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# A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CREATION PROCESS AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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## ABSTRACT

*With increasing competition and wide number of buying options available to the consumers of modern world, it becomes essential to consolidate the understanding of consumers' experiences to create enthralling and riveting customer experiences. Experiences are created through every direct or indirect interaction of consumers with the company. A good experience increases customer satisfaction, and successively customer loyalty and a bad one blemishes the company's image not only in the eyes of existing customers but also of the prospective customers, thus losing its customer base. In order to manage and enhance these experiences, it is important to understand the process through which they are created. The paper is a conceptual approach towards understanding the process of customer experience creation and how experiences impact consumer behaviour. Extensive literature review has been done to identify the different dimensions of the retail environment, personal and situational factors that affect the nature of experience creation and its dynamic effect on different aspects of consumer behaviour. Findings have been presented in the form of a conceptual framework for customer experience creation and its impact on consumer behaviour. The framework elaborates upon the various stages of customer experience creation from encounter with clues and emergence of values, leading to formation of intentions and consumer response in terms of certain behaviour. The framework also elaborates upon the traits and dimensions associated with each of these phases. The conceptual framework will act as a research base on which future researches can be taken up in various dimensions.*


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## KEYWORDS

Consumer Behaviour, Customer Experience, Customer Experience Creation, Consumer intention, Customer Values.

## INTRODUCTION

urvival in today's competitive retail environment requires more than just low prices and innovative products. To compete effectively and be successful, businesses must focus on customers' shopping experiences. Large number of domestic and foreign players are realizing the need to create and deliver value for its target customers in form of experiences. In order to create and manage customer's experience, brands and retailers must first understand what "customer experience" actually means. For carrying out strategies of "creating value", companies need meaningful and up-to-date insights of their customers regarding their journey from the expectations they have before the experience occurs to the assessments they are likely to make when it's over. Using that knowledge, companies can orchestrate an integrated series of "clues" that collectively meet or exceed people's emotional needs and expectations. The internalized meaning and value the clues take on can create a deep-seated preference for a particular experience — and thus for one company's product or service over another's. (Berry, Carbone and Haecckel, 2002)

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

Customer experience has emerged as the single most important aspect in achieving success for companies across all industries (Peppers and Rogers 2005). Customer Experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or a part of its organization, which provoke a reaction. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels -rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, and spiritual. Its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer's expectations and the stimuli coming from interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points. (Gentile, Spiller, Noci, 2007, p.397).

Customer experience is the perception formed owing to all the interactions a customer has with a company or brand. Every time a direct or an indirect interaction takes place, an experience is formed and it holds true at all touch-points. One single negative experience of all the interactions that a customer has with the brand or company is enough to make the customer dissatisfied, making him vulnerable to switch. Bernard Schmidt of Columbia Business School, in his book "Customer Experience Management" explained that the customer experience could be looked at in terms of three key components:

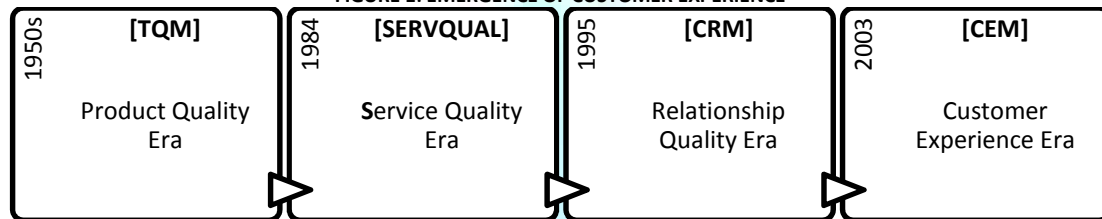
- The brand Experience: The brand experience encompasses the look and feel of logos and signage, packaging, and retail space.
- The customer interface: The customer interface consists of all the dynamic exchanges and contact points where the company interacts with customers, namely, face to face in a store, in a sales visit, at a hotel check in, or a customer event.
- Innovation: It includes anything that improves end consumer's personal lives and business consumer's work lives. Innovations demonstrate the company's commitments to the customer and are what keep the experience compelling, relevant and unique.

Customer Experience is a subjective measure of perceptions during a given servicing scenario. These perceptions are measured both with respect to service provider and the customer. There always exists a gap with respect to expressing the perceptions and understanding the perceptions. Also, the perception can always vary over a period of time. The aim of brands and retailers should be to minimize these gaps so that the overall customer experience is always positive. Measuring perceptions and evaluating experiences in order to make the company's offerings (in terms of product, services, retail environment, etc.) more attractive is the objective of Customer Experience Management. But the activities of measuring and managing customer experiences become meaningful, only when the company had initially emphasized upon creation of "desired" and "unique" experiences for its customers.

### EMERGENCE OF THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ERA

The Product Quality Era in 1950s marked the emergence of TQM approach popularized by Edward Deming. Concepts like Zero defect and Six Sigma emphasized a complete re-engineering of work approach and processes with a view to enhance the experiences of internal as well external customers of organizations. Later, the concept of service quality was proposed by the Nordic School (Gummesson, 1979 and Gronross, 1982) and further researched by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988). With the developments that followed, the concept of service quality emerged as the critical factors determining customer satisfaction and SERVQUAL emerged as a gap-based performance measure. The Relationship Era emerged in 1995 when Relationship Management was introduced by Jagdish Sheth. This marked the popularity and growth of CRM systems. Reichheld introduced the Net Promoter Score (NPS) in 2003 and this kicked-off the beginning of CEM era.

FIGURE 1: EMERGENCE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



Source: Adapted from Customer Experience Measurement Model, Prof. Adre Schreuder, Consulta Research

A direct derivative of Customer Experience is Customer Satisfaction which has been viewed as an outcome of a consumption activity. It is a consequence or outcome of evaluation between what was received and what was expected by the customers in a transaction with a retailer. Satisfaction is the surprise element of product acquisition and / or consumption experience, or an affective response to a specific consumption experience. Based on the experience there will be different states of reinforcement and arousal; (1) Low arousal = "satisfaction-as-contentment", (2) High arousal = "satisfaction as surprise" (positive / delight or negative / shock), (3) Positive reinforcement = "satisfaction-as-pleasure", (4) Negative reinforcement = "satisfaction-as-relief" (Oliver (1989), Parker, C & Mathe ws, B. P., (2001)

Researchers have termed "Customer Experience" as the "New Customer Satisfaction". Yet despite the recognition of the importance of customer experience by practitioners, the academic marketing literature investing this topic has been limited. The literature in marketing, retailing and service management historically has not considered Customer Experience as a separate construct. Instead researchers have focused on measuring customer satisfaction and service quality." (Verhoef, P.C et al, 2009).

### CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CREATION

Experience creation is the practice of relevant befitting experiences for the target consumers through designing products, processes, services, events and environments with a focus placed on the quality of the user experience and relatedness with their socio-cultural atmosphere and psychographic traits. According to Dr. Ronald Jones, the mission of Experience Design is "to persuade, stimulate, inform, envision, entertain, and forecast events, influencing meaning and modifying human behavior." It draws from many other disciplines including cognitive and perceptual psychology, architecture and environment design, product design, information design, ethnography, brand strategy, interaction design, service design etc. In the discipline of marketing, it may be associated with Experiential marketing where existing touch-points are identified and new ones are created and an appropriate offering as a bundle of product features, service attributes, marketing communication & retail environment is extended to the customers.

Experiences are created regardless of whether or not the company intends to. However, for an experience to be a point of differentiation it has to be intentional, consistent, differentiated from competitors and valuable to the consumer (Smith & Wheeler, 2002). According to Pine and Gilmore (1999) a distinctive customer experience can provide huge economic value for firms. Customer experience is the key factor for companies to use, in building loyalty to brands, channels and services (Badgett, Boyce & Kleinberger, 2007). Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) also associated experiential aspects with consumption. Despite of this, customer experience did not get importance as separate construct of consumer behaviour till late. Researchers majorly focused on measuring customer satisfaction and service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988; Verhoef, Langerak & Donkers 2007).

While creating desirable and superior customer experiences, it is important to understand customer's point of view and their definition of an accomplished and enthralling experience. Lutz & Foong (2008) proposed a five step customer experience framework in their paper 'A strategy fit for a king: A Customer Experience Framework', emphasizing on listening to consumers' demands and then identifying the gap between what the customers actually want and what is being delivered to them, in order to close the gap between both. Similar researches have used different terminology such as "Experience Audit" (Berry, Carbone & Haeckel, 2002) or "Value Mining" (Honebein & Cammarano, 2005) for studies on customer experience insights. An effective customer experience design is one that enhancing the affordance of a product or service, its interface with people, is key to customer experience design. Consumer experience encompasses the total experience, including the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases of the experience. It also involves experiences due to different retail channels, personal (internal) factors, situational (external) factors and also the past experiences with the product and the company. For different products and services, there could be different dimensions of customer experience. Customer experience factors also differ with different socio-cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, personality traits, demographics and economic status.

The term Customer Experience Management has its foundation in the concept of Experience Economy; first described by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore in 1998 in the article 'The Experience Economy'. According to Pine and Gilmore, after the most recent service economy, the next economy that will strike, will be the experience economy. Pine and Gilmore suggest that businesses must create memorable events for their customers in such a dedicated and intense manner that the memory itself becomes the product called "experience". Customer Experience Management is a strategy that focuses on the operations and processes of a business around the needs of the individual customer so as to create a win-win value exchange between retailer and customers. In its commercial context, experience management is driven by consideration of the moments of engagement, or touch-points, between people and brands, and the ideas, emotions, and memories that these moments create. Hence experience creation should be a focussed activity and this can only happen if experience determinants are identified.

Bernd H. Schmitt (1999) coined the term "Experiential Marketing and explored how companies create experiential marketing by having customers sense, feel, think, act and relate to a company and its brands. According to Schmitt, Customer Experience Management is the discipline, methodology and/or process used to comprehensively manage a customer's cross-channel exposure, interaction and transaction with a company, product, brand or services. Schmitt proposes that customers consider the functional features of the product, its quality and distinguished brand image as the basic, fundamental offerings that any consumer goods company must provide to its customers. Customers, today, are looking forward to products, communication and marketing campaigns that dazzle their senses, touch their hearts and stimulate their minds by delivering an experience. They want to relate to products and communications and also incorporate these into their lifestyles. Schmitt forecasted that "The degree to which a company is able to deliver a desirable customer experience – and to use information



technology, brands, and integrated communications and entertainment to do so – will largely determine its success in the global marketplace of the new millennium.”

## DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

Anything that can be perceived or sensed or anything that can be recognized by its absence, is an experience clue. Customer Experience Determinants are the clues which are related to the product, the services, previous experiences and the entire retail environment (Retail atmosphere, gestures and tone of store staff, merchandise display etc.) that arouse certain psychological and physical dispositions in the consumer of a product or service that determines his / her buying behaviour in various dimensions. Clues carry certain messages and suggest something to the customer. The messages or suggestions might not be very explicitly interpreted by the consumer but they get manifested in the manner the consumer reacts to these clues. The clues can be broadly categorized as Functional and Emotional. The first concerns the actual functioning of the good or service. Clues relating to functionality are interpreted primarily by the logical circuitry of the brain. The second category concerns the emotions and includes the smells, sounds, sights, tastes and textures of the good or service, as well as the environment in which it is offered. The feel of leather upholstery, the sound and smell of a steak on the grill, the tone of voice of the person answering the customer-service line are all clues that envelop the functionality of a product or service. This category of clues includes two types: “mechanic s” (clues emitted by things) and “humanics” (clues emitted by people). Such clues tend to address emotions rather than reason, as people consider whether to buy or move on. The experience motif is the touchstone from which clues can be developed and defined. Mechanics can be represented graphically in drawings, and humanics should be described in narratives pegged to employee roles. (The customer experience construct is holistic in nature and involves the customers’ cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical responses to the retailer. This experience is created by-

1. Controllable elements – Service interface, retail atmosphere, assortment, price
2. Uncontrollable elements – influence of others, purpose of shopping

Customer experience encompass the total experience, including the search, purchase, consumption and after-sale phases of the experience, and may involve multiple retail channels. According to Verhoef, P.C et al, (2009), the three major focus area are- (1) Cognitive evaluation (i.e functional values), (2) Affective (emotional) responses and (3) Social & physical components.

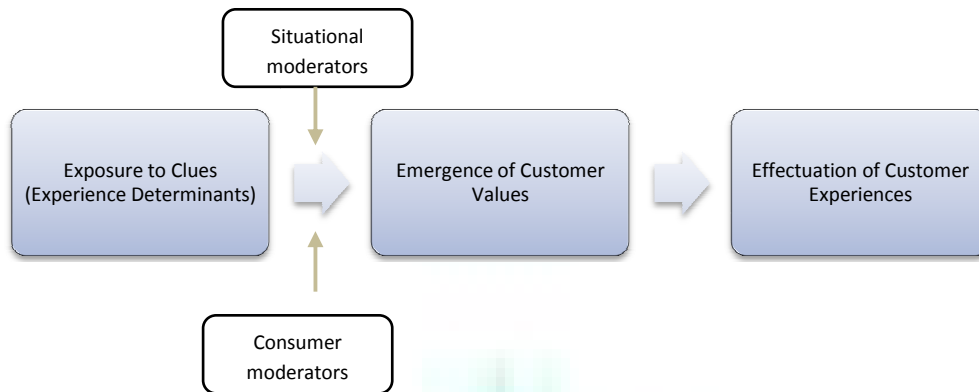
In various different researches conducted since 1996, researchers have identified different elements of the Retail environment and business processes as drivers or constructs of Customer Experience; being referred to as Customer Experience Determinants in this research.

- As one of the earliest discoveries in the sphere of customer experience, **Past Customer Experiences** was identified by Bolton and Drew (1991), Boulding et al. (1993), Mittal, Kumar and Tsiros (1999), van Doom and Verhoef (2008) as a significant construct of customer experience.
- In different studies, Bronnenberg and Wathieu (1996), Baker et al. (2002), Noble and Phillips (2004), Wedel and Zhang (2004), Ofir et al. (2008), Dorotic, Verhoef, and Bijmolt (2008), Gauri, Sudhir and Talukdar (2008), Kopalle et al. (2009) identified **Price** as an experience determinant.
- Starting from this period only, **Packaging and Labelling** starting getting researched as customer experience determinant in different researches by Beatty et al. (1996), Oliver (2001), Baker et al. (2002), Folkes and Patrick (2003), Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (2004), Meuter et al. (2005), Van Dolen, Dabholkar, and de Ruyter (2007), Weijters et al. (2007).
- **Service Interface** emerged as an experience construct in researches by Beatty et al. (1996), Mittal and Lassar (1996), Baker et al. (2002), Folkes and Patrick (2003); Meuter et al. (2005); van Dolen, Dabholkar and de Ruyter (2007); Weijers et al. (2007).
- **Advertising** was discussed as an experience construct by Goff et al. (1997), Fisher, Gainer, and Bristor (1997), Wakefield and Baker (1998), Jugger (1999), Petty & Cacioppo (2003), Young (2003), Janoschka (2004), Chaudhuri & Buck (2005), (Koirala (2005), Kotler and Armstrong (2005), Luo (2005) White and Dahl (2006).
- **Atmosphere**, as a driver for customer experience was studied by Wakefield and Baker (1998); Baker et al. (2002); Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006).
- Broniarczyk, Hoyer and McAllister (1998); Huffman and Kahn (1998); Baker et al. (2002); Janakiraman, Meyer, and Morales (2006) discussed **Assortment** driving customer experience.
- **Service Mix** got identified as a construct of customer experience in studies by Schmitt (1999), Baron, Harris and Harris (2001), Kozinets et al (2002), Baker et al. (2002).
- **Location**, as an experience determinant was discussed by Ghosh and Craig (2001), Durvasula, Sharma and Andrews (2002), Gauri, Trivedi, and Grewal (2008) and Xu and Kim (2008).
- Baker et al. (2002); Haytko and Baker (2004); Luo (2005); Wjite and Dahl (2006) identified **Service Environment** as a driver of customer experience.
- **Brand** was identified as a construct by Keller and Lehmann (2003); Ofir and Simonson (2007); Chartrand, and Fitzsimons (2008); Lee and Rhee (2008); Gauri, Trivedi, and Grewal (2008).
- **Promotion** was studied as an experience determinant by Gijsbrechts, Campo, and Goossens (2003), Van Heerde and Neslin (2008), Chiou-Wei and Inman (2008), Lwin, Stanaland, and Miyazaki (2008) and Ailawadi et al. (2009).
- **Supply Chain Management** was mentioned in many researches by Garg et al. (2005), Neslin et al. (2006), Sousa and Voss (2006), Verhoef, Neslin and Vroomen (2007), Patricio, Fisk and Falcao e Cunha (2008), Xu and Kim (2008), Dant et al. (2009) and Burkle and Posselt (2009).
- **Channel** was identified as an important factor constructing customer experience by Neslin et al. (2006), Sousa and Voss (2006), Verhof, Neslin and Vroomen (2007), Patricio, Fisk and Falcao e Cunha (2008).
- P.C. Verhoef, K.N. Lemon, A. Parasuram, A. Roggeveen, M. Tsiros and L.A. Schlesinger developed a framework of Customer Experience Creation in their research and identified **Social Environment, Social Interface, Retail Atmosphere, Assortment, Price, Customer Experience in Alternative Channels, Retail Brand and Previous Experiences** as important determinants of Customer Experience. They also discussed the impact of Situation Moderators (Economic environment, Competition etc.) and Consumer Moderators (Demographics, Economic condition, social position etc.) on Customer Experiences.

## THE PROCESS OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES CREATION

The process of experience creation begins when customers get exposed to certain clues. Though these clues are generally associated with the retail environment, some Personal factors or Consumer moderators (personality, motivation, perception, demography, social position, economic status, cultural background etc.) and Situational moderators or factors (situation or environment surrounding the consumer) also affect the creation of customer experience. These clues are called Experience Determinants and may be different varying with consumer segments and product or service categories. On exposure to the clues, certain consumer values are generated based on how the consumers receive, associate and absorb the clues. These values that emerge as the internalized principles and code of behaviour, affect consumer’s intentions and subsequent behaviour. If none of the customer values are associated or relevant with the determinant, there is a state of indifferent experience. These dormant values might become active in a different situation or time frame.

FIGURE 2: THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CREATION PROCESS



According to Schmitt, the five processes that generate values in the consumers are- Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate. Sensory values are created through sensory experiences of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. Emotional values are created through experiences related to customers' inner feelings and emotions. Cognitive experiences create cognitive values as a result of intellectual and problem-solving appeal. Behavioural values are created due to experiences of alternative ways of doing things & alternative lifestyles. Relational or Social values are created as a consequence of expansion beyond the individual's personal feelings and his/her social associations. Values related to lifestyle experiences are the "Feel-Good" factors and sense of "Accomplishment" that signify the overall thinking and behaving of a person that is in congruence with his or her acquired lifestyle. These values, in dynamics with various other factors related to product, store etc. enable the realization of an 'experience'.

Type of values generated as a result of exposure and interaction with the clues, define the customer experience that gets created in the form of sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, social and life-style experiences. Experiences may get effectuated as positive or negative; this definition may vary from customer to customer. This realization in association with attitude towards consumption formulates an intention which directly determines the customer's buying behaviour. Consumer Attitudes are defined as settled ways of thinking or feeling about the experiences that customer gains in one or more interaction with the company and result in an overall evaluation that express how much the consumer likes or dislikes an object or an action. Consumer attitudes are a composite of a consumer's (1) beliefs about, (2) feelings about and (3) behavioural intentions towards some object-within the context of marketing, usually a brand or retail store. Attitudes guide our thoughts (the cognitive function), Influence our feelings (the affective function), and Affect our behavior (the conative function). These forces in turn create an intention in the consumer for a certain behaviour. (The Tricomponent Model - Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009)

## TYPES OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

In a broad categorization experiences are either good or bad. It is more or less a psychological state which consumer reach after various types of physical, mental, emotional, social, behavioural acquaintances. Based on these states, experiences can be categorized as-

- Sensory Experiences – Sensory experiences are created through clues obtained through our senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, hearing and smell). The stimulation from various clues /cues affect the consumers' senses to arouse aesthetical pleasure, excitement, satisfaction and sense of involvement or association.
- Emotional Experiences – Emotional experiences are related to customers' inner feelings and emotions. Such experiences involve one's affective system through the generation of moods, feelings and emotions. Affective systems might be created with the company, its brand, the products or even the endorser.
- Cognitive Experiences – Cognitive experiences are created as a result of exposure to intellectual and problem-solving clues. This type of experience is connected with thinking or conscious mental processes of consumers when a company's offering engages in creative solutions or problem solving. A company might also lead consumers to revise (or unlearn & learn) the usual idea about or a way of using a product.
- Behavioural Experiences – Behavioural experiences emerge due to alternative ways of doing things & alternative lifestyles. Such Pragmatic experiences may not be exhausted by, the concept of usability in post-purchase stage but extends to all the stages of the product-life cycle. (Gentile, Noci and Spiller, 2007)
- Social or Relational Experiences- Social experiences are created as a consequence of expansion beyond the individual's personal feelings and his/her social associations. Such experiences involve the person and beyond, his or her social context, relationship with other people and also with his or her ideal self. This experience might be generated due to an offering that encourages or requires the use or consumption together with one or more other people or which might create a common passion and form a community or which is a means of affirmation of a social identity.
- Lifestyle Experience – This is a newly emerging experience category that comes from the affirmation of the system of values and the beliefs of the person often through the adoption of a life-style and behaviours. The concept of lifestyles experiences emerge and hold importance when the product itself and its consumption becomes means of adhesion to certain values the company and the brand embody and the customers share. (Gentile, Noci and Spiller, 2007)

Experiences provide a certain "Reason" to the way consumers behave in future and thus consciously or sub-consciously make the consumer behaviour a "Planned" one. This manifests through the application of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975 and 1980) for exploring the factors which influence the consumers' decision to engage in a certain behaviour. "Reasons" formulate intention towards a certain behaviour. Intention of undertaking or not undertaking the behaviour is the direct predecessor to the behaviour after evaluation of the favourable or unfavourable performance of the behaviour. In many cases, it enunciates disposition of the attitude and the subjective norm wherein the subjective norm is basically the perception formed by the individual about undertaking or not undertaking that behaviour due to the social pressure.

One prominent assumption of Theory of Reasoned Action is that behaviour under consideration is volitional in nature i.e. person can decide whether he or she performs that behaviour or not (Ajzen, 1991). Although true in many cases, behaviour may also depend on other factors such as availability of appropriate opportunities and resources which collectively correspond to the people's actual control over the behaviour (Liska, 1984).

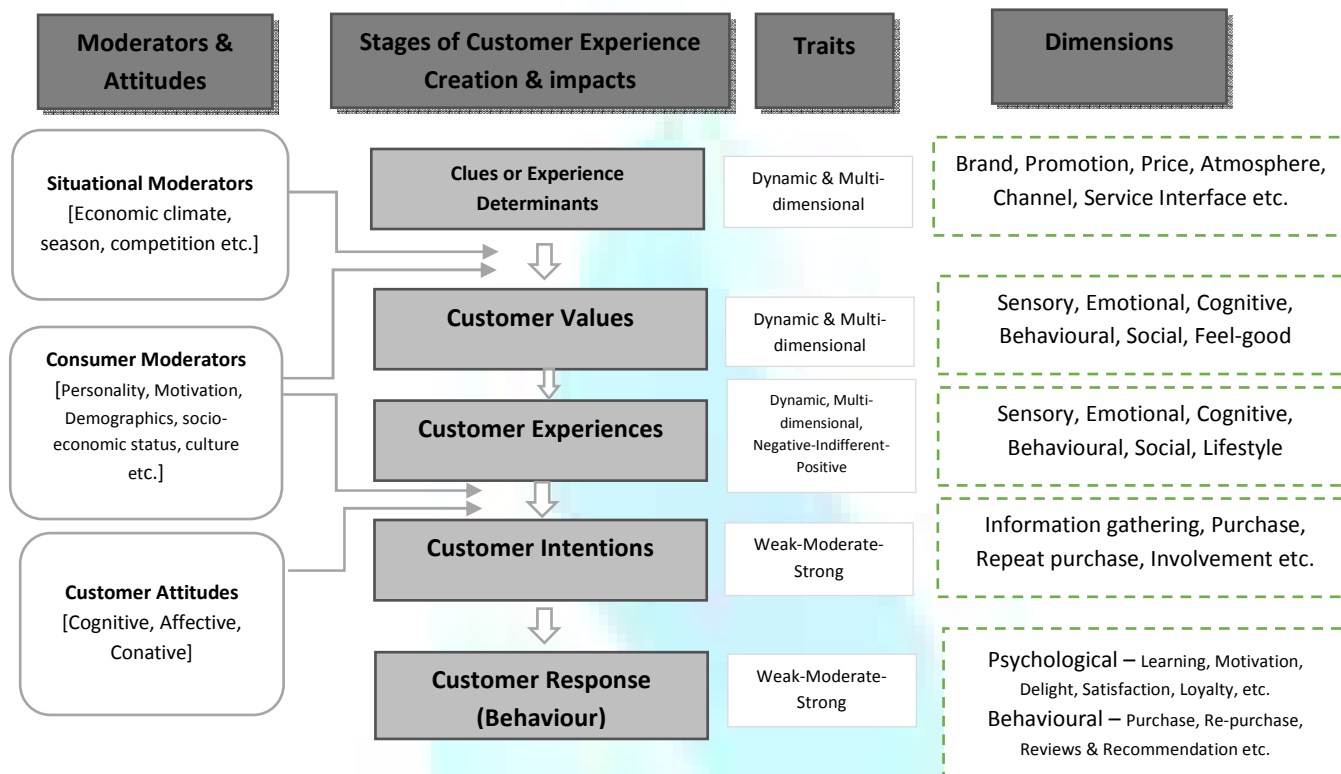
Customer intentions after the experience may range from weak to strong, for actions such as information gathering about the company and its products, purchase and repeat purchase and deeper involvement with the company. Intentions result in certain form of behaviour as a response to the experience determinants in form of customer satisfaction, delight, loyalty and reviews and recommendations. This process is dynamic and depends on various factors such as values created, types of experiences, personal & situational moderators, attitudes, strength of the intentions etc.

The acquired experiences impact the consumers broadly in Psychological and Behavioural dimensions. The psychological dimensions include consumer perception, learning, motivation, attitudes, trust, loyalty, satisfaction etc. The Behavioural dimensions are related to attraction and interest towards the company and its offerings leading to purchase intention and finally to the actual purchase behaviour (frequency & volume of purchase and re-purchase), referring & recommendations etc.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CREATION AND ITS IMPACTS**

On the basis of the conceptual interpretation, a framework for Customer Experience Creation has been developed. The framework shows the stages of customer experience creation as (1) Confrontation with Clues or Experience Determinants, (2) Emergence of Customer values, (3) Effectuation of experiences, (4) Development of an intention towards a behaviour and (5) Consumer's Response and Reaction in terms of a behaviour.

Situational moderators and consumer moderators impact the emergence of values and hence different values can emerge and become significant in varying situations for different people. Consumer moderators also affect the development of consumer intentions after having the experience. Another critical factor impacting consumer intention and subsequent behaviour is the attitude of the consumer. Attitudes, in perspective of their cognitive, affective and conative components affect the emergence of intentions in a conspicuous manner.

**FIGURE 3: FRAMEWORK OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CREATION & ITS IMPACTS**

The framework, further specifies the traits (attributes) associated with each phase of the experience creation process and also elaborates upon the dimensions (aspects) that the phases can span up to. Experience determinants and the values generated are dynamic and multi-dimensional in nature. The manner in which they impact the consumer and the magnitude of this impact is dependent on various aspects and may change from time to time. Similarly Customer experiences are dynamic, multi-dimensional and may range from negative experiences, state of indifference to positive experiences. Customer intentions and Response can also be on a scale of weak to strong.

Dimensions of the Experience determinants are the different aspects of the retail environment that affect customer experience.

- Dimensions of customer values are the different types of values or components of values that emerge.
- Dimensions of customer experiences the various types of experience that are created. These are not mutually exclusive.
- Dimensions of customer intentions are the different activities towards which the customer shows his or her inclination after the experience.
- Dimensions of the customer response or behaviour are the different ways in which a customer reacts to the overall situation.

**CONCLUSION**

Customers always have an experience — good, bad or indifferent — whenever they purchase a product or service from a company. In order to create superior and satisfying customer experiences, brands and marketers need to understand the factors that determine customer's experience and the process of experience creation.

Customer experience constructs are holistic in nature and involve customer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical responses to the brand and the retailer. The overall experience is created by some elements that are under the control of retailer (e.g., service interface, retail atmosphere, assortment, price), and also some elements that are outside the retailer's control (e.g., influence of others, purpose of shopping). The Total Customer Experience is a result of various constructs, which are dynamic in nature and have overlapping effects. Companies are competing fiercely with one another on the aspects of combined offerings of functional and emotional benefits. But sustenance of customer connect, under the forces of changing customer profiles and increasing competition, is possible only by the incorporation of the mantra of "Customer Experience Creation and Management" in all its customer interfaces. Organizations that create a fancy through design elements or focus on the customer experience in isolated pockets of their business will not be able to delight their customers.

The research highlights various aspects of the sphere of customer experience which can be taken up in future researches to develop deeper insights into the subject area. A systematic application of principles and tools of customer experience creation and management is the need of the hour for organization to grow and become profitable. The experience that the company create for its target consumers has to be designed using the constructs desirable by and valuable to the consumers. It has to be a Total Customer Experience satisfying the different dimensions of customers' expectations.

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