.” (Ibid, p. 6). Despite her careful analysis Snel does not explaining the relationship between the *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* leaving the impression that they are two independent ways experiencing the world.

Boswijk et al. (2007) when analysing ‘meaningful experiences’ elaborate the model of Snel from a cognitive perspective by introducing sensory perception and emotions in the meaning formation process, as illustrated in figure 3.



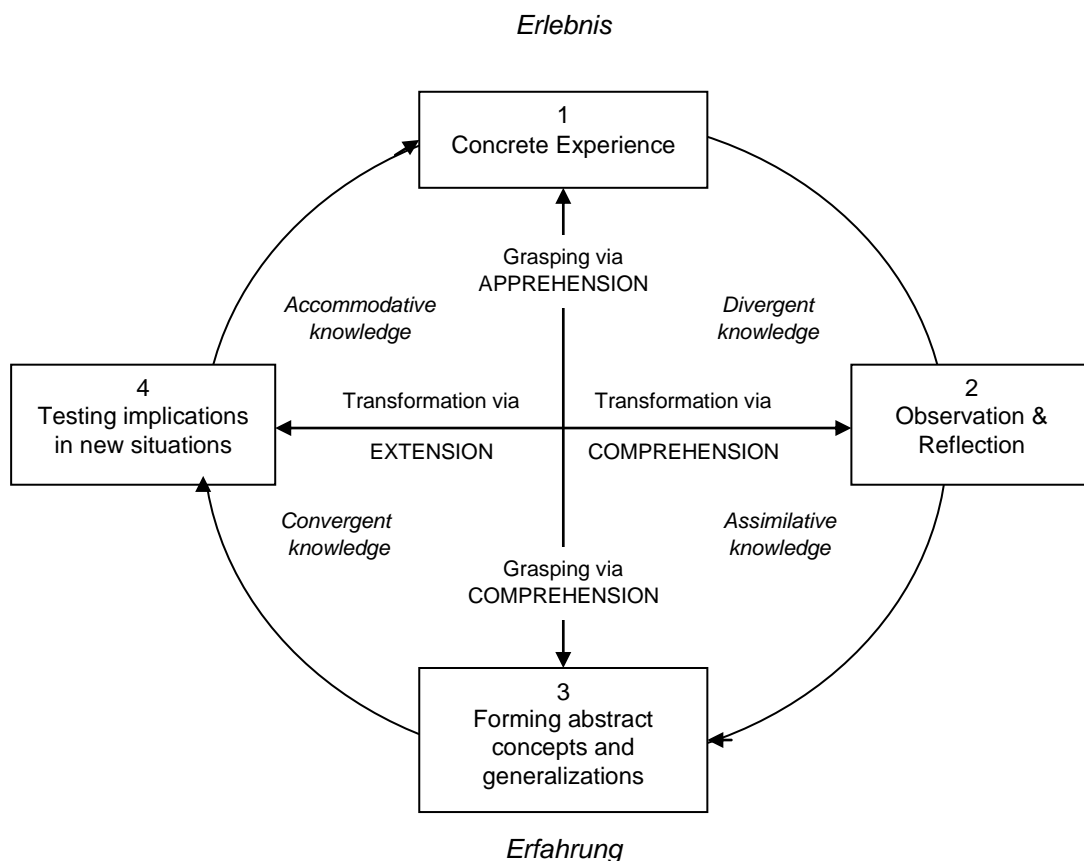
**Figure 3. The chain-process of experiencing after Boswijk et al. (2007, p. 20)**



In their view humans receive impressions through their sensory perception from both the world and their own body and these impressions generate emotions which they regard as a way of processing information. “*Emotions determine both whether or not change is worthwhile and the individual’s readiness to take action ... They can manifest themselves in four ways: through feelings, expressive behaviour, motivated behaviour and psychological change.*” (Ibid, p. 22). From the sensory processing through emotions an *Erlebnis* is created which they define as “*An immediate, relatively isolated occurrence with a complex of emotions that make an impression and represents a certain value for the individual within the context of a specific situation.*” (Ibid, p. 22). This is thus an extension of the definition of Snel incorporating emotions, and relating *Erlebnis* with *Erfahrung* as following each other in the process of creating meaning. They thus define *Erfahrung* as “*A meaningful experience or Erfahrung has to do with the sum of all interactions that people have with their environment and with others... Experiences in the sense of Erlebnis are therefore a subset of an experience in the sense of Erfahrung: they are a product of a particular context and a particular time.*” (Ibid, p. 24). Here Boswijk et al. provide us with an explanation of the interconnectedness between the *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* where the events of the former precede the later in the process of creating meaningful experiences.

In the models of Snel (2005) and Boswijk et al. (2007) the meaning of an experience is revealed over *time* as experiences is part of the lifelong learning process. Both Snel and Boswijk et al. build their model on Dewey that sees experiences as a process based on interactions of an individual with the environment and the social context (Dewey 1938). Integrating psychology, philosophy and physiology, Kolb (1984) elaborated the theory of Vygotsky, that learning from experiences is the process whereby human development occurs, into the Theory of Experiential Learning (Ibid, p. 21). Kolb extended the Lewinian Model of *Erlebnis*

Action Research and Laboratory (Ibid, p. 21) with the learning models of Dewey and Piaget into a comprehensive model with structural dimensions of apprehension, comprehension and extension resulting in the four basic knowledge forms of divergent, assimilative, convergent and accommodative knowledge, figure 4 (Ibid, p. 42).

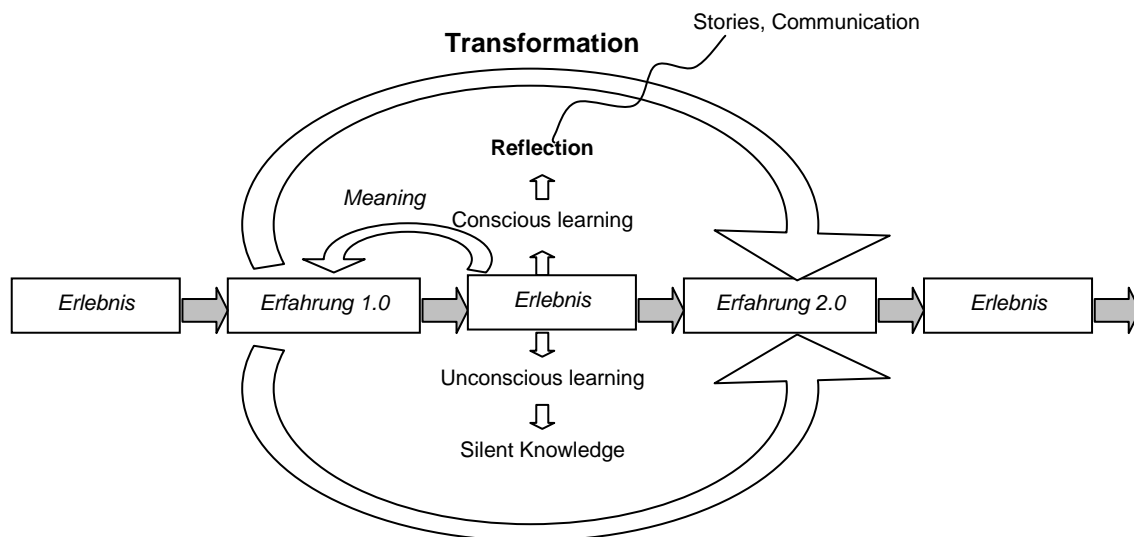


**Figure 4. Incorporating the concepts of *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* with the Experiential Learning Model of Kolb showing the Lewinian Experiential Learning model (in boxes), dimensions of the Experiential Learning (arrows) and the resulting four Knowledge Forms (italic) (modified after Kolb 1984, p. 42)**

In this Experiential Learning model, the first box of concrete Experiencing in the Lewinian Experiential Learning process can be viewed as the *Erlebnis*. After a process of reflection and comprehension the event of the *Erlebnis* are transformed to *Erfahrung* where the meaning of the experience is formed by formulating abstract concepts and generalisations where the assimilative knowledge is transformed into convergent knowledge. This new *Erfahrung* can in this EL-model be tested by the process of extension in new situations creating a new concrete experiences, new *Erlebnises*. From this Experiential Learning Model of Kolb we

learn that the concrete experiences of *Erlebnis* have to be processed through a reflective process to be incorporated in knowledge base of the *Erfahrung* and to be useful in new concrete experiences. We thus must use experiences (*Erfahrung*) from earlier experiences (*Erlebnis*) to find meaning in new experiences (*Erlebnis*).

From Kolbs Experiential Learning model I deduct that the events of *Erlebnis* and the cumulative *Erfahrung* outcome are iterative and interactive processes as illustrated in figure 5. They are interdependent as every experience (*Erlebnis*) is entered with a previous Life-World experience (Lived Experience) (*Erfahrung 1.0*), and resulting in some new way of relating to the world, an expanded life-experience (*Erfahrung 2.0*). In this way we cannot gain life-experiences without some kind of *Erlebnis* – may it be an event in the real world or some internal immaterial experience through thoughts, dreams or emotions. In this conceptualisation an *Erlebnis* always, but to a varying degree contribute to our *Erfahrung* and Lived Experience (Life-World). Thus contrary to the model of Boswijk et al. (2007) where meaning is created as an outcome of the chain Perception-*Erlebnis*-*Erfahrung*-Meaning, in my model meaning is an outcome of the interaction between *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis* driving the transformational learning process. In this conceptualisation meaning is created when the events of the *Erlebnis* can be related to earlier experiences, *Erfahrung 1.0*, and when the *Erlebnis* being experienced as meaningful, it will be assimilated into new *Erfahrung 2.0* thus transforming the person into a new understanding of the world, an expanded Lived Experience. This, however, does not imply that every meaningful experience will radically transform a person, but rather contribute to the personal development. But carefully designed and staged chains of *Erlebnis* may thus result in more major transformations according to the goals of transformational offerings of Pine and Gilmore.



**Figure 5. A conceptualisation of Transformational Learning as Lived Experience where *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis* constitute a continuous iterative and interactive process of Lived Experiences.**

In this suggested *Transformational Learning Model*, reflection is central, as in the EL-model of Kolb, to be able to verbally communicate the *Erlebnis*. Here reflection is understood as active and focused thinking on the conscious cognitive experience (*Erlebnis*) (Gelter 2003) resulting in formulating of abstract concepts and generalisations that can be communicated and spoken about. Thus only conscious elements of the *Erlebnis* can be communicated.

But experiences also affect us in an unconscious way resulting in a kind of unconscious learning and silent knowledge (figure 5). The EL-model of Kolb as most pedagogical theories focus only on the conscious communicative learning process (*i.e.* the left logical brain processes, Pink 2008) that can be conceptualised in verbal theories and communicated by words, the parallel unconscious learning processes are implicit or ignored. This unconscious ontological knowledge can not be communicated or cognitively reflected on, thus often labelled as ‘silent knowledge’. It is our “familiarity”, skills, “body knowledge” or acquaintance with the world that we accumulated through interactions with the world during *Erlebnis* events. This “silent knowledge” probably constitutes an important factor in the understanding and interpreting of a new *Erlebnis*, and thus “silently” integrated in our

unconscious *Erfahrung*. From this we can conclude that unconscious learning aspects of the experience process may be as important as the conscious aspects of the experience in the outcome and value of the offered experience. This might imply that features and stimuli of the experience offering that we will not be conscious aware of, such as sound, smells, lightning, non-interactive other persons etc. can in an unconscious way effect the perception of the experience and its meaning.

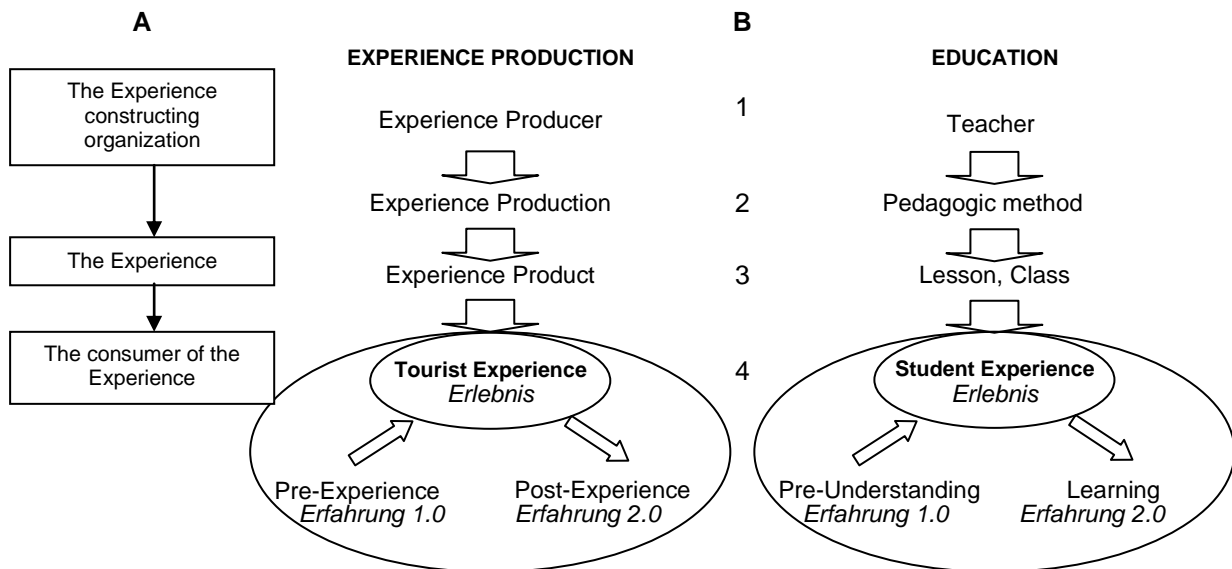
The proposed *Transformational Learning Model* (figure 5), we can apply on the model of Transformational economical offerings of Pine and Gilmore, where the *Erfahrung 1.0* constitutes the initial state that has to be diagnosed by the *elictor* to transfer the *aspirant* towards the desired new trait, the *Erfahrung 2.0*. In the light of the Experiential Learning model and our interpretation of *Erfahrung* as constituting a series of experience events (*Erlebnis*), a transformational offering has to be built up by several smaller steps of designed experiences (*Erlebnis*) each with explicit learning goals, as in any educational program. This process transfers the aspirant stepwise by accumulated *Erfahrung* towards the overall transformational goal of the transformation offering. We can therefore conclude that integrating the TL-model of Kolb with the Experience Economy gives us a theoretical framework for the proposed transformational offering of Pine and Gilmore and a basis for Transmodern tourism offerings.

Such transformational tourist experiences are however not a new concept. Already Freeman Tilden (1957) developed a set of principles for interpretation of cultural and natural resources that became a guiding doctrine for the interpretation profession of North America (Beck & Cable 1998). This Tildenian Interpretation is a creative communication process between the interpreter and the guest with the aim to give the guests a good learning experience about the

resources in focus, based on certain defined learning goals. Tilden developed six basic principles of Interpretation that through praxis and research have been extended to 15 principles (Beck & Cable 1998, Brochu & Merriman 2002, Brochu 2003, Knutson et al. 2003, Ward & Wilkinson 2006). Tilden's original definition of Interpretation is still the base for the methodology: "*An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.*" This is achieved by careful Interpretative Planning of the experience with well defined and explicit learning, emotional and behavioural objectives, addressing the cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects of the learning experience. These transformational goals of Tildenian Interpretation to learn about, to get emotional involved with, and to actively change your behaviours in relation to the interpretation goal, corresponding nicely to Pine and Gilmore's transformational offering. Thus in the context of the Transformational Learning Model, the *Erlebnis* of the Interpretation reveal new meaning and knowledge (*Erfahrung 2.0*) in relation to the guest's everyday life (*Erfahrung 1.0*). As interpretation includes having fun and taking place in aesthetic places such as special nature or cultural setting or within a designed visitors centres or museums, the similarity with Pine and Gilmore's 4E experiences realms of entertainment, education, esthetics and escapism are striking (Pine & Gilmore 1999). Adapting Tildenian Interpretation to the Experience Economy could thus give us methodologies for Transmodern tourism.

The proposed "*Transformational Learning Model*" indicates that experiencing the world is closely related to our processes of learning and that the concept of *Erlebnis* is a time limited event in the chain of Life Experiences, and *Erfahrung* is the accumulated knowledge of ones Life Experiences. When viewing this conceptualisation of experiences as a learning process,

Gelter (2006, 2008) could visualise the parallel processes Experience Production and Education, figure 6.



**Figure 6. Comparison of the “holistic” Experience Creation model of Sunbo & Damer (2008) (A), and the four steps Experience Production and Education model of Gelter (2006, 2008) (B)**

Figure 6B, compares the guest experiences in the Experience Economy with the Student Learning Experience in the Educational setting where the Experience Producer corresponds to the Educational Teacher, the Experience Production Process with the Pedagogic Process and the Experience Product with the Classroom Lesson. As students attend their lesson with a pre-understanding of the subject of the lesson and leave the learning experiences with new knowledge and understanding, the guest engages in the purchased Experience Product with a pre-experience, *Erfahrung 1.0*, and anticipations, feelings and emotions, then obtain the *Erlebnis* when consuming the Experience Product and leaves the experience with new *Erfahrung 2.0*, memories and feelings (Gelter 2006). The main differences between attending a commercial experience product and an educational learning experience, is that the former always is voluntary and the later compulsory in most educational systems. From this analogy we see that like education, Experience Production has four levels to manage; the producer, the

production, the offering (product) and the outcome (the experience). Several authors have addressed the conceptualisation of a “holistic” view of Experience Production such as in Managing Service Marketing (Bateson 1995), Experience Marketing (O’Sullivan & Spangler 1998), Marketing Management (Kotler 1994), Customer Experience Management (Schmitt 2003) and Experience Creating in the Experience Economy (Sunbo & Darmer 2008). In the most recent analysis by Sunbo and Damer (2008) of they addressed their “Experience Creation” (figure 6 A) only three levels, the Experience producer, the Experience and the Consumer of the experience, thus omitting the Experience Production process and the Experience Product (offering) in their analysis, while as we have seen, already Toffler (1970) addressed all four levels.

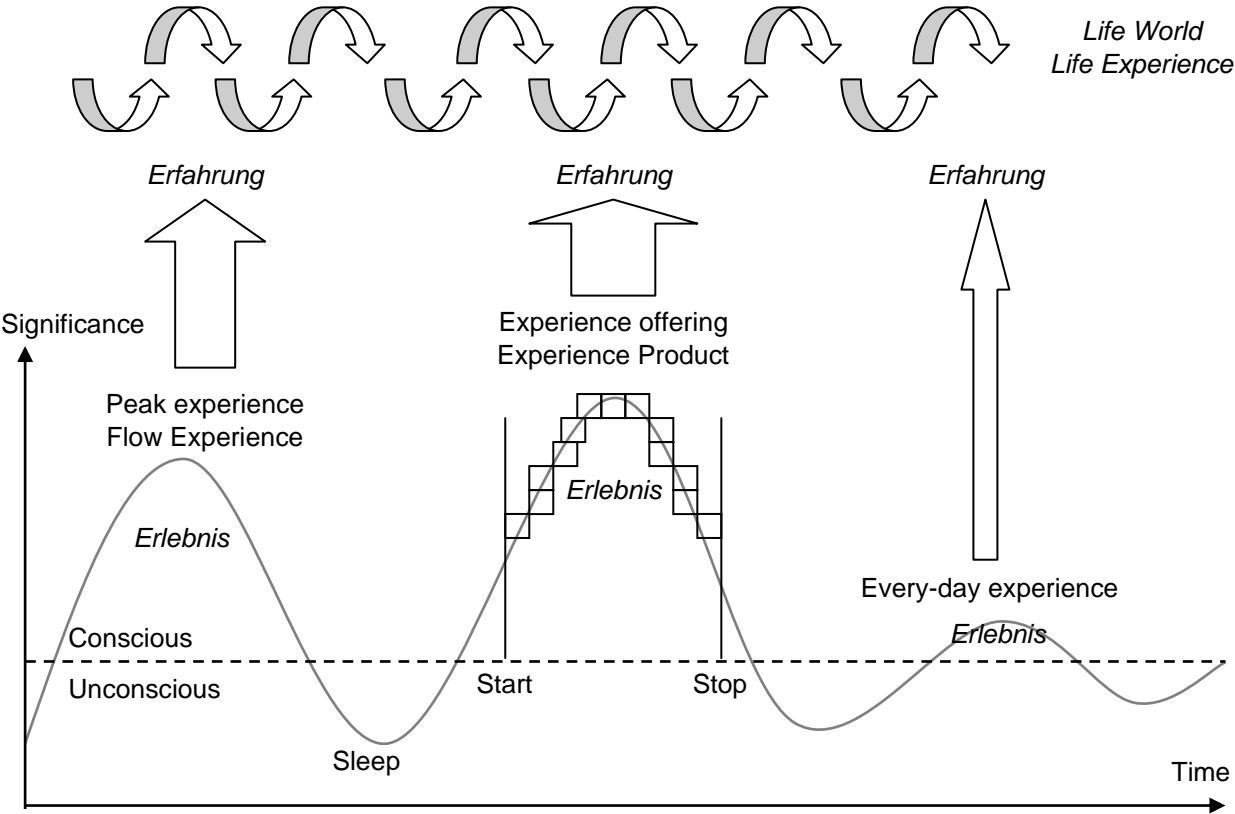
### **Temporal experience dimension**

This Experience Production concept suggested by Gelter (2006) stresses the fact that the “experience” is a process, as learning is a process more than as an isolated event. This process in the Experience Economy context starts with a pre-experience process that prepares the guest for the coming *Erlebnis* as in Marketing and Market Relations. The explicit experience offering, the Experience Product, then needs signals, markers or rituals that indicate when the experiential offering starts and stops, to contrast it to every day life experiences as well as other experience offerings (Pine & Gilmore 1999, Mossberg 2003, Gelter 2007). Most commercial experience products have such a clear start and stop in the form of signs or rituals such as when entering a movie saloon or entertainment park (Gelter 2006, 2007). After the *Erlebnis* of the Experience Product, the post-experiences process integrates as we have seen in Kolbs EL-model the *Erlebnis* into the new obtained *Erfahrung 2.0*. The post-experience can in the same way may be managed and reinforced by market Relations, souvenirs and other memorabilia (Gelter 2006). Not only the material settings and design of an experience but also its immaterial components are part of the economic offering. Already Toffler (1970)



proposed this dualistic aspect of a designed or staged experiences as composed of both a material component constituting the physical place, room design, artefact, props etc. as well as an immaterial part constituted of the mode, emotions, feelings, expectations, thoughts etc. of the experiencing person (Gelter 2006).

To get a better model of the temporal component of the experience we can turn to the field of phenomenology where we can learn that experiences can be described as a *Life world* composed of lived space, lived time, lived body and lived human relations (van Manen 1990). Thus we have to consider not only space and time but also body and mind and its relations to the world. From hermeneutical phenomenology we can also learn that experiences that matter anything to us must have significance and meaning and only the person living the experience can define its meaning and significance (Ibid, p. 36). Based on this Gelter (2006) suggested a dynamic temporal model of experiences that can be both unconscious (such as non-remembered dreams) and conscious with varying significance (intensity), figure 10.



**Figure 10. A model of continues experiencing Life World with the experience significance plotted against time where the different kind of *Erlebnis* build *Erfahrung* and our Life Experience (Adapted after Gelter 2006, p. 34)**

In this suggested concept internal and external sensations constitutes a constant stream of experiences (continuous life in figure 10) where some experiences are more intense and therefore more memorable, and other experiences are more common and less interesting, and therefore quickly forgotten, such as ordinary every-day experiences (Gelter 2006). This stream of internal and external sensations constitutes the string of *Erlebnis* which can be regarded as composed of sub-elements, *Sub-Erlebnis*, *i.e.* temporal-spatial components of the experience event. Together these *Sub-Erlebnis* build up a memorable *Erlebnis* that contribute to our *Erfahrung*, such as the components of skiing down a slope resulting in the *Erlebnis* of the run contributing to our skiing *Erfahrung* and Life Experience as skier. The different *Erlebnis* we meet in our lives such as such staged Experience offerings, Peak or Flow experiences in our work or leisure time, or our every-day experiences, all contribute to our accumulative *Erfahrung* and our *Life World* as illustrated in figure 10. In the example of figure 10, the Experience offering, *i.e.* the Experience Product, consists of 13 sub-events of which each can be designed, creating an “*Experience Dramaturgy*”. This ED can involve a “*Dramaturgy of the Senses*” (Gelter 2006, 2007) where each sense can actively be stages to contribute to the experience theme, such as gastronomical peaks, olfactory staging, audio-visual harmonisation etc. Designing, staging and managing this Experience Dramaturgy in relation to transformational goals is thus here proposed to be the core concept of Transformational Experience Production.

Also in Toffler’s (1970) “psychologization process” where “experience-designers” creates the “experience product”, design and staging the experience are central concepts. Several models of how this can be understood have been proposed (summarised by Getz 2007, Berridge 2007,

Sundbo & Darmer 2008). Pine and Gilmore (1999) suggested the conceptual framework of the theatre not as a metaphor but as a model for business development and staging experiences. To obtain this economic value of an experience Pine and Gilmore stated “... *staging experiences is not about entertaining customers. It’s about engaging them.*” (Ibid, p. 30). They therefore developed a model of guest engagement in an experience based on two dimensions. The first dimension is the level of *guest participation* from *passive participation* where guest do not affect or influence the performance of the experience to active participation in the experience in which the customer personally affects the performance and events of the experience. The other dimension describes the kind of connection or environmental relationship uniting the customer with the event or performance. At one end the *absorption* through a person’s attention brings the experience into the mind and awareness. At the other end of the spectrum lies *immersion* – where the customer becomes physically or virtually immersed in the experience and a natural part of the experience itself. When combining these two experience dimensions, Pine and Gilmore suggested that we obtain four “Realms” of experiences – Entertainment, Education, Escape and Estheticism (Ibid, p 30), which can come together to form unique personal encounters with the experience. These have by Mossberg (2003) been interpreted as feel, learn, do and be, respectively, identical to the Tildenian Interpretative goals.

To design a rich, compelling and engaging experience, Pine and Gilmore (1999, p. 39) suggest not selecting and staying in only one experience realm. Instead they suggest using the experiential framework of their 4E model to creatively explore the aspects of each realm that can contribute to enhance the experience to be staged. Pine and Gilmore (Ibid, p. 52) continue by stating that the experience must render indelible *impressions*, which are the “take aways” of the experience. They concluded that to create the desired impressions through the

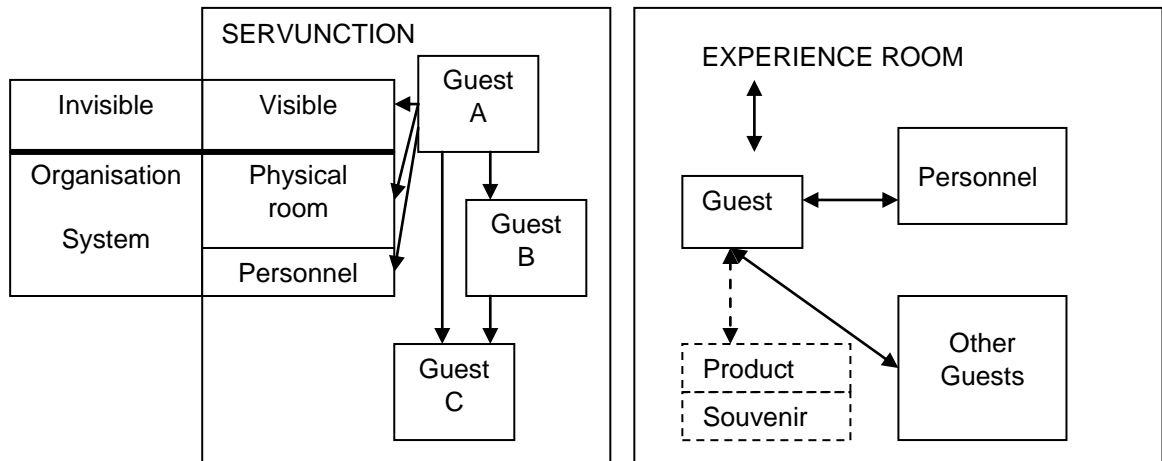
experience, companies must introduce clues that together affirm the nature of the desired experience of the guest. Each clue must support the theme, and none should be inconsistent with it. Experience production must not only use positive clues to ensure the integrity of the customer experiences, but also eliminate negative clues. Anything that diminishes, contradicts, or distracts attention from the theme must be eliminated. This is a direct analogy to the theming and harmonization in Tildenian Interpretation. In their model of staging memorable experiences, Pine and Gilmore also propose to enhance the “take away” of the experience by tangible artefacts that should be offered as memorabilia of the experience (Ibid, p. 57). Such souvenirs represent the intangible experience and support the memory of it thus extending the experience in the customer’s mind over time.

### **Spatial experience dimensions**

To address the spatial dimension of the experience O’Dell (2002, 2005) introduced the concept of the *Experiencescape* as a landscape metaphor for the organised cultural landscape that intends to form and steer the experience of people. In this concept the experience is formed by the social interaction between people but is also structured by the material cultural artefacts and physical environment. In this sense the *Experiencescape* is a parallel concept to the *servicescape* (Bitner 1992, Aubert-Gamet & Cova 1999) but focused on the created experiences rather than the service outcome. The *Servicescape* integrates the physical and social aspects of the service offering taking into account factors in the physical environment that affects the customer and personnel service behaviour and customer satisfaction. As with Toffler’s (1970) material and immaterial experience components, also the *Servicescape* include an immaterial psychological part of the customer’s feelings and behaviour (Aubert-Gamet 1997). O’Dell explains the concept of the *Experiencescape* by “... *the spaces in which experiences are staged and consumed can be likened to stylized landscapes that are strategically planned, laid out and designed. They are, in this sense, landscapes of experience*

– *experiencescapes* – that are not only organized by producers..., but are also actively sought after by consumers.” (O’Dell 2005, p. 16). O’Dell was inspired by Appadural (1996) who used a similar landscape metaphor to illustrate how the globalisation process brings together and integrate certain people and at the same time increases the distance to other people, thus coining the concepts of *Mediascapes*, *Ethnoscapes*, *Ideoscapes*, *Financescapes* and *Technoscapes*. In a spatial conceptualisation of Experience Production the *Experiencescape* is a useful experiential extension of the *Servicescape* as the dynamics underlying the experience offering.

In a similar way Mossberg (2003) based on the models of *Servicescape* and *Servunction* (Eglie & Langeard 1987, Bateson 1995) developed her model of the “*Experience Room*”. The *Servunction* model integrates service and function in a relational model where the physical environment of the service in a similar way as in the *Servicescape* affects both personnel and customers. The *Servunction* consists of two areas; one for the customer invisible “Backstage” of the business organisation and logistic systems, and one visible “Frontstage” consisting of the visible experience room, personnel and other customers. Mossberg extended this model by introducing the dynamic interaction between the guest, personnel, other guests and the physical setting of the room, which together constitute the “*Experience Room*” (Mossberg 2003, p. 28), figure 8. This *Experience Room Model* was later modified by Mossberg & Johanssen (2006) to also including the product and souvenirs as interaction components.



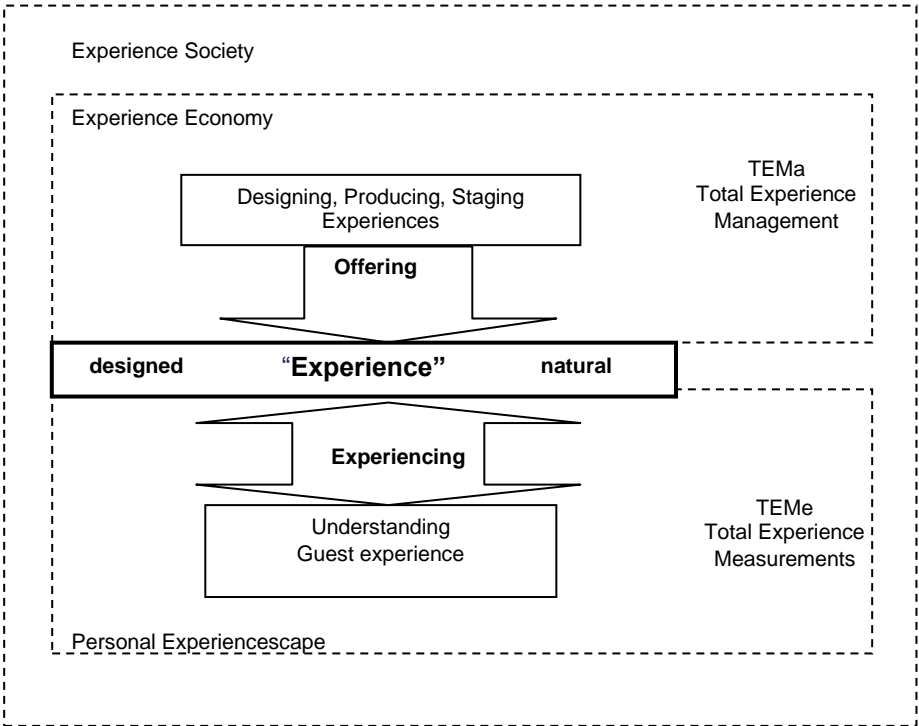
**Figure 8. Comparison of the *Servunction* system (left) and Experience Room Model of Mossberg (right) (Modified after Mossberg 2003, p. 17 and 28, and Mossberg & Johanssen 2006, p. 37)**

Although discussing the temporal component of the experience as a key factor in understanding experience production, Mossberg's Experience Room model does not include the temporal dimension or any learning aspects. In discussing the temporal dimension of the service experience Mossberg (2003) introduced the three service phases of the pre-purchase, the service meeting and the after service-purchase of Lovelock et al (1999). This model she integrates with the trampoline metaphor of Jafari (1987) for the tourist behaviour in relation to time and place, where the tourist leaves every day life for a temporal excursion to the non-ordinary activities and then returns back to the ordinary every-day life. Using these two temporal components conceptualisations of an experience, she integrated these with the 4E model of Pine and Gilmore (1999) to obtain a kind of temporal experience model (Mossberg 2003, p. 81) to create "extraordinary experiences". This temporal model does, however, not incorporate her spatial interaction model of her *Experience Room* and gives no information of how the 4E's interact temporarily and spatially. We thus still lack a comprehensive spatio-temporal model of Experience Production. The concept of "*Extraordinary Experiences*" was introduced by Arnould and Price (1993) based on their analysis of white water rafting experiences, as constituting of an active dynamic and context depended process, with strong

social dimensions creating meaning and feelings of enjoyment, resulting in absorption and personal control, has some uncertainty and novelty and contributing to life satisfaction. The more generic concept of “*Extraordinary Experiences*” has now become a popular expression for staged experience offerings (Mossberg 2003) and is most often used highly undefined. In a similar way “*Meaningful Experiences*” (Snel 2005) has become a buzz word in the experience industry. So far no comprehensive nomenclature or taxonomy for different experiences has been developed yet. Also the dynamics of the interactions within the Experiencescapes of O’Dell and Mossberg are not conceptually explored or addressed.

The psychological theory of a “*Hierarchy of Needs*” by Maslow (1954) is an appealing dynamic model that has been applied within tourism (Pearce 1988, 1991, Andersson 1999). Maslow classified human needs into five basic needs of Physiological, Safety, Belongingness and Love, Esteem and Self-Actualisation needs. Pearce (1988) adapted the model into the “*Travel Career Ladder*” with five “career steps” affecting tourist preferences. This ladder scheme consists of Biological needs (including relaxation), Safety and Security needs (or levels of stimulation), Relationship development and Extension needs, Special Interest and Self Development needs, and Fulfilment or Deep Involvement needs (formally defined as self actualization) (Pearce 1996, p.13). In this model Pearce suggests that as tourists become more experiences, they increasingly seek satisfaction of higher needs (Ryan 1988, Pearce 1991). Maslow’s model was also simplified by Scitovsky (1985) who limited his model into three categories of Human Satisfaction; Personal Comfort, Social Comfort and Stimulation. Andersson (1999) in a study of two charter tours to the Antarctic tested this models by measuring need satisfaction and travel experience. He modified Scitovsky’s categories into the three physiological, social, and intellectual needs as three general causes of satisfaction.

Andersson assumed that the physiological needs are stimulated by food and safety; the social needs by new acquaintances and group activities; and intellectual needs by new experiences and excitement. Andersson however found that his concept of “stimulation needs” could not satisfactorily explain “tourist satisfaction”. Also the Travel Career Ladder model had difficulties finding empirical support (Ryan 1988) as has Maslow’s classic model (Andersson 1999). Maslow’s model should therefore not be regarded as a model of human development but rather a normative model (Maslow 1954, Andersson 1999). As in other models of Experience Production (*i.e.* Pine & Gilmore, Mossberg etc.) it is not always obvious if their approach is from the point of the provider or from the guest, i.e. and experience production or experience analysis perspective. I therefore suggest a theoretical research framework that distinguish between a “normative” production approach, Total Experience Management (TEMa) and a “analytical” approach, Total Experience Measurement (TEMe) according to figure 11.



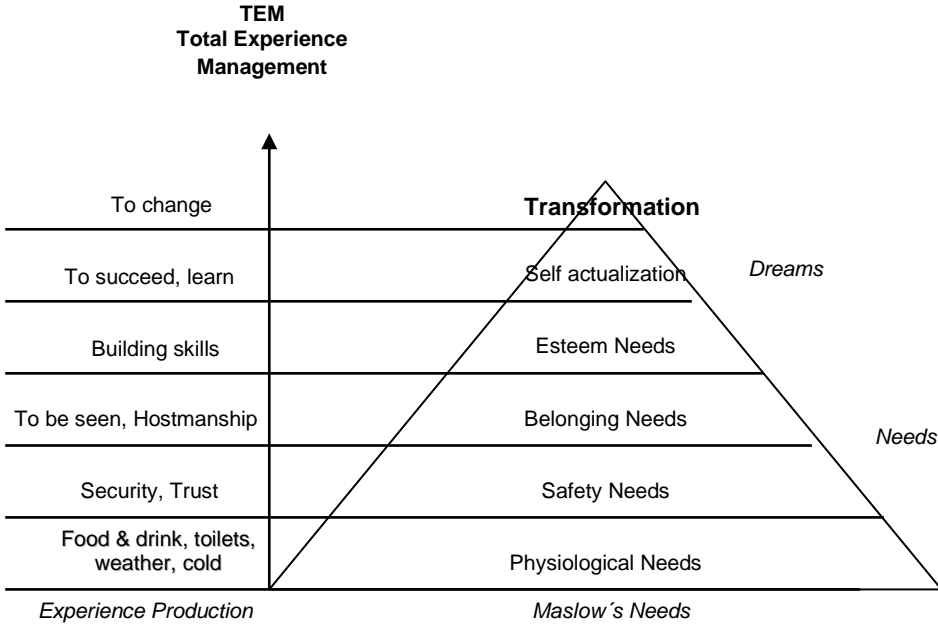
**Figure 11. Two theoretical research frameworks for the study of experiences and experience production in the experience economy.**



In this framework the personal experiencescape is investigated by TEMe where different guest experience dimensions are measured by different research approaches such as “Quality of Experience” QoE, phenomenological, psychometrical and physiometrical approaches. TEMe measures the outcome of the Experience Production of the TEMa approach. Thus in the ecology of the Experience Society, the TEMa is the producer perspective of the Experience Economy with all the different dimensions of Experience Production (as in figure 6), while TEMe is the Personal *Experiencescape* composed of *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* and their different dimensions and parameters within the Experiential Learning Model. In the same way the terms “staging”, “designing”, “managing” and “producing” experiences are used intermixed and often with unclear defined. I therefore suggest using the term “*Designing Experiences*” in regard to the spatio-material dimension, i.e. designing the space dimension (the room, equipment, artefacts etc). The term “*Staging Experiences*” could be limited to staging the process, *i.e.* the temporal dimension as in the theatrical context of scripts, roles and dramaturgy. The term “*Managing Experiences*” could be restricted to the resources such as personnel, economy, equipment resources, logistics etc. and “*Producing Experiences*” for the overall process of Experience Production, as “producing cars” applies to the overall concept of “car production”.

Instead of using Maslow’s hierarchy of needs for understanding guest Experiences (TEMe) I have proposed using his concept in a production perspective (TEMa) (Gelter 2007, 2008). In taking account all the levels of the “*Pyramid of Needs*”, the Experience Producer approaches a “*Total Experience*” concept when incorporating not only human need dimensions but also human dream dimensions (as proposed by Jensen 1999). Using this theoretical concept for Experience production, the producer can easily construct a check-list for each level at each dramaturgical stage (*Sub-Erlebnis*) of the production, a kind of TEM protocol for Experience

Production. This TEM-model also gives a base for the *diagnosis of aspirants* for personal transformation offerings which according to this model are based both on basic needs such as security, thrust, esteem etc. as well on personal dreams, goals of learning and changing. Thus when designing a transformational offering, this TEM concept can be useful.



**Figure 11 Integrating Maslow’s human needs into Experience Production (modified after Maslow 1954)**

When attempting to obtain a holistic ecology of the Experience Production context we need to incorporate both the temporal *Transformational Learning Model* and the special *Experienscape* concepts of *Servicescape/Experience Room* and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs in the TEMa context applied on the four levels of experience production ; the experience producer, production, product and the guest experience, to obtain a holistic *Total Experience Management Model*, figure 12.

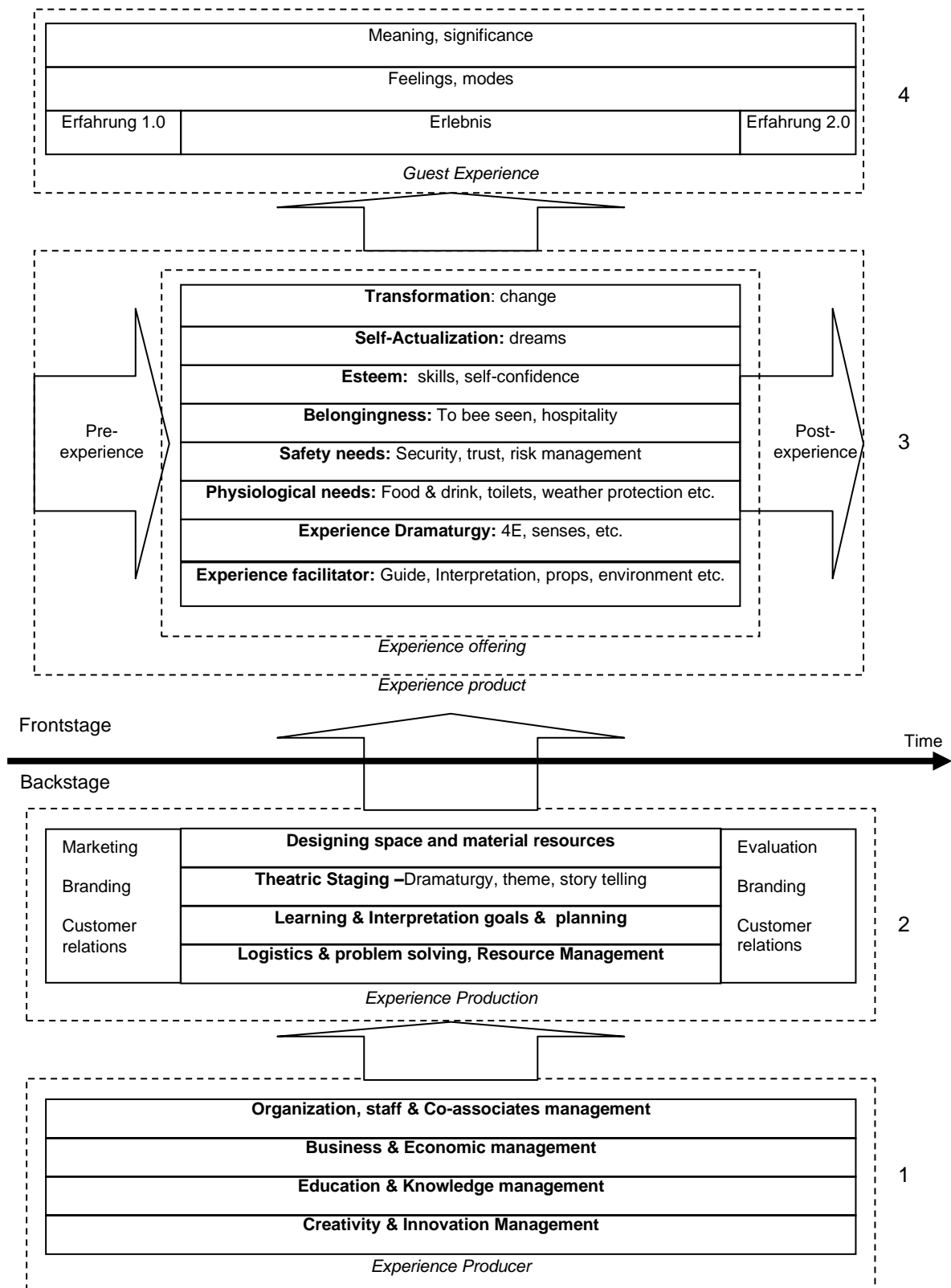


Figure 12 Integrating the Experience Production levels (figure 3) of Gelter (2006) with the Experiencescape concept into a holistic *Total Experience Management* model.

As the ecology in biology is complicated and multidimensional, so is also the ecology of producing human experiences and transformations. We need to understand the different dimensions and parameters to manage and produce successful transformational experiences. To do this we need a clear conceptualisation and frameworks of both the temporal and spatial context of the transformational offerings and processes. The *Total Experience Management* model of experience production in figure 12 is an attempt to describe this complex ecology. To be useful within a tourism enterprise context, each of the four steps and its components has to be transformed into business practice and logics. In such a way this TEM model could be a first “blue print” for developing transformational experience offerings within the Transmodern tourism. To be Transmodern, the transformative goals must consist of emotional, cognitive and behavioural transformations towards a sustainable lifestyle and sustainable values. Such Transmodern tourism based on the proposed transformative offerings needs to be evaluated and tested. But as I have shown, the concepts of Experience Production, Tilden’s Interpretation, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and the pedagogic dimensions of Experiential Learning can build a conceptual framework and foundations for such product development.

## **DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

This deductively developed concept of *Total Experience Management* as a blueprint for product development of transformational offering within the Experience Economy will probably best fit within small scale nature-based tourism where the number of guest are low.

As transformations according to the Pine and Gilmore concept are personal, traditional Interpretation methodology directed towards tourist groups can not directly be adapted. Rather the underlying pedagogical philosophy of Tildenian Interpretation objectives of intellectual, emotional and behavioural could be used for developing explicit learning goals

that addresses sustainable issues within the EESP-sustainability model. Using the theoretical framework of Experiential Learning adapted to the context of Experience Production as suggested in this paper, transformational offerings within tourism can be developed with the goal of transforming the tourist towards a Transmodern lifestyle.

This kind of normative goals within tourism are still uncomfortable concepts both for tourism research and the tourism industry. But it can open new innovative business opportunities within the Pine and Gilmore's proposed transformational economy. As nature-based tourism, besides the explicit methodology of Tildenian Interpretation, to a large degree lacks a theoretical foundation to produce high quality experiences, it to a substantial degree is based on practical experiences and *doxa* resulting more in copying rather than innovations (Gelter 2008). Developing a theoretical foundation for Transmodern tourism would imply tourism with explicit goals (*telos*) of sustainability and survival of humanity, i.e. the explicit implementation of Agenda 21 into tourism. This gives us three implications.

- 1) normative tourism (how to do)
- 2) Transformative tourism offerings (change to)
- 3) Tourism with explicit learning goals (what to learn – i.e. sustainability)

I therefore can conclude that implementing concepts of the TEMa as **Transformational Experience Production (TEP)** into Transmodern tourism can open for new innovative business concept within the transformational economy and innovative development of **Transmodern tourism**. This proposed theoretical framework of TEP need however, to be analyzed in detail for practical implementations, further theoretical verification and finally verified by empirical data. Hopefully this paper can stimulate such development of the Experience Economy.

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## ABSTRACT

The emerging Experience Economy will have interesting implications for experience production within tourism. By integrating theoretical frameworks of the Experience Economy with the context of Transmodern tourism, this paper explores concept of transformational offerings into meaningful and learning experiences that contribute to a sustainable world. Based on theoretical frameworks from Experiential Learning, Tildenian interpretation, Experiencescapes and Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, a Total Experience Management model of experience production has been developed. This model of TEM could be a tool to transform the *Erlebnis* aspects of the experience into meaningful *Erfahrung* and Life Experiences. In the context of sustainability and the intention of Agenda 21 the transformational aspects of experiences can be applied to transform tourists into an engagement of sustainability issues. Nature based tourism can thereby develop innovative themes of transformations within the transformational offerings and economy proposed by Pine and Gilmore 1999.